

Introduction to American Government

COURSE INFORMATION	<i>Term:</i> Fall 2018 <i>Level:</i> Introduction <i>Meet:</i> Tuesdays & Fridays, 1-2:30 <i>Room:</i> College Hall 221 <i>Syllabus Revision:</i> January 4, 2020	<i>Instructor:</i> Jack Reilly <i>Office:</i> Social Sciences 205 <i>E-mail:</i> jreilly@ncf.edu <i>Office Hours:</i> Tuesdays 11-12, Wednesdays 2-3 <i>Appointments:</i> jacklireilly.youcanbook.me
DESCRIPTION	This course serves as an introduction to the systematic and rigorous study of American politics. We develop an understanding of the forces that influence the behavior of individuals and institutions in and around our national government. How well does the American political system live up to the ideals of a representative democracy? Answering this question means that we need to know something about how our government is supposed to work, where it fails to measure up, and why. This will put us in a position to evaluate proposals for reforming the system as well as defenses of the status quo. Topics include the Federalist papers, the Constitution, participation and voting behavior, elections and representation, political parties and factions, Congress, the Presidency, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, and the formation of public policy.	
COURSE STRUCTURE	This is a multi-mode introductory-level class. Class will consist of group discussions, talks, simulations, debates, and class discussions. We begin each day small group discussions. You must come to class prepared to participate every day.	
PREREQUISITES	None. Recommended co-requisite: introductory writing course and/or introductory data course.	

Materials

BOOKS	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ken Kollman, <i>The American Political System: Core Edition</i>. Norton. (Referred to as "text". Any edition is OK.)• Ken Kollman, <i>Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives</i>. (Referred to as "reader". Newest edition is useful.)• Dahl, Robert. <i>How Democratic is the American Constitution?</i> Yale.• Additional readings as assigned can be found in the course Google drive.
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Course Requirements

OVERVIEW	Satisfactory completion of the course requires completion of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preparation & Participation<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Attendance(b) Reading(c) Discussion Questions(d) Simulations & Games
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2. Debates

- (a) Citizen Competence
- (b) Pluralism/Party Theory
- (c) Judicial Decisionmaking
- (d) American Democracy

3. Exams

- (a) Models
- (b) Behavior
- (c) Linkage
- (d) Institutions

DAILY PREPARATION

Daily Participation and Reading. Successful participation requires both attendance and familiarity with the readings. By class each day, you should have completed the readings for that day. Students are not expected to have mastered the reading by class, but students are expected to be familiar enough that they may ask and answer questions about the material, both in small group discussion at the beginning of class and within the larger classroom context. As this is an introductory class with strong group discussion components, slides are not exhaustive and it is difficult to make up missed class time. If you must miss a class, make sure to complete the reading for the class and review the material with your fellow classmates or with the professor.

Discussion Questions. Submit discussion questions or points (broadly construed) to the professor's e-mail (jreilly@ncf.edu), the TA's e-mail (jennifer.lin16@ncf.edu), and to your discussion group by noon on the day of class. This question (or set of questions) can be about anything from the reading: uncertainty on the analysis technique, a challenge of the author's theory, a question about the implications of a paper, etc. The idea is for your classmates and professor to get a feel for what you are thinking about the reading, and what you are having trouble with, so that we conduct class discussions accordingly. Daily question e-mails should be titled as follows: AG Questions 1.1, AG Questions 1.2, AG Questions 2.1, etc.

DEBATES

The main independent work for the course involves participation in a series of four debates. There are two core components to each debate:

1. *Preparation*, including developing and writing opening debate essays ("constructives"). (1-2 pages each.)
2. The *debate* itself, including oral presentation of the constructive, a cross-examination period, and a closing argument ("final focus").

Participation in debates is by discussion group ("house").

EXAMS

There are four exams in the class, each covering one of the four course units. Each exam takes 45-60 minutes of time in class. The course is cumulative, and each test will be comprehensive, but each exam will focus on material from that unit. Test dates will not change and may not be missed except for documented medical or family emergencies. If you are unable to attend class on one of the test days, contact me during the first week of class.

- The first exam is on September 21, 2018 and covers models and constitutional foundations.
- The second exam is on October 12, 2018 and covers political behavior.
- The third exam is on November 9, 2018 and covers political linkage mechanisms.

- The fourth and final exam is on November 30, 2018 and covers formal political institutions.

Conditions for Satisfactory Evaluation

EXPECTATIONS	<p>To satisfactorily complete the course, you must satisfactorily complete all three course requirements: preparation & participation, debates, and exams. Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with more than three unexcused class absences may not receive a satisfactory course evaluation. • Students who fail to submit more than three days worth of discussion questions may not receive a satisfactory course evaluation. 2. Debates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must participate in all required debates to display oral and written communication skills as well as the ability to create and support an effective argument. 3. Exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must satisfactorily complete all four exams to illustrate command of the material. <p>Unsatisfactory performance in any of these course components may result in an unsatisfactory evaluation.</p>
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The Course Cup

OVERVIEW	<p>In addition to formal academic requirements, students in the course compete for the “course cup” through participation and performance in a variety of classroom simulations, activities, and debates. The winner of the course cup wins glory, timê¹, the pleasure of vanquished debate foes, and great honor for their house.</p>
HOUSES AND SORTING	<p><i>Oh, American politics is messy And has evolved immeasurably But the founding fathers presence Has been felt most consistently</i></p> <p><i>They shared a goal, a war, a dream They drafted the constitution Yet each one contributed something different In this country's evolution.</i></p> <p><i>But with which imposing influence And philosophy they espouse Do you most associate with? Because you will be joining with their house.</i></p>

¹(ancient Greek) honor; also meaning value, attributed to a person (as Achilles' time); public acknowledgement of one's value/glory through awarding prizes; acclaim for achieving excellence (arete) in battle, sport or council; is often competitive; as in the Iliad (<http://www.webwinds.com/thalassa/terminology.htm>)

*You might belong in Washington,
That great Cincinnatus fan,
If anyone can lead this nation
Then Washingtonians can*

*You might belong in Jefferson
Whose orientation is local
And his Declaration drafting skills
Make Jefferson fans vocal*

*Or yet with wise old Madison
And his crafty Federalist 10
Designed the separation of the powers
And his members may do so again*

*Or perhaps in Hamilton
Authored 60% of the federalist papers
Great advocate of centralization
(You've heard the rap of his capers)*

*So choose your house! And choose with pride!
It's not a major mystery
And perhaps you like they
Will make American history!*

DETAILS

House points are gained and earned at the discretion of the Professor, and include (but are not limited to) the core simulation, activity, and debate days in the class. We sort into our houses on the first day of class. Your house will be where you start discussion every day in class, who you participate in debates with, and where your earned points from simulations you participate in individually accumulate.

Policies

COURSE POLICIES **Etiquette:** Course participants must be courteous to the professor and fellow students. Attend class on time, listen to fellow students when they talk, and disagree (or agree) with others' arguments professionally. Keep cell phones silenced and out of sight.

Computation and Technology: Laptops are required to be closed and left out of sight. Alternate accommodations, if necessary, can be made in the case of documented necessity through New College's Student Disability Services office (SDS).²

Office Hours: I encourage you to stop by my office hours at any point if you have questions about the course, the readings, school, etc. In addition to formal office hours, I have an open-door policy: if the door is open, you are welcome to come in, so long as I am not facing an immediate deadline of some kind. (In other words, coming in minutes before class is usually

²Why is my technology policy so constrained? Because in this class, we trust science. And on this matter, science is clear: use of laptops and technology in classes tends to not just distract the user, but also peers next to them – even in lecture based classes (Sana et al., 2013; Fried, 2006). In seminar classes, the problem is worse, with laptops breaking the implicit social contract of the classroom space and hindering sustained reflection of the material. Why? Because humans, by nature, are bad at multitasking (yes, despite what you hear about its importance) and are prone to distraction by shiny things in the corner (Lee et al., 2011; Rosen et al., 2013). There is even reason to believe that long-hand writing and note taking improves comprehension and mental processing of material (Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014). To be present and engaged in a meaningful educational experience means placing yourself in the correct context for learning. Which, in turn, usually means keeping the computer off.

not a good idea.) If you want to be sure you can speak with me, setting up an appointment beforehand at jacklreilly.youcanbook.me is always a good idea.

E-mail: Students can generally expect a response to all e-mails within 24 hours, excepting weekends. Questions that require more than a couple sentences in response should usually be addressed in person. On the flip side, please send me all the weird and neat election-related tidbits you find.

A Note on Writing: Clear writing and argumentation is a critical element to success in this class. I strongly recommend exploring the options for writing (and revising!) assistance at the Writing Resource Center. You can schedule an appointment through the writing center here: <https://ncf.mywconline.com>

NEW COLLEGE
POLICY
STATEMENTS

Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a documented disability, may require special arrangements and/or accommodations, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note that instructors are NOT permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please visit Student Disability Services in HCL 3 and/or email disabilityservices@ncf.edu.

Religious Observance: No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time when s/he would normally be engaged in religious observance or on a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. Students are expected to notify their instructors if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with the policy, prior to the scheduled meeting.

Academic Integrity: Any suspected instance of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the College’s policy on academic dishonesty.

Class Schedule

OVERVIEW

Topics Outline (Subject to change)

W	TUESDAY	FRIDAY
1	Talk: Models and Science	Simulation: Collective Action
2	Simulation: Prisoner Dilemmas	Simulation: Tiebout Sorting Models
3	Talk: Madison’s Republic	Simulation: Principal-Agent Models*
4	Talk: Critique of the Republic	EXAM I: FOUNDATIONS
5	Talk: Participation & Resource Bias	Activity: Spatial Models of Voting
6	Talk: Public Opinion & Media	Talk: Models of Voting
7	Debate I: Citizen Competence	EXAM II: POLITICAL BEHAVIOR
B	FALL BREAK	
8	Talk: Party Theory	Talk: Pluralism
9	Talk: Factions Revisited	Debate II: Party Theory
10	Talk: The Electoral Connection	EXAM III: LINKAGE MECHANISMS
11	Talk: Collective Representation I	Activity: Pivotal Politics
12	Talk: Collective Representation II	THANKSGIVING
13	Debate III: Judicial Decisionmaking	EXAM IV: INSTITUTIONS
14	Debate IV: How Democratic is the American Constitution?	
F	FINALS WEEK	

Course Topics

1. Foundations

- Model thinking
 - collective action issues
 - principle agent problems
 - prisoner's dilemmas
- Public and Private Goods
- Madison's Republic, Factions, and Self-Interest
- The Constitution
- Federalism and Sorting Models

2. Political Behavior

- Citizen Participation
- Public Opinion
- Rational Abstention
- Elections
- Vote Choice

3. Linkage Mechanisms

- Media
- Political Parties
- Party Theory
- Pluralism
- Interest Groups

4. Political Institutions

- Micro-Representation
- Collective Representation
- Brick and Mortar Institutions
 - Congress
 - Presidency
 - Judiciary
 - Bureaucracy