

LPOL 2120A:

Power and Politics in the United States

Semester: Spring 2012

Day and Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00pm – 1:40pm

Location: 6 East 16th Street, Room 1004

Instructor: Nathan Angelo

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Course Overview: This class offers students an introduction to American politics through the study of power. We will focus on: the institutions of government, political identity, and American political thought in an effort to locate political power in American government and determine how citizens can interact effectively with political institutions. We begin by attempting to define power broadly then try to locate power within American government. Then we will focus on the institutions of American government, their development over time, and the major theoretical trends within the field of Political Science. Finally, we study citizen mobilization as a way to understand the role of the citizen within structures of power in American government. We conclude by identifying sites of resistance in the United States and show how activists attempt to gain power, focusing on how political identity groups mobilize.

Objectives: After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Identify major theories within the field of Political Science
- Understand the way that power operates in American Politics
- Understand and critique theories of politics
- Produce arguments about the location of power in American politics
- Understand the structure of the American political system

Course Format: This course will be structured mainly as a discussion style seminar. Good student preparation is essential for an interesting class discussion. Students should come to class prepared with thoughtful questions and critiques of the assigned articles.

Assignments: There are two types of assignments in this class: daily reading assignments and written assignments. Regarding reading assignments: students should come to class with copies of the reading assignments, ready to discuss them. Students should also be aware of current events by reading a newspaper or another news source. When choosing a news source, keep ideology in mind. You might choose to read a few different news sources that capture a variety of ideologies. I am happy to give recommendations for news sources on any point of the political spectrum.

Written assignments should be handed in on the day that they are due. A valid medical excuse is required for any missing work. Please submit two copies: one on blackboard and another hard copy in class. I will be able to give you more detailed comments on a hard copy than on blackboard. If you have questions about writing, you should visit the university writing center.

Class Participation: The classroom should be an interactive environment but it should also be inviting for all to participate. Spirited engagement is always welcome and an important part of the class. Conversations should be active and civil. Please participate intelligently, it is an important component of your grade.

Attendance: It is crucial that students attend class and be on time. Your grade will be adjusted relative to the number of times you are absent and the frequency in which you are late. Note that the university attendance policy states that four absences will result in a failing grade for the class.

Electronic Devices: Unless instructed otherwise, laptops, iPads, and other electronic devices should not be used during class. They are a distraction to you and the people around you. Please be sure to silence mobile devices before the class begins.

Grading:

Two Papers:	25% (each)
Final Exam:	35%
Class Participation:	15%

Note on Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on plagiarism. If you are unsure how to cite correctly, refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, *The MLA Handbook* or any of the online resources available. If you are still unsure after consulting these sources, visit the university writing center for further guidance.

Course Outlines and Reading Assignments:

Monday January 23: Introduction, What is Political Science?
No Readings

Part 1: Foundations: Studying Power and Democracy in America

Wednesday January 25: What is Democracy? What is Power? What is American?

Walzer, Michael "What Does it Mean to be an American?" *Social Research*, Vol. 74, Issue 3 (Fall 2004)

Wolin, Sheldon "Fugitive Democracy" *Constellations*, Volume 1, Issue 1 (December 1994)

Monday January 30: How Do We Study Power?

Dahl, Robert "Power as the Control of Behavior" in *Power* edited by Steven Lukes. New York: NYU Press, 1986, pp. 37-58.

Foucault, Michel "Truth and Power" in *Power: The Essential Works of Foucault* edited by James Faubion. New York: New Press, 2001.

Wednesday February 1: American Foundations

Katznelson, Ira, Mark Kesselman and Alan Draper "Capitalism and Democracy" in *The Politics of Power: A Critical Introduction to American Government*, New York: Norton, 2011, pg. 28-60.

Hartz, Louis "The Coming of Age of America" *The American Political Science Review*, Vol 51, No 2 (June 1957)

George, Susan "A Short History of Neo-Liberalism" *Global Exchange*

Monday February 6: The Constitution and The Federalists

The Declaration of Independence

The Constitution

Federalists #10, #51

Anti-Federalist #3

Wednesday February 8: Tocqueville

De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*: Volume 1, Chapter 3, 12; Volume 2, Book 1, Chapter 2; Volume 2, Book 2, Chapter 1, 4, 5, 7.

Monday February 13: What is American? Is it exceptional?

Wilson, James Q. "American Exceptionalism" *American Spectator*, (October 2006)

Lipset, Seymour Martin "Still the Exceptional Nation?" *Wilson Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 2000)

Winthrop, John "A Model of Christian Charity"

Part II: Power in the Institutions of Government

Wednesday February 15: Congress

Squire, Peverill et al "Congress" in *Dynamics of Democracy*, 6e Cincinnati: Atomic Dog Publishing, 2010.

Monday February 20: No Class, Presidents Day

Wednesday February 22: Congress

Smith, Steven "Congress, The Troubled Institution" in *Principles and Practice of American Politics 4th Edition* edited by Steven Smith and Samuel Kernell, New York: CQ Press, 2009.

Jacobs, Lawrence and Theda Skocpol *Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. (pgs 101-120)

Monday February 27: The Judiciary: How the Court Got its Power

Federalist #78

Lincoln, Abraham "Speech on the Dred Scott Decision"

Cases: Marbury v. Madison, Dred Scott v. Stanford, McLaurin v. Oklahoma, Plessy v. Ferguson, Brown v. Board of Education

Wednesday February 29: Judicial Activism or a Living Document

Scalia, Antonin "A Matter of Interpretation: Federal Courts and the Law" (excerpt)

Tushnet, Mark "Democracy Versus Judicial Review" *Dissent* (Spring 2005)

Cases: Griswold v Connecticut, Roe v. Wade, Lawrence v. Texas, Loving v. Virginia, Perry v. Schwarzenegger

Monday March 5: The Development of the Presidency Over Time

Federalist #69, #70

Wilson, Woodrow "The Public Presidency"

Skowronek, Stephen "Notes on the Presidency in The Political Order" *Studies in American Political Development*, Vol 1, No 1 (1986).

Wednesday March 7: What is Presidential Power?

Paper #1 Due on Blackboard

Neustadt, Richard "The Presidential Hundred Days" in *Understanding the Presidency 6th Edition* edited by James Pfiffner and Roger Davidson. New York: Pearson, 2011.

Miroff, Bruce "The Presidential Spectacle" in *The Presidency and the Political System*

Monday March 12 and Wednesday March 14: No Class, Spring Break

Monday March 19: The Bureaucracy, the Iron Triangle, and the Power Elite

Eisenhower, Dwight "Farewell Address"

Mills, C. Wright *The Power Elite* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000 (excerpt on blackboard)

Part III: Negotiating Political Power, Citizens and the State

Wednesday March 21: Civil Rights

Johnson, Lyndon "We Shall Overcome"

Malcolm X "The Ballot or the Bullet"

DuBois, WEB *Souls of Black Folk*, Chapter 1, 14

Monday March 26: Civil Liberties

Whitehead John W. et al. "Forfeiting "Enduring Freedom" for "Homeland Security": A Constitutional Analysis of the USA Patriot Act and the Justice Department's Anti-Terrorism Initiatives."

American University Law Review 51, no.6 (June 2002):1081-1133

Cases: Miranda v. Arizona, Mapp v. Ohio, Brandenburg v. Ohio, New Jersey v. TLO

Wednesday March 28: Voting and Districting

Popkin, Samuel "The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns" in *Principles and Practices of American Politics*

Riker, William "Camouflaging the Gerrymander" in *The Art of Political Manipulation* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

Charles Cameron, David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Black Representation in Congress?" *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 90, No. 4 (Dec., 1996), pp. 794-812

Lublin, David "Racial Redistricting and African-American Representation: A Critique of "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Black Representation in Congress?" *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 1 (Mar., 1999), pp. 183-186

Monday April 2: Political Parties and Representation

Fiorina, Morris "from Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America" in *Principles and Practice of American Politics*

Frank, Thomas "What's the Matter with Kansas?" (excerpt)

Wednesday April 4: Media

Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, "News That Matters"

McChesney, Robert "It's the Media Stupid" (excerpt)

Monday April 9: Public Opinion

Zaller, John "Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science" *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (June 1998)

Ginsberg, Benjamin "The Captive Public: How Mass Opinion Promotes State Power"

Wednesday April 11: Interest Groups

Olson, Mancur "The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups"

Theodore J. Lowi, "Interest-Group Liberalism."

Monday April 16: The Police

Kelling, George and James Wilson "The Police and Neighborhood Safety: Broken Windows"

Jacobson, Mark "The Splitting Image of Pot" *New York Magazine*

Part IV: Identity and Political Power

Wednesday April 18: Why do Americans Hate Welfare?

King, Desmond and Rogers Smith "Racial Orders in American Political Development" *American Political Science Review*, Vol 99, No 1 (February 2005)

Gilens, Martin "Why Americans Hate Welfare" (excerpt)

Monday April 23: What is Whiteness?

Baldwin, James "On being White and Other Lies"

Olson, Joel "Whiteness and Polarization of American Politics" *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol 61., No 4 (Dec 2008)

Wednesday April 25: Immigration and Ethnicity

Hattam, Victoria *In the Shadow of Race* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, chapter 1, 6, 7.
Ignatiev, Noel "Immigrants and Whites" in *Race Traitor* edited by Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey,
New York: Routledge, 1996.

Monday April 30: Southern Politics and the New Right

Paper #2 Due on Blackboard

Lowndes, Joseph from "From the New Deal to the New Right" (excerpt)
Goldwater, Barry "The Conscience of a Conservative" (excerpt)
Nixon, Richard "The Great Silent Majority"
Robertson, Pat "A Portrait of America"

Wednesday May 2: The Tea Party, New Right or More of the Same?

Melissa Harris-Lacewell, "Is this the Birth of a Nation?" *The Nation*, March 22, 2010
Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol, and John Coggin, "The Tea Party and the Remaking of
Republican Conservatism," *Perspectives on Politics* 9 (2011)
William Hogeland, "Real Americans," *Boston Review*, September/October, 2010.
<http://bostonreview.net/BR35.5/hogeland.php>.

Monday May 7: Class and the (New) Inequality

"Who exactly are the 1%?" *The Economist* 21 January 2012.
Stiglitz, Joseph "Capitalist Fools" *Vanity Fair*, January 2009.
Walzer, Michael "In Defense of Equality" *Dissent*, 1973.

Wednesday May 9: Gender

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady "The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" (excerpt)
bell hooks "Feminist Theory from Margin to Center" (excerpt)
Millet, Kate "Sexual Politics" (excerpt)
Friedan, Betty "The Feminine Mystique" (excerpt)

Monday May 14

FINAL EXAM
No Readings Assigned

Note: Readings and assignments may change. I will announce any changes in class.