

# Liberty and Equality

POSC 122 – Spring 2017  
Carleton College  
(MW 8:30-9:40 a.m. & F 8:30-9:30)  
Willis 204

---

**Instructor:** Melanie Freeze

**Phone:** 507-222-5850

**Email:** [mfreeze@carleton.edu](mailto:mfreeze@carleton.edu)

**Office:** 415 Willis Hall

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 1:15-3 pm or by appt.

## Course Description

This course introduces the basic structures, processes, and conflicts of the American system of government. First, we will talk about the big ideas and issues for which consensus and disagreement exist in the current U.S. political landscape. After we have set the stage, we will turn to the founding of the nation to better understand our governmental institutions, identity as a nation, and some of the country's most core and long-lasting conflicts. We will explore the key federal institutions that constrain and shape political processes. Following this section, the course shifts its focus from elites and institutions to citizens and the ways in which mass preferences are transmitted to government actors to produce actual policy. We will examine the development of rules that protect individual citizens from the government (civil liberties) and from the majority (civil rights). What opinions, characteristics, and behaviors of citizens are relevant to politics? We will grapple with the questions of whether or not fair and full democratic representation of citizens exists and if it is even possible? Finally, the last section examines interest groups and the policy outputs of the American political process. Ultimately the goal of this course is to give you the basic tools needed so you will be better able to analyze, interpret, and potentially shape political events and governmental processes.

## Notes

You are expected to read the entire syllabus at the beginning of the term.

Please be aware that this syllabus contains hyperlinks. While you are encouraged to print out a hardcopy to read and reference through the term, you will also want to have an electronic version to easily access all external websites and resources.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Identify and understand the structure and processes of federal U.S. government institutions;
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system;
- Understand some of the foundational theories of political institutions and behaviors;
- Critically analyze political inputs (public opinion, elections, etc.) and outputs (policy, news reports, etc.).

## Class Structure and Expectations

This term, each class will be highly structured, yet hopefully in a way that will give a high degree of involvement to everyone in the class. I do NOT want this class to be one where the professor stands in the front of the room next to a powerpoint presentation while students remain passive observers. As a result, each class will roughly follow the following format:

- Current Events Discussion (10 minutes) (not on Fridays)
- Reading Quiz and Feedback (10 minutes)
- Lecture (35 minutes)
- Class Discussion (15 minutes)

The reading quiz is discussed in more detail below, but the main goal of this exercise is to ensure you have the basic terminology and conceptual building blocks needed to take the topic to a higher level during class discussion. Current events discussions will be student-led and not necessarily connected to the topic of the day but should be designed to help us think more critically about the world around us. Lectures will be varied in design: they may involve some sort of activity, delve deeper into a concept, introduce ideas or cutting edge research not found in your readings, or present a particular thesis regarding the broad topic of the day. Finally, during class discussions, I, as the professor, will take a step back and let you as a class take charge. Discussions can draw on the discussion questions provided for each lecture topic or they can be based on questions that arise naturally in conversation. Two “devil’s advocates” will be assigned to help challenge our assumptions, perceptions, and question consensus/authority during these discussion periods.

To facilitate insightful and interesting discussions, you are required to complete the assigned readings *before* each class and contribute to class discussions. I also encourage you to pay attention to a quality daily newspaper (recommended papers include *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Hill*, and *The Wall Street Journal*).

## Required Readings

- Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabahere. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., brief thirteenth edition edition, 2015. (henceforth *Power and Purpose*)

## Grading

Note that most of your assignments will be submitted electronically via Moodle. It is your responsibility to make sure the file is not corrupted (you should be able to download and view the file after you upload it to Moodle). Corrupted files will be treated as though they are late until they are correctly uploaded. Your grade will be based on the following:

Discussion and Participation	10%	
Overall Participation	2%	
Current Events Discussion Leader	3%	(Due: Same Day)
Devil's Advocate Discussion and Response Paper	15%	(Due: One Week Later)
Enrichment Activities	2%	(TBA)
Reading Quizzes	3%	(Each Class)
Analytical Paper	15%	(Due: May 3)
Policy Group Project	10%	(Due: May 26)
Midterm	25%	(Apr. 19)
Final	25%	(June 5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### Discussion and Participation 10%

#### Overall Participation 2%

The overall participation grades will be determined by the *quality*, not just quantity, of comments/questions in class discussion.

#### Current Events Discussion Leader 3%

**DUE: 11:59 THE EVENING** of the day you were assigned to be the Current Events Discussion Leader

**SUBMISSION FORMAT: Submit to Moodle (if you are using .pages, please convert to .pdf before submitting)**

You will be assigned as a current events discussion leader for one of the lectures. Ten minutes of each class will be reserved for class discussion of a current event (Usually two people present—so you will have about 5 minutes each). You will be responsible for picking one current event to talk about, reading up on the event, briefly summarizing the event verbally in class, and then posing a discussion question for the class to help us delve into the implications of the event or connected to some concept addressed in readings or lecture.

After you have served as discussion leader, you must submit on Moodle by 11:59 p.m. **THAT SAME EVENING** a document with the title/links to at least one article/media regarding the current event you chose and the discussion question you presented in class.

#### Grading Criteria

1. Kept within 10 minute time limit.
2. Summary of event was brief and helped quickly bring everyone on board.

3. Discussion question pushed us to a higher level of critical thinking, conceptual application, etc.
4. Was engaging and enthused in presentation to class.

### **Devil's Advocate Discussion and Response Paper 15%**

**DUE: 11:59 ONE WEEK after you were assigned to the Devil's Advocate role**

**SUBMISSION FORMAT: Submit to Moodle (if you are using .pages, please convert to .pdf before submitting)**

For one class in the term, you and another individual will be assigned to play the role of “devil’s advocate.” This assignment is structured to achieve three goals. First, because the individuals serving as the “Devil’s Advocate” also act as discussion leaders, more voices are given the chance to be heard (not just the individuals who feel comfortable talking in group settings). Second, while there are a wide variety of experiences and perspectives at Carleton, it is sometimes difficult to get a wide range of opinions expressed in group settings. This exercise is designed to raise opinions and perspectives that might not naturally be voiced. Finally, this experience is designed to help you and others think more **critically** about the materials covered in this course. As the “devil’s advocate” you are not only supposed to challenge the dominant (in class and/or society) opinion regarding issues, but also the authority figures (professor/academics/media), the validity/reliability of the data presented, and assumptions made in class or in discussion. Your role is to keep us on our toes! While asking hard questions or pushing us to think about things from another angle is your main job, you should also try to accurately represent perspectives that may not be your own. As a result, you should prepare for this role by exploring news media you might not normally read, checking out opinion polls, or doing the readings with the aim of seeing the “other” side for the topic corresponding to your assigned day. Finally, as the “devil’s advocate,” you will be required to wear a pair of shiny red devil horns in class that day. The purpose of this is to help everyone easily identify the discussion leaders and perhaps remind other students that you may be saying things you do not personally agree with to help us have a more productive discussion.

Write a 2-4 page double-spaced paper regarding one topic related to the lecture of the day and briefly address the different sides of the opinion/claims/research. Due by 11:59 pm ONE WEEK after you were assigned to the Devil’s Advocate role. Do NOT use the paper to summarize the class discussion. The paper should be an independent and careful consideration of at least two different perspectives regarding that day’s topic (it does not need to be exactly what was discussed in class).

#### **Grading Criteria**

1. Content (60%): Draws on empirically grounded and logical claims (cite polls and news articles)
2. Balance (10%): Provides a balanced description of at least two competing opinions/perspectives. Does not belittle or pass judgement on either perspective.
3. Style (10%): Clear structure. Can be broken into short unconnected sections if needed. Clean in terms of grammar and spelling. Consistent citation style (footnote with links is acceptable).

4. In-Class Discussion (20%): Comments in class were insightful and germane to the discussion. Devil advocate's comments stimulated more discussion.

### **Enrichment Activities 2%**

As announced. For the most part, these activities are graded purely on participation, not content, as they are designed to make lectures more interesting and enjoyable.

### **Reading Quizzes 3%**

To ensure you have mastered the building block concepts required for insightful and critical class sessions, short reading quizzes covering the materials in your reading will be conducted after the current events portion of each lecture. The quizzes will be self-graded in class (feedback will be presented immediately after the quiz) and then turned in to help you effectively encode the basic terms and ideas. Bring a different colored pen to class. The two lowest scores will be dropped.

### **Analytical Paper 15%**

**DUE: Wednesday, May 3 at at 11:59 p.m.**

**SUBMISSION FORMAT: Submit to Moodle (if you are using .pages, please convert to .pdf before submitting)**

*Your paper should draw on specific examples, be thoughtful, logical, and concise. You should have a clear thesis that you then support in the following paper. You must address each of the questions asked. Papers should be 6-7 pages long, double-spaced, using Times New Roman 12 point font, and the margins should be 1-inch. You are encouraged to draw on other readings or web-based resources, but you must cite any ideas or materials that are not your own. You must clearly cite your sources using the American Political Science Association citation style (chicago/turabian). For more information see <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>*

Institutions are defined by Douglass North in *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performances* as “the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction.” From this perspective, political institutions can be thought of as rules of the game. And as anyone who has played Calvinball knows, rules have the ability to shape outcomes. For this paper you will consider the U.S. Constitution from the perspective that rules can shape outcomes.

- Select one current provision in the U.S. Constitution that you think should be reformed (NOT THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE). Or think of a new amendment that should be added to the Constitution.
- Why would you change/add the rule and what specific changes would you make? What is the motivating problem?
- How could this reform be brought about? What is the most likely path this constitutional alteration would follow?
- What are the possible implications if this reform was made to the Constitution? (For example, would it change the balance of power, leader to a democratic expansion, etc?)

### **Grading Criteria**

1. Content (70%)
  - Thesis makes sense, is focused, easily found, accurately voices main idea of project
  - Demonstrates critical thinking
  - Addresses all questions
    - (a) Select Constitutional provision to reform/add
    - (b) Why would you change rule?
    - (c) How could this reform be brought about?
    - (d) What are the possible implications of the reform?
  - Supports claims with logical and relevant evidence
  - Clearly defines terms and concepts
2. Structure and Style (30%)
  - Strong in terms of grammar and spelling
  - Clear, logical organization and transitions
  - Engages reader

### **Policy Group Project 10%**

**DUE: Friday, May 26 at 8:30 a.m.**

**SUBMISSION FORMAT: Powerpoint slides submitted on Moodle (may want to convert to pdf to ensure formatting).**

In this project, you will assume the role of academic expert/policy advisor. You will identify a problem, conduct research, and then draft a policy recommendation for a U.S. Senator (you need to select a specific Senator that you think has the most power and influence in this issue area) that is based on political science research. Then you will present this policy recommendation to the class as a group.

#### **Grading Criteria**

1. (15%) - Identification of problem based in concrete evidence to justify claim that this is indeed a problem that can be addressed by federal-level legislation (news reports, opinions, statistics). Identifies a critical decision-maker in Senate and provides logic for why your presentation should be directed toward this individual.
2. Academic sources (15%)- Main point accurately and succinctly described. Logically connected to recommendation. One article per group member.
3. Slides (15%)- informative, visually pleasing, not too crowded with text (put detailed notes in note section). Cite sources.
4. Presentation (25%) - engaging, included a good hook. Each group member is equally involved in the presentation.
5. Content (30%)- Recommendation realistic, based on academic research, grounded in research of the local situation/problems.

## Midterm Exam 25%

**DATE: Wednesday, April 19 from 8:30-9:40**

The midterm exam will be held IN CLASS on Wednesday, April 19 and will cover materials covered up to (and including) the Apr. 17 lecture (Judicial Branch). The exam will consist of identifications (define and state significance of terms provided), short answers, and an essay. You are allowed to bring 1 sheet of paper with notes (8.5 x 11, front and back).

## Final Exam 25%

**DATE: Monday, June 5 from 12:00-2:30**

The final exam will be held in Willis 204 (our classroom) on Monday, June 5 from 12:00-2:30 and will cover materials covered the second half (Apr. 21- May 24 lectures) of the course (not comprehensive). The exam will consist of identifications (define and state significance of terms provided), short answers, and an essay. The exam will be CLOSED BOOK and CLOSED NOTES.

## Course Policies

### Grading Policies

I will assign grades using the following scale : A (93.33), A- (90), B+ (86.67), B (83.33), B- (80), C+ (76.67), C (73.33), C- (70), D+ (66.67), D(63.33) D- (60) F (Below 60). I do not round your final grade up or down (so if you receive a 93.327, you will receive an A- for a final grade).

Additional Grading Policies:

1. I will not receive grade complaints if more than one week has passed after the assignment has been returned to you. Before I review your grade you must first:
  - Wait 24 hours.
  - Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
  - Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not to vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”

The second grade, whether higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.

2. Late assignments are not tolerated. Your grade will be lowered 5 percentage points for each day it is late. That is if the assignment is due on Tuesday at 8:20 am and you turn it in sometime between 8:20 am and Wednesday 8:20 am, the highest grade you can achieve is 95.
3. The ONLY acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are family emergencies or illnesses. However, in these cases, I will arrange to give you extra time ONLY if you communicate with me **BEFORE** the assignment is due and you provide **DOCUMENTATION** of the circumstance.

## Electronics in Class Policy

If possible, I would like you to bring your own laptop (or mobile device) to class as we will often need to access the Internet for in-class activities. However, I expect you to be responsible in your use of electronic equipment: please avoid visiting social networking sites, or otherwise browsing the internet on sites unrelated to the course. I would also recommend you read through the discussion (including comments), *Computers in the Classroom*, to think about the possible pros and cons of using computers in a classroom setting. Individuals who abuse this privilege will find their participation grade reduced. Please turn off all cell phones during class.

## Academic Honesty

You are expected to abide by fundamental standards of academic honesty. A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>. All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources!

## Acknowledgements

Several of the discussion questions listed below in the Course Schedule were drawn/modified from Douglas B. Harris's Instructor's Manual for the Brief Twelfth Edition of *American Government: Power & Purpose*.

## Disability-Related Accommodations

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Burton Hall 03) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, sensory, or physical), please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, by calling 507-222-5250 or sending an email to [cdallager@carleton.edu](mailto:cdallager@carleton.edu) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

## Course Schedule

Readings should be completed BEFORE the lecture.

### WEEK 1

#### Lecture 1 (March 27): Popping the Bubble: Introduction and Logistics

##### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the last political discussion you had? With whom, where, about what?
- How would you describe the overall political landscape/climate at Carleton? (ideology, participation, interest, salient issues, partisanship, nature and tone of deliberation)

- What are the pros and cons of like-minded communities. Should political bubbles be popped?
- What is a belief you hold with which many people disagree?
- What are the consequences of taking political science classes? What do you hope to gain from this class?

## Lecture 2 (March 29): Ties that Bind: Political Culture

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 1
- Louis Hartz, Rogers M. Smith, and Daniel J. Elazar. Political culture. In David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, editors, *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, chapter 1, pages 3–31. W.W. Norton & Company, 5th edition, 2008.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Should English be a required language? Should there be efforts to “Americanize” immigrants?

## Lecture 3 (March 31): All the Divides Us: Ideology and Polarization

### READINGS

- Melanie Freeze and Jacob M. Montgomery. Static stability and evolving constraint: Preference stability and ideological structure in the mass public. *American Politics Research*, 44:415–447, 2016.
- polarization overview article here

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Is political polarization good or bad for 1) governing productivity, 2) representation, 3) inter-personal relations, 4) other? Can Democrats and Republicans have productive/successful conversations in the current political climate?

## WEEK 2

## Lecture 4 (April 3): “We Have to Start Somewhere”: The Founding and Constitution

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 2
- *Power and Purpose*: APPENDIX (pp. A3-A33)
- Laurence H. Tribe and Michael C. Dorf. How not to read the constitution. In Peter Woll, editor, *American Government: Readings and Cases*. Longman, New York, 2012.

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Consider this statement made by Barack Obama regarding the Constitution ([WEBEZ Radio Sept. 2001](#)): “I think it is an imperfect document, and I think it is a document that reflects some deep flaws in American culture, the Colonial culture nascent at that time... I think we can say that the Constitution reflected an enormous blind spot in this culture that carries on until this day, and that the Framers had that same blind spot. I don’t think the two views are contradictory, to say that it was a remarkable political document that paved the way for where we are now, and to say that it also reflected the fundamental flaw of this country that continues to this day.” Discuss this comment. What fundamental flaw(s) is Obama talking about? Is the Constitution, as currently amended, still fundamentally flawed today?

## Lecture 5 (April 5): We are Not Angels: Federalism and Separation of Powers

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 3
- *Power and Purpose*: APPENDIX (pp. A34-A42)
- Goldberg, Jonah. 2016. “Trump: An Opportunity for Federalism.” *National Review*: <https://goo.gl/WdY5Tw>
- (Browse) Fiscal Federalism Initiative - The Pew Charitable Trust: <https://goo.gl/qHIFm>

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Discuss Goldberg’s (*National Review* article) claim that “People on the ground in their own communities have a better understanding of how they want to live and what they want from government. Local politicians are easier to hold accountable, and culture-war arguments aren’t abstractions when the combatants have to look each other in the eye.” Is local governance always better?

## Lecture 6 (April 7): Sausage Making: Congress pt I

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 5
- Skim: David R. Mayhew. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1974.
- To help you read the above more efficiently first read quick summary of Mayhew (1974) at: [http://wikisum.com/w/Mayhew:\\_Congress](http://wikisum.com/w/Mayhew:_Congress)

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Consider the congressional representation styles of delegates and trustees. Members of Congress adopting the *delegate* style of representation follow closely what their constituents want and act accordingly. Members of Congress who conceive of themselves as *trustees* frequently use their own judgment on an issue regardless of what their constituents want. Which style of representation do you prefer? Are there circumstances or certain issue areas where one style is more appropriate than the other? What are the potential negative consequences of the use of either a strict delegate style or a strict trustee approach? Even if a member of Congress favors the delegate style of representation, how may other factors (staff members, interest groups, the president, and professional policy researchers) influence the decision making-process?
- Is it important to have the legislative body represent the nation demographically (substantive versus descriptive representation)?

## WEEK 3

## Lecture 7 (April 10): Sausage Making: Congress pt II

### READINGS

- Laura Blessing. Practice and theory: How experiencing the political process can inform scholarship. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 48:671–673, 2015.
- Paulina S. Rippere. Sensemaking in the Senate: A congressional fellow’s perspective of life on the Hill. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 49:380–382, 2016.
- Strokoff, Sandra. “How Our Laws Are Made: A Ghost Writer’s View” at: <https://goo.gl/MSUZYw>

- 115th Congress Profile: <https://goo.gl/fUHP7O>
- 2017 House Calendar: <https://goo.gl/4dk4z6>

#### IN-CLASS ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY

### Lecture 8 (April 12): The Presidency

#### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 6
- “Executive Orders: SNL” at <https://youtu.be/JUDSeb2zHQ0>

#### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Should the Electoral College be abolished? What are some of the arguments/claims of who generally wins and loses under the Electoral College system? If the Electoral system was abolished, what would you propose as the replacement?

### Lecture 9 (April 14): Red Tape and Drift: The Executive Branch

#### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 7
- “Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness.” *U.S. Government Accountability Office* at: <http://www.gao.gov/duplication/overview>

#### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- What might be gained and what might be lost by privatizing education policy, trash removal, criminal incarceration, or national defense?

## WEEK 4

### Lecture 10 (April 17): Judicial Branch/Midterm Review

#### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 8
- Browse: <https://www.supremecourt.gov/>
- “The Supreme Court: A Winning Issue in the Presidential Campaign?” *NPR* at: <https://goo.gl/Vl7Yuf>

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Debates continue regarding what constitutes an appropriate role for the judiciary. Some argue that courts have become too powerful and that judges “legislate from the bench.” What does it mean for a court to be activist? What does it mean for a court to show judicial restraint? Although conservatives had long complained about the activism of liberal justices and judges, in recent years conservative judges and justices have been likely to overturn precedents and question the power of elected institutions of government. When is judicial activism appropriate?

## Lecture 11 (April 19): MIDTERM

## Lecture 12 (April 21): Freedom From Government: Civil Liberties

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 4 (pp. 84-105)
- *Power and Purpose*: Bill of Rights (pp. A24-A25)
- “Should There be Limits on Freedom of Speech?” *PBS* at: <https://goo.gl/loDxcA>
- (especially the Q&A section) Carleton College Convocation: Greg Lukianoff at <https://goo.gl/HzeIEo>

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Should universities have the right to ban extreme speakers from campus? Should colleges prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus?
- What are the pros and cons of safe spaces on campus?
- Are norms of civility merely ways to suppress speech through societal norms? Is being polite a restriction of individuals’ right to free speech?

## WEEK 5

## Lecture 13 (April 24): Freedom From Majority: Civil Rights

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 4 (pp. 105-129)

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Consider the Black Lives Matter social movement. How is this similar and different from the civil rights movement of the 1960s? What are the pros and cons of the current BLM structure in terms of producing desired outcomes?

## Lecture 14 (April 26): Difficult Discussions

### READINGS

- “Research says there are ways to reduce racial bias. Calling people racist isn’t one of them.” *Vox* at: <https://goo.gl/ZXWB7P>
- Lilach Nir. Disagreement in political discussion. In Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. Published online, 2014. doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.013.013.

## Lecture 15 (April 28): The Voice of the People: Public Opinion

### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 9 (pp. 274-294)

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- How malleable is public opinion? Can elites strategically shape public opinion? Do presidential campaigns produce “enlightened”, “silenced”, or “biased” public opinion? Should there be limits on particular types of campaigning?

## WEEK 6

### NO LECTURE (May 1): MIDTERM BREAK

#### Lecture 16 (May 3): Forum, Fount, Filter, or Fire alarm? The Media

##### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 9 (pp. 294- 311)
- S. Robert Lichter. Theories of media bias. In Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. Published online, 2014. doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.001.0001.

##### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Is “media bias” a serious problem for democracy in the contemporary United States?

#### Lecture 17 (May 4): Whose Voices? Political Participation

##### READINGS

- Yeojin Kim and Hyoungkoo Khang. Revisiting civic voluntarism predictors of college students’ political participation in the context of social media. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 36:114–121, 2014.

##### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- A true representative democracy is one where elected officials are responsive to public opinion and wishes and 2) all voices contribute equally to that public opinion. However, this ideal is obviously one that is difficult to achieve. How close to the mark are we in the U.S.? Does there need to be an expansion of political participation in the United States. Why or why not? What are the pros and cons of increasing political participation?

## WEEK 7

#### Lecture 18 (May 8): Focal Point of Democracy: Elections

##### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 10
- Gelman, Andrew. 2016. “19 Lessons for Political Scientists from the 2016 Election.” *Slate* at: <https://goo.gl/yIR716>

##### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The costs of elections has increased considerably in recent years. In order to compete, politicians must raise vast amounts of money. Does the process of raising money have an impact on the behaviors of politicians? Are politicians bought and paid for? Is there a way to address the inequities of the campaign finance system without trampling on the free speech rights of campaign donors?

#### Lecture 19 (May 10): Not all Fun and Games: Political Parties

##### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 11

##### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Some political scientists claim that political parties are essential to modern democracy. What might modern democratic government look like without political parties? Are they, in fact, essential for the functioning of democratic government? What roles and functions do parties perform? How might contemporary political parties be reformed to perform these functions better?

### **Lecture 20 (May 12): NO CLASS**

TBA Activity

## **WEEK 8**

### **Lecture 21 (May 15): “All Politics is Local”: Local Politics**

#### READINGS

- Melissa J. Marschall. The study of local elections in American politics. In Jan E. Leighley, editor, *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2010.
- James G. Gimple and Iris S. Hui. Seeking political compatible neighbors? the role of neighborhood partisan composition in residential sorting. *Political Geography*, 48:130–142
- Paul G. Lewis. Size and local democracy: Scale effects in city politics. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, January:107–109, 2011.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can you become more involved in local politics? What are the advantages and disadvantages of local political participation?

### **Lecture 22 (May 17): Guest Speakers**

NO READINGS

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Before class, submit a list of questions you would be interested in discussing with the guest speakers.

### **Lecture 23 (May 19): Organization Matters: Interest Groups**

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 12
- Ideological Ranking of Think-tanks: <https://goo.gl/J2cKux>

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do interest groups have too much power in American politics? Discuss interest group involvement in elections, lobbying legislators and executive-branch officials, and suing and submitting amicus briefs in the judicial process. Does interest group involvement in politics (particularly in campaigns) improve democratic processes or impede them?

## **WEEK 9**

### **Lecture 24 (May 22): The End Goal: Policy Domestic**

#### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 13

- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/dpc>

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Opponents of welfare programs argue that welfare programs actually hurt the poor by creating a cycle of dependency and a permanent underclass in society. How might welfare programs actually hurt the groups and individuals that they intend to help? Given the functions welfare and “poor support” generally perform in society, what alternatives exist? Is there a way of providing support without incurring unintended negative consequences?

### **Lecture 25 (May 24): The End Goal: Policy Foreign**

#### READINGS

- *Power and Purpose*: Chapter 14

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In an era of increasing globalization, the United States has benefited from increased international trade, the increased exchange of information throughout the world, and its leadership in an ever-expanding world community. Still, globalization is controversial in American politics. Amid the advantages of globalization, are there costs for the United States? What are those costs? How should domestic political concerns affect foreign-policy decisions?

### **Lecture 26 (May 26): Local Politics Group Presentations**

#### **WEEK 10**

### **Lecture 27 (May 29): Local Politics Group Presentations**

### **Lecture 28 (May. 31): Final Review**