

PSC 101

Introduction to American Politics Summer 2011 (Session JC)

Class Information:

- ⇒ **Instructor:** Nicholas P. Nicoletti
- ⇒ **Office:** 508 Park Hall
- ⇒ **Phone Number:** (716) 645-8445
- ⇒ **Email:** npn@buffalo.edu
- ⇒ **Class Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30 pm - 9:40 pm
- ⇒ **Room:** 210 Norton Hall
- ⇒ **Office Hours:** Mondays 5:00 pm - 6:15 pm *AND* Wednesdays 5:30 pm - 6:15 pm or
By Appointment

Course Description:

As noted by Magleby, Light and Nemacheck (2011) (the authors of your textbook), the U.S. Constitution has been a great experiment in self-government which began more than two centuries ago. The course is designed to explore the theory and practice of the American political system. We will cover the three government branches (Congress, the Courts, the President), federalism, political parties, groups in the electoral and governmental process, public policy making, and contemporary political problems. This course is intended to make you think logically about our government's institutions, and critically think about their consequences — both intended and unintended. The primary outcome of this class is to make students more sophisticated observers of American Politics. To accomplish this, we will explore a number of political science theories that help explain political behaviors and outcomes.

Course Expectations:

First, this is a *summer night class* which runs from 6:30 pm to 9:40 pm — over 3 full hours. YOU choose to enroll in a summer night class about politics. Naturally, we will have to cover as much material as the same class which is held two or three times a week during a regular length semester. This means that some weeks will require 90 plus pages of reading. I expect that *ALL* students will come to class each week having read the material assigned for that day. **Readings are due on the day they are listed in the syllabus AND you are required to bring the readings with you to class that day!**

Moreover, some of the readings are theoretically and analytically rigorous. Simply put, many of them are difficult and will require students to do more than skim through

the pages. Students are expected to go beyond the memorization of core concepts and vocabulary words; you will be expected to apply these concepts throughout the class, especially on the examinations.

While I do not take attendance, I expect that students participate in class. Participation is worth 10% of your grade and *simple attendance is not good enough*. You are required to *answer* and/or *ask* questions during this class. If you are someone that does not like to talk during class, you may want to reconsider your enrollment. **If you do not participate you will not be able to earn a major portion of your grade.**

Unexcused absences on exam day will result in a forfeiture of all points for that exam. Make-ups can be scheduled only for students who pre-excuse their absences (that means before the exam, **not after**). An absence is only excused if supported by documentation either from University personnel or your physician. **There are absolutely no make-ups for pop quizzes; if you miss class on a day that I give a quiz, you will lose the quiz points for that day — NO EXCEPTIONS.**

The research outline/presentation is due on Monday June 27, 2011. A **hard copy** of the outline must be submitted on the day it is due at the beginning of class (i.e. 6:30 pm). Moreover, students are required to submit a digital copy of the outline to the SafeAssign drop-box located under the *Assignments Tab* on UB Learns by 6:30 pm on June 27, 2011 (see below for more details on similarity detection software). *Once the SafeAssign drop-box closes, it will not be reopened.* **Late presentations will not be accepted.** More information on the research presentation can be found later in the syllabus.

I expect that the following classroom norms will be followed in my class. Please refrain from listening to mp3 players/all music devices, texting, instant messaging, facebooking, tweeting, or typing assignments for other courses during this class. Cell Phones should remain off at the start of class. Laptop computers are a privilege and may be used for note taking or reading digital copies of the textbook; this privilege may be revoked at my discretion at any time. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be respectful of their peers and various points of view. Discussion is encouraged but rude responses will not be tolerated. Finally, please refrain from holding private conversations with your peers during class; this behavior is distracting to other students and the overall classroom environment. If I become aware that you are violating any of these norms, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

I expect a lot from students in my class, so you ought to expect something from me. You can expect me to come to class prepared, enthusiastic, and open to questions at any time. You can expect me to always be available during my office hours and to answer emails within a 24 hour window. *If you are struggling with the material do not hesitate to see me!* I take my teaching responsibility seriously and I strive to be the best possible professor I can be. I will often ask for your feedback during the course and I take your input seriously.

Grading:

- * “Surprise” Quizzes on the Readings Due that Day: 10%
- * Midterm Exam: 25%
- * Final Exam: 25%
- * Team Research Presentation and Outline: 30% (20 points for the outline and 10 points for the presentation)
- * Participation: 10%

Each test consists of three parts. Part I is a set of multiple choice questions; Part II is a set of short answer/definition questions; and Part III is a set of long-response essay questions. The exams are not cumulative. The quizzes are in the “pop” form, so it is in your interest to read the material prior to coming to class. See below for more information on the Research Paper and Participation.

Grading Distribution:

- ✓ A = 94 and Above
- ✓ A- = 90 - 93
- ✓ B+ = 87 - 89
- ✓ B = 84 - 86
- ✓ B- = 80 - 83
- ✓ C+ = 76 - 79
- ✓ C = 70 - 75
- ✓ D = 60 - 69
- ✓ F = 0 - 59

Required Texts:

- ◇ Magleby, David B., Paul C. Light, and Christine L. Nemacheck. 2011. *Government by the People (2011 National Edition)*. New York, NY: Longman. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-82840-1.
- ◇ Serow, Ann Gostyn and Everett C. Ladd. 2011. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*. Baltimore, Maryland: Lanahan Publishers Inc. Fifth Edition. ISBN-13: 978-1-930398-16-0.
- ◇ Make sure to get the proper *editions* of these books, as the contents in the new editions are different from previous versions.
- ◇ The remaining readings are a mixture of scholarly articles and book chapters which will be posted on UB Learns. A “+” indicates that the reading is posted on UB Learns. The References section of this syllabus provides a list of readings for this class in the American Political Science Association (APSA) citation style.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating and plagiarism (using someone else's work or ideas without proper citation) will not be tolerated. The UB policy on plagiarism is available at: <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/plagiarism.html>. Cheating and/or plagiarism is a serious offense and can have severe consequences. Cell phones, PDAs, or electronic devices of any kind (calculators can be utilized if necessary) are banned from all tests and quizzes. Students using electronic devices during tests and quizzes will fail the assignment.

Similarity Detection Software:

To prevent and detect plagiarism, I will require students to use similarity detection software (e.g. SafeAssign) in this course. Textual similarity software compares submitted student text to a database of millions of previously published documents, including those on the public internet, a proprietary collection of published articles, as well as every student paper previously submitted to the detection software. When similarities between student text and an existing document are found, the software identifies those similarities for the instructor and/or student to review. Similarity alone is not evidence of academic misconduct, as such material may be correctly cited. This software may be used as an educational tool to assist students in learning how to properly cite resources, to decrease instances of academic misconduct, and/or to assist in the identification of acts of academic misconduct. The SafeAssign drop-box is located under the *Assignments Tab* on UB Learns.

Special Needs:

Any student who requires accommodations to complete the requirements and expectations of this course because of a disability is invited to make his or her needs known to the instructor and to the Disabilities Services Office, 25 Capen. Students with special needs should bring their requirements to my attention in the first week of classes. I will make every effort to assist students with special needs. Students dealing with stress-related problems should visit the Counseling Center, 120 Richmond Quad.

Participation:

Attendance is an important part of the college learning experience. I expect students to come to class prepared (having done the readings and assignments) and ready to participate in the form of answering and asking questions. While I will not take formal attendance, I will be keeping track of average participation rates. Participation is worth approximately 10% of your grade.

Course Schedule:

May 23, 2011:

⇒ Course Introduction and the Foundations of American Political Thought

- ★ Serow and Ladd (S&L), James Madison. (1787). "The Federalist No. 10", pp. 56-69. Essay can also be found online at: <http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/federalist/10.html>.†
- ★ S&L, James Madison & Alexander Hamilton. (1788). "The Federalist No. 51", 97-101 Essay can also be found free online at: <http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/federalist/51.html>.†
- ★ S&L, Alexander Hamilton. (1778). "The Federalist No. 78", pp. 311-315. Essay can also be found online at: <http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/federalist/78.html>.†

May 25, 2011:

⇒ Constitutional Principals/Design, and American Federalism

- ★ Magleby, Light, and Nemacheck (MLN), Chapter 1: Constitutional Democracy, pp. 2-15.
- ★ MNL, Chapter 2: Constitutional Foundations, pp. 16-41.
- ★ MLN, Chapter 3: American Federalism, pp. 76-101.
- ★ Madison, *Federalist Paper #39 and #46* (S&L pages 119-123).

May 30, 2011:

⇒ Memorial Day

- ★ NO CLASS, Memorial Day Observed.

June 1, 2011:

⇒ Public Opinion, Participation, and Voting and Campaigns and Elections

- ★ MLN, Chapter 8: Public Opinion, Participation, and Voting, pp. 212-239.
- ★ Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (S&L pages 419-424).
- ★ Cronin, *Direct Democracy* (S&L pages 425-432).
- ★ MLN, Chapter 9: Campaigns and Elections, pp. 240-273.
- ★ ANNOTATED LIST OF SOURCES FOR RESEARCH PRESENTATION DUE.

June 6, 2011:

⇒ Political Culture/Ideology, Interest Groups, and Political Parties

- * MNL, Chapter 4: Political Culture and Ideology, pp. 102-127.
- * Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in American* (S&L pages 3-6).
- * MNL, Chapter 6: Interest Groups, pp. 156-183.
- * MNL, Chapter 7: Political Parties, pp. 184-211.
- * Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainspring of American Politics* (S&L pages 543-548).

June 8, 2011:

⇒ Midterm Exam

- * **MIDTERM EXAMINATION.**

June 13, 2011:

⇒ The Presidency

- * MNL, Chapter 12: The Presidency, pp. 234-249.
- * Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (S&L pages 211-217).
- * Schlesinger, *The Imperial Presidency* (S&L pages 218-224).
- * Cronin and Genovese, *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency* (S&L pages 236-246).
- * Rimmerman, *The Rise of the Plebiscitary President* (S&L pages 247-255).

June 15, 2011:

⇒ Congress

- * MNL, Chapter 11: Congress, pp. 298-323.
- * Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (S&L pages 147-150).
- * Fenno, *Home Style* (S&L pages 151-156).
- * Binder, *Stalemate* (S&L pages 156-162).
- * Starobin, *A Time-Honored Tradition Lives On* (S&L pages 187-189).
- * Ellwood and Patashnik, *In Praise of Pork* (S&L pages 190-194).

June 20, 2011:

⇒ The Judiciary

- ★ MNL, Chapter 14: The Judiciary, pp. 374-397.
- ★ Rostow, *The Democratic Character of Judicial Review* (S&L pages 316-320).
- ★ O'Brien, *Storm Center* (S&L pages 291-296).
- ★ Yalof, *Pursuit of Justices* (S&L pages 302-308).

June 22, 2011:

⇒ Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- ★ MNL, Chapter 15: Civil Liberties, pp. 400-427.
- ★ MNL, Chapter 16: Civil Rights, pp. 428-455.
- ★ Kluger, *Simple Justice* (S&L pages 371-378).
- ★ Ogletree, *All Deliberate Speed* (S&L 378-387).

June 27, 2011:

⇒ Student Presentations

- ★ STUDENT TEAM PRESENTATIONS.

June 29, 2011:

⇒ Final Exam

- ★ FINAL EXAMINATION.

Team Research Presentation:

General Information:

Located on UB Learns, under the Course Documents Tab, is a list of theories/topics which have been developed within the subfield of American Politics. Teams of 3-4 students (depending on how many students enroll in the class) will research several questions regarding the theory they are assigned. Each group will be responsible for developing a 10 minute PowerPoint (or some other type of) presentation which will be presented to the class on **June 27, 2011**. Each team will also be responsible for handing in a 6-8 page *outline* of their presentation, which will be due at the beginning of class on June 27, 2010. **The outline should be a detailed, thorough, and fully cited version of the presentation.** The **Final Presentation Rubric** can be found under the Course Documents tab in UB Learns. This document explains exactly what I will be looking for in the outline/presentation.

Students will also complete an Individual/Peer assessment form for themselves and every other member of their group. The assessment form can be found under the Course Documents section in UB Learns. *Each student* is to submit a form at the beginning of class on June 27, 2011. These forms will be taken seriously by the instructor when grading each student's contribution to the group project. "Social Loafing" is unacceptable and each student is required to pull their weight in the group. If necessary (i.e. based on the peer evaluation forms) I will grade individuals differently from the rest of the group; this is unlikely to occur unless there is overwhelming evidence that a group member failed to do a proper amount of work. The evaluation forms are completely anonymous and will not be seen by the other members of each group.

Presentation Research Questions:

(1) Description of the Theory/Topic

In this section you should give a detailed description of the theory/topic you have been assigned. You should also try to find out which scholar(s) was the first (or if not the first an early contributor) to develop your assigned theory/topic. Most importantly, what does your theory argue (explain the theory or set of competing theories within your topic)? Here you should give a detailed description of your theory and/or a description of a set of competing theories within your topic.

(2) Theory Application

In this section you need to research how your theory (or competing theories) have been applied to Political Science. What specific phenomenon has your theory been used to explain? Has your theory (competing theories) been applied or extended into multiple topics? Integrate the application of the theory with material we learned throughout the semester.

(3) Empirical Evidence

How have your theory/theories have been tested? What evidence have these tests revealed? This section should discuss research which has tested your theory or set of competing theories. The section can discuss the ways in which the theory was tested, but should focus on the *results* the tests have revealed. What are the major findings from the political science research regarding your theory/topic?

(4) Theory Improvement

How can your theory/theories be improved? Discuss some interesting avenues of research that may have been overlooked or a new area of research that your theory (or competing theories) can be applied to. This section should not be overlooked; the group will need to critically think about what they have researched and try to suggest feasible improvements.

Due Date(s):

A list of 4 annotated sources for the team presentation should be submitted on **June 1, 2011**; this should be 2-3 pages and list 4 potential sources that you have gathered for your outline/presentation. Each citation should be accompanied by an *annotation* about a paragraph long. The annotation should give a complete description of the article's major points. This assignment is intended to get each group to seriously begin the research process early in the semester. **It will be worth 2 out of 25 points (8%) of the Final Presentation grade.**

A hard copy of your outline is due at the beginning of class (6:30 pm) on Monday June 27th. Late outlines will not be accepted. A digital copy **MUST** be submitted to the SafeAssign drop-box on UB Learns by 6:30 pm on Monday June 27th.

Citations:

All direct quotes, paraphrased text, and ideas must be cited in your paper. As a general rule, if you got an idea from somewhere, you should cite the source. I have given you several examples of the American Political Science Association Citation Style in this syllabus. The References section gives examples of how to cite books and journal articles. You may also use footnotes or endnotes, but your paper must follow a professional citation style (APSA, APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). Instructions on how to use these styles can be found at the University Library web-site at: http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/tutorials/citing_stylemanual.html or here at <http://dept.lamar.edu/polisci/DRURY/drury.html>.

Your outline should cite 10 different sources. **At least 8 sources must be from peer-reviewed academic journals or scholarly books.** Other sources can include relevant newspaper articles and popular non-fiction books; although it is highly recommended that the group stick with scholarly journal articles. **Wikipedia is not an OK citation, DO NOT CITE Wiki in you bibliography!** Moreover, do not use information from *Wikipedia* and fail to cite it; it will become apparent that you used this source when I look at your SafeAssign report. Citing a Wiki will result in loss of points on this assignment. *Wikipedia* is an OK place to look for ideas, but you should follow up with original sources.

Outline Format:

All outlines must follow these strict formatting guidelines. Your grade will be impacted if you do not follow these standards.

- ✓ No more than 8 double spaced pages of text (not including your endnotes or reference sheet).
- ✓ Times New Roman, 12 Point Font.
- ✓ 1 inch margins top and bottom.
- ✓ 1 inch margins left and right.

✓ Fully paginated.

The outline should also be broken up into each section listed above, just like this syllabus is broken-up into sections. In addition, all outlines should be edited for appropriate spelling and grammar. Formatting, grammar, and spelling count toward your grade.

References

Magleby, David B., Paul C. Light and Christine L. Nemacheck. 2011. *Government By The People (2011 National Edition)*. New York, NY: Longman.

Serow, Ann G. and Everett C. Ladd. 2011. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity (Fifth Edition)*. Baltimore, Maryland: Lanahan Publishers Inc.