

PSCI 1101: American Political System

Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Janet Donovan

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:20, Math 100

Office hours Tuesday 11-1 or by appointment, Ketchum 121a

janet.donavan@colorado.edu

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the U.S. system of government and politics. We will emphasize interrelations among levels and branches of government, formal and informal institutions, processes, and political behavior. This semester, we will also focus on how each individual can affect the political process, and on how economic inequality affects democracy. Each student will choose a political issue to follow throughout the semester for a semester project, learning how the U.S. political system addresses the issue in government, elections, extra-governmental institutions and media. This course meets MAPS requirement for social science: general or U.S. history and is approved for arts and sciences core curriculum: contemporary societies or United States context.

Course Objectives:

1. Foster an understanding of the U.S. political system enabling students to operate as fully-participating citizens and providing foundation for additional political science coursework.
2. Learn about the changes in the U.S. political system over time.
3. Evaluate the current status of the U.S. political system and identify areas for improvement.
4. Examine the effects of social, economic and racial inequality on the functioning of the U.S. political system.
5. Provide an opportunity for students to gain an in-depth understanding of an issue of individual importance through the semester project.
6. Improve writing, researching and critical thinking skills through the semester project.

Grade Basis:

Exams:

Midterm 1	10 points
Midterm 2	15 points
Final	15 points

Semester Project:

Project Assignments	9 points
Paper	15 points

Recitation:

Quizzes	10 points
Attendance	7 points
Participation	8 points

Lecture:

Attendance Quizzes	11 points
--------------------	-----------

Total: 100 points

Grading Scale:

98-100 A+
93-97 A
90-92 A-
88-89 B+
83-87 B
80-82 B-
78-79 C+
73-77 C
70-72 C-
60-69 D
< 59 F

Required Texts:

Bianco, William T and David T Canon. *American Politics Today*, 3rd Essentials edition. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-92106-9

Canon, David T, et al. 2013. *The Enduring Debate*, 7th edition. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-92158-8

Follow U.S. political news daily

Additional readings as assigned, to be made available through Desire2Learn

What to Expect: The good news and the bad news is that this is a rigorous course. As a 3 credit hour course, students should expect to spend 9-12 hours per week reading the course text, taking notes, completing assignments and studying, in addition to the lecture and recitation, for a total of 12-15 hours per week commitment to the course. The class follows a set schedule, which is outlined in the course schedule. All graded work must be completed on schedule. Please note the three exams and the semester paper are all required to receive a passing grade in the course.

Requirements:

Exams: There are 3 exams in this class, 2 midterms and a final. The dates for these exams can be found in the course schedule. Each exam will consist of 30 multiple choice questions and 5 term identifications. The midterms will be conducted in class, and the final exam will be in the regular class room during the assigned final exam slot. Make-up exams are permitted only in cases of documented medical or family emergency, or participation in a university sanctioned activity. Prof. Donovan must be informed in advance, if physically possible of such an emergency. All make-ups are at Prof. Donovan's discretion and will be in a different format than the original exam. The first midterm is worth 10 points, and the second midterm and final are valued at 15 points each. Students must take all 3 exams to receive a passing grade in the course. More information will be provided near exam time.

Project Assignments: Each student will choose a political issue of interest to follow throughout the semester. Students will receive 3 project assignments in section. The purpose of the assignments is to assist students in learning about their chosen issue. Project assignments must be turned in by the designated dates. Late assignments will receive a substantial grade reduction. The assignments are designed to prepare students for the project paper. If completed properly, students should not need to do any additional research beyond the project assignments to gather information for the project paper. Each assignment is worth 3 points, for a total of 9 points of the final grade. More information on choosing a topic will be provided with the first project assignment.

Project Paper: Each student will choose a political issue of to follow throughout the semester, turning in 3 project assignments, and use the research from the project assignments to complete the paper. The project paper is due on the designated date. Papers should be 5-6 pages typed, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, in 10-12 point Times New Roman font. Paper length does not include titles or title pages, bibliography, graphs, pictures, or other non-text materials. Deviations from this length will receive a deduction, at the teaching assistant's discretion. The paper is worth 15 points of the final grade and is required to receive a passing grade in the course. Extensions are given only in cases of documented medical or family emergency and are again at the discretion of the teaching assistant. Late papers will

receive a 1 point deduction per day. More information on the project paper will be provided later in the semester.

Lecture Attendance and Reading: Students will complete clicker quiz questions in class during most course periods as the basis for lecture attendance. The quizzes are designed so that students who have completed the readings should be able to answer the questions. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that his or her clicker is properly working. In cases of documented medical or family emergency, religious observance excused in accordance with course policy, or participation in university sanctioned activities, the student's participation grade will be calculated without the excused clicker questions. There are no make-ups for clicker questions. Lecture attendance and reading is valued at 11 points of the final grade. Students are required to have a working clicker in class from Tuesday, 9/2 through the end of the semester.

Recitation Attendance: Recitation attendance is valued at 7 points of the final grade. Students are required to attend all recitations. Please see your teaching assistant for further information on recitation attendance policies.

Recitation Participation: Recitation participation is valued at 8 points of the final grade. Recitations are an important part of the learning process, and allow students to engage with the material from lecture and the textbooks. Recitation sections have their own assigned readings, which must be completed before the recitation section that week. Please see your teaching assistant for further information on recitation participation policies.

Recitation Quizzes: There will be 6 unannounced quizzes in recitation over the course of the semester. For each student, the lowest score will be dropped. The quizzes are valued at 2 points each for a total of 10 points. Please ask your teaching assistant for further information on the policy on missed quizzes in your individual section.

Course Policies:

Course communications: Email is the official mode of communication for the University of Colorado at Boulder. Students are required to regularly check their @colorado.edu email (at least every 48 hours) for updates regarding the course. Students are responsible for receiving any messages sent by the instructor to the class email list, or individually to the student. Students are responsible for ensuring that any email sent by the student to the instructor or TA is received. In addition, students are responsible for checking the D2L site for the course regularly.

Contacting the Instructor: Please feel free to contact me with questions about the course. The best ways to reach me are to come by office hours, or to email. You may also call my office phone, but that is a less efficient means of reaching me. I always answer email within 48 hours, so if you do not receive a reply, that means I did not get your email and you should try to contact me again. When addressing me, please address me in person or in email as Dr. Donovan or Professor Donovan.

Course Etiquette: Students are expected to come to class on time and stay the entire time. If it is necessary to come late or leave early, please let me know in advance. If your schedule does not permit

you to be on time and in class on a regular basis, please take another course. Students are expected to be respectful of each other and of the instructor; lively debate is encouraged, but personal attacks are prohibited. These guidelines should be obvious, and they will help to make the course a more enjoyable experience for all. For more information on University requirements regarding classroom behavior please see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Electronic Devices: Electronic devices, including computers and mobile phones, are prohibited in class. The use of these devices causes serious disruption in class and affects the learning of all students. Computers, phones and other devices must be turned off and put away during class (off means off, not on mute or vibrate mode). Students may appeal this policy on an individual basis by coming to office hours and providing sufficient reason why an exception to the policy is necessary. Exceptions to this policy are at the instructor's discretion.

Honor code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. In this course, students will receive a 0 on any assignment in which the honor code is violated. In addition, all incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode>

Students with disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>.

Religious observances: Students with religious observances that conflict with course requirements will be accommodated whenever possible. In order to ensure such accommodation, students must notify the instructor within the first 2 weeks of the course to allow time to make such arrangements. For more information on the University policy, please see http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Discrimination and harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 9/17/13). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes, or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political

affiliation, or political philosophy. The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment as defined by any of these policies should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

Reading Schedule:

Note: Readings are to be completed BEFORE the lecture or recitation for which they are assigned

Week 1 (8/25-8/29): Introduction: Welcome to the American Political System

Tuesday 8/26: Introduction to the class, syllabus

Thursday 8/28: Read *Preface* in *American Politics Today*

Recitation: Introduction to the class

Week 2 (9/1-9/5): Understanding American Politics

Tuesday 9/2: Read Chapter 1 in *American Politics Today*

Thursday 9/4: Chapter 1 in *American Politics Today* (cont)

Recitation: Read Chapter 1 in *The Enduring Debate*

Labor Day 9/1 Campus Closed- Monday recitations will not meet

Week 3 (9/8-9/12): The Constitution and Founding

Tuesday 9/9: Read Chapter 2 in *American Politics Today*

Thursday 9/11: Read *Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, The Constitution and Amendments*, and *The Federalist Papers* in the Appendix of *American Politics Today*

Recitation: Read Chapter 2 in *The Enduring Debate*

Week 4 (9/15-9/19): Federalism

Tuesday 9/16: Read Chapter 3 in *American Politics Today*

Thursday 9/18: Chapter 3 in *American Politics Today* (cont)

Recitation: Read Chapter 3 in *The Enduring Debate*

Project Assignment 1 due in recitation

Week 5 (9/22-9/26): Civil Liberties

Tuesday 9/23: Read Chapter 4 in *American Politics Today*

Thursday 9/25: Chapter 4 in *American Politics Today* (cont)

Recitation: Read Chapter 4 in *The Enduring Debate*

Week 6 (9/29-10/3): Midterm 1 Exam

Tuesday 9/30: Catch up and Review

Thursday 10/2: Midterm 1 Exam in class

Recitation: No recitation readings this week

Week 7 (10/6-10/10): Public Opinion and the Media

Tuesday 10/7: Read Chapter 5 in *American Politics Today*

Thursday 10/9: Chapter 5 in *American Politics Today* (cont)

Recitation: Read Chapter 9 in *The Enduring Debate*

Week 8 (10/13-10/17): Political Parties and Elections

Tuesday 10/14: Read Chapter 6 in *American Politics Today*
Thursday 10/16: Read Chapter 7 in *American Politics Today*
Recitation: Read Chapters 10 & 11 in *The Enduring Debate*
Project Assignment 2 due in recitation

Week 9 (10/20-10/24): Elections and Interest Groups

Tuesday 10/21: Chapter 7 in *American Politics Today* (cont)
Thursday 10/23: Read Chapter 8 in *American Politics Today*
Recitation: Read Chapter 12 in *The Enduring Debate*

Week 10 (10/27-10/31): Midterm Exam 2

Tuesday 10/28: Catch up and Review
Thursday 10/30: Midterm Exam 2 in class

Week 11 (11/3-11/7): Congress

Tuesday 11/4: Read Chapter 9 in *American Politics Today*
Thursday 11/6: Chapter 9 in *American Politics Today* (cont)
Recitation: Read Chapter 5 in *The Enduring Debate*

Week 12 (11/10-11/14): Presidency and Bureaucracy

Tuesday 11/11: Read Chapter 10 in *American Politics Today*
Thursday 11/13: Read Chapter 11 in *American Politics Today*
Recitation: Read Chapters 6 & 7 in *The Enduring Debate*
Project Assignment 3 due in recitation

Week 13 (11/17-11/21): Courts and Civil Rights

Tuesday 11/18: Read Chapter 12 in *American Politics Today*
Thursday 11/20: Read Chapter 13 in *American Politics Today*
Recitation: Read Chapter 8 in *The Enduring Debate*

Fall Break and Thanksgiving, November 24-28 no lecture, recitation or office hours this week

Week 14 (12/1-12/5): Domestic and Foreign Policy

Tuesday 12/2: Read Chapter 14 in *American Politics Today*
Thursday 12/4: Read Chapter 15 in *American Politics Today*
Recitation: Read Chapter 13 in *The Enduring Debate*
Project Papers due in recitation

Week 15 (12/8-12/12): Foreign Policy and The Future of the American Political System

Tuesday 12/9: Chapter 15 in *American Politics Today* (cont)
Thursday 12/11: What is the Future of the American Political System?
Recitation: Read Chapter 15 in *The Enduring Debate*

Final Exam Monday, December 15, 1:30-2:30