

POLS 101 (Section 2): American Politics and Public Policy Occidental College

Updated October 24, 2022

Fall Semester, 2022
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
1:55-2:50 PM
Room: Johnson 203

Instructor: Dr. Isaac Hale (he/him)
Email: halei@oxy.edu
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 3:00 – 4:00 PM
Office: Johnson Hall 308

Class Discord Invite URL: <https://discord.gg/P4WX5NPjBa>

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of public policy, government, and politics in the United States. Throughout the semester, we will explore the founding of American government, the structures of our political system, the institutions that comprise government in the United States, contemporary public policy issues, and the political behavior of American citizens, interest groups, and political parties.

This introduction course cannot cover every facet of the entire subfield of American Politics – that is simply too much to ask in a single semester. If this class piques your interest, you are highly encouraged to seek out additional upper division American Politics courses which will provide more detailed explorations of specific topics in the sub-field. Instead, this class will attempt to provide a broad overview of the main concepts and research areas that dominate American Politics.

This class seeks to address a core question: does the American political system embody the ideals of a representative democracy? Our exploration of this inquiry will lead us to investigate how **citizen behavior** and **political institutions** perform in the context of American government. We will begin the course by observing how James Madison's "republic" provides a theoretical underpinning for democratic representation in the American political system. Next, we will focus on how individual citizens form political attitudes and make political choices. Emphasis will be placed on how these actual processes do or do not comport with the Madisonian framework. Finally, we will examine American political institutions, including political parties, electoral systems, the presidency, Congress, and the judiciary. We will consider how each of these institutions does or does not fit into Madison's ideal democratic framework and assess the health of each institution in the context of our modern democracy.

Participation will be a large portion of your grade, and you cannot expect to succeed without reading all the assigned material and coming to class. With that being said, this is an introduction course, and there is no expectation that you have taken any previous political science courses. Do not be shy to speak up, even if you are not certain about something. There is no penalty for engaging in debate or questioning what I am telling you – in fact both are heavily encouraged!

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will make this a challenging semester for all of us. This class will be my first priority, but I do not expect it to be yours. If you or your family are sick or struggling, let me know – I can help make sure that you succeed in this class anyways. In addition, I have taken several steps to make this course as engaging and accessible as possible. There will be no final exam for this course. Instead, the course will have brief assignments throughout the semester and a final paper. This will help ensure that students face less pressure and that each graded assignment is worth less of the total grade.

One final note – this course is meant to be fun! While the material in this class will take a broad perspective on American politics, our discussions should be extremely relevant to current political events. If there is something happening in the news that is relevant to our class, I will be sure to allocate time to discuss it. Major legislation, elections, scandals, news stories, and policy debates are all fair game!

Course Objectives

The student learning outcomes for this course are as follows:

- Gain a nuanced understanding of the Madisonian design of national American institutions and assess whether modern institutions comport with this ideal
- Engage with advanced models of policymaking
- Acquire tools to assess the quality of representation in the United States
- Explore the origins and evolution of the two-party system
- Interrogate the quality of American democracy, both historically and in the present day
- Learn about potential reforms to American political institutions, and how such reforms might affect political outcomes
- Apply knowledge from the class to contemporary political events, including the 2022 midterm
- Produce a final paper that demonstrates a mastery of the topics covered in this course

Textbook

There is one required text for this course. The first edition is out of date (American politics have changed dramatically since 1989!), so please make sure you get the second edition.

- Stone, Walter J., and James A. McCann. 2021. *Republic at Risk: An Introduction to American Politics*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

You may access all other readings through Moodle portal for this class or via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

Core Program Requirements

POLS 101 fulfills a U.S. Diversity (CPUD) core program requirement.

Class Expectations

Credit Hour Policy

POLS 101 is a 4-unit course. On average, you should expect to spend at least twelve (12) hours a week (including in-class time) on this course.

Online Access

All readings and documents for this course (except the textbook) can be accessed through the Moodle website or via hyperlinks in the syllabus schedule. Messages will be sent by me via Moodle, so make sure you have email notifications for Moodle messages activated.

Email

I welcome questions and comments by email. When you email me, you should compose your email as you would any piece of professional correspondence. I will respond to your emails as quickly as possible, but please do not expect a quick response to email sent on weekends or after 5pm on any day.

Lecture Slides

Slides will be used in class on most days. Slides will be posted to Moodle following the class session.

Class Discord

There is a Discord channel for this class. Participation is not required and will not affect your grade. You may use it to ask me questions, chat about the class, talk politics, and socialize. While you are encouraged to discuss class material with each other, please keep in mind that you are expected to complete your assignments individually. You may join using the following link: <https://discord.gg/P4WX5NPjBa>

Desk Name Tag (yes, this is required)

Though this class will have plenty of lectures, I also intend for discussion to feature prominently. Toward that aim, I ask that you place a name tag on the desk in front of you in class each day. Although attendance will not be taken every day, showing up to class with your desk name tag will greatly affect your participation grade. The best way to make this name tag is to take an 8½ x 11-inch piece of construction paper or lightweight cardboard, fold it in half lengthwise (so it's now 4¼ x 11 inches), and write your name on one side so that your name is upright when you put the folded piece of paper like a tent on the desk in front of you. Please write your full name (**FIRST AND LAST**—using whatever name you prefer to be called as your first name) in **LARGE, VERY DARK, BOLD** letters. I will bring nametag supplies on the first day of class.

Laptops and Other Electronics

[Numerous studies confirm that](#) students who take notes by hand retain more information over time and that laptop bans improve student engagement in smaller classes. It is also far less distracting to others when there is not constant typing and visual distraction going on during a lecture/discussion. As such, laptops and phones are not allowed in class.

If you have a documented learning disability that is helped by typing your notes, feel free to talk with me and I will be happy to consider an exception. Furthermore, if you have a very compelling reason why you strongly prefer to take notes during lecture with a laptop, you may write me an email letting me know, and we can discuss the matter individually. Any laptops approved for use in-class must not be used for web surfing during class.

You may bring an e-reader, tablet, or another “lie-flat” device to access readings in class. You may not use it for tasks such as surfing the web or email. You may of course bring printouts of the readings to class if you so choose instead.

Finally, please silence and put away your phones. If I see you texting, I will feel no shame about asking you to put your phone away. If there is an emergency, please step out of the classroom to deal with your phone.

Grading

Grading for this course will be calculated as follows:

Response Papers (best 10 out of 12)	60%
Analytic Essay	30%
<u>Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total:	100%

The final letter grade will be assigned according to the standard table:

93-100: A	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+
90-92: A-	83-86: B	73-76: C	60-66: D
	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	00-59: F

If you are 0.5 points or less from the next letter grade at the end of the course, the grade submitted to the registrar will be rounded up to the next letter grade. You will not be able to see this rounding on Moodle.

All graded items listed above are detailed in the sections that follow.

Response Papers

There are no exams in this class. However, 60% of your grade will be determined by **twelve (12) short** weekly response papers. The response papers are a means for you to engage on a deeper level with the (often complex!) articles and chapters we are reading for class.

There will be a response paper every week EXCEPT:

- No response paper week 1
- No response paper week 13, Thanksgiving week
- No response paper week 15, the last week of class

Each response paper will be short (generally around a page), though the exact length will vary from paper to paper. Each one should take you no more than an hour or two to complete.

Since you may miss or drop two response papers, no make-up papers will be offered. For the same reason there is no need to inform me if you are unable to submit a response paper (or decide not to). All response papers will be graded out of 10 points. Each paper (not including the two dropped papers) will be worth 6% of your final grade.

Prompts will be posted to Moodle on Wednesdays. You will have four days to complete each response paper, meaning submissions will close at 11:59 PM each Sunday.

- Due to Fall Break, the response paper following Week 6 will instead be due at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, October 11th

Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double-spacing. All response papers will receive in-text comments from me on Moodle. You do not need to include a bibliography and in-text citations in your response paper **unless** you refer to a source besides the assigned readings.

Analytic Essay

In lieu of a final exam, you are required to submit an analytic essay for this class. Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, double-spacing, and proper citation format (see section below).

Additionally, please number each page. The essay should be five-six pages long (and should certainly not exceed seven). This page limit does not include a bibliography, which should be at the end of your paper.

Essays will be graded on content (evidence provided), analysis (claims drawn about the evidence provided), structure (clarity of thesis and logical “flow” of the essay), and mechanics (grammar, punctuation use, sentence and paragraph composition, etc.). The following elements are part of an A paper:

1. **A clear thesis** presented in the first paragraph and argued throughout. Include “In this essay I will argue that…” or something similar.
2. **Evidence to support your thesis** in the form of facts, ideas from existing research, and thoughtful, balanced analysis.
3. **Clear structure**, including an introduction, a conclusion, and reasonably sized body paragraphs. Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence that introduces that paragraph.
4. **A bibliography** with a complete list of your sources. Some guidelines:
 - Include a **minimum of five (5)** sources total.
 - At least **three (3) academic sources** for each paper. These should be *academic articles* or *university press books*.
 - At least one of your three academic sources must be from outside the class (meaning that it is not on the syllabus).
 - Google Scholar can be very useful for finding sources
 - Lectures and the textbook may be cited, but do **not** count towards your required sources.
5. **Appropriate and sparing use of quotes**. Quotes do not speak for themselves. They should always be preceded by context and followed by analysis of that quote.
6. **Clear writing** with few grammatical errors.

Essay prompts are posted on Moodle. The essay is due Friday, December 9 (the scheduled final exam day), at midnight (11:59 PM).

Participation

Your participation grade will be based on the overall effort you put into the class, including the effort you put into your assignments, your attendance in class (and having a desk tag!), and your participation in discussions. Come to class, participate in class discussions, earn a good participation grade, and get more out of the class. It’s a win-win. You are also encouraged to bring up news stories, relevant examples, and send me “dank” American politics memes.

Citations and Bibliographies

I am not a stickler for a particular citation format. What does matter is that you cite every source you reference and include a bibliography at the end of every paper you submit that references outside sources. You may use either in-text parenthetical citations (e.g., [APSA style](#)) or footnotes (e.g., [Chicago style](#)), but you **MUST** be consistent and use citations every time you refer to an outside source rather than your own opinion.

You do not need to include a bibliography and in-text citations in your weekly response papers **unless** you refer to a source besides the assigned readings.

Late Submissions

Do not wait until the night before it is due to begin to work on an assignment. Life is complicated and full of unexpected surprises. Plan for uncertainty by managing your time efficiently. Even if your work is not complete because something unexpected interfered, submit what you have accomplished prior to the emergency. After-the-fact extensions will be granted only under extreme circumstances, and at my sole discretion.

If you know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit a partially completed assignment early — and then appeal for an extension.

Assignments submitted late will have 10% deducted from their final score for every day they are late. This penalty begins immediately following the day and time the assignment is due and will not be prorated. Late final projects will not be accepted after the scheduled final exam date.

Extra Credit Meme

You may earn extra credit by creating and submitting a meme related to course content. The extra credit is worth up to two points on your final grade (e.g., raising an 88% final grade to a 90%). In order to receive full credit, the meme must be used correctly! I suggest using <https://knowyourmeme.com> to make sure you are using your meme correctly. You can create memes using meme generators such as <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>. Your meme may be shared in class, so be creative!

- The meme is due Wednesday, November 30th at 11:59 PM

Grade Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the grade you receive on an assignment, please take the following steps:

- 1) Review any comments/feedback I have provided.
- 2) If you still have questions, come to my office hours, or contact me by email.
- 3) If you still believe the grade you received is in error, submit a one-paragraph written request for a regrade by email. If the request is approved, your work will receive a completely new evaluation by me. Your score may increase, decrease, or stay the same.

Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities and learning differences who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester, or as soon as possible thereafter. Do not wait until just before an assignment deadline to inform me of a need for accommodations. Students are encouraged to contact or meet with the instructor to discuss how accommodations can support them in meeting the course learning objectives. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.

Support Services

A number of services are available here at Occidental College to make sure that you excel in your academically and socially.

There are a number of opportunities for **academic support**. Please visit the following website at <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/student-success> to see the variety of services offered, including writing support, tutoring, research assistance, language tutoring, and academic coaching.

The Emmons Wellness Center provides **medical services and counseling**. Visit their website for information on specific services provided: <https://www.oxy.edu/student-life/resources-support/emmons-wellness-center>

Sexual Harassment and Assault Resources

In the event that you write or speak about having experienced discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic or sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual and/or gender-based harassment), as a designated Responsible Employee, I must inform the Civil Rights & Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about resources and support services at Oxy, as well as reporting options both on and off-campus. You have no obligation to respond to the Civil Rights & Title IX Office or to meet with them to discuss support services and reporting options.

If you do not want the Civil Rights & Title IX Office contacted, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with:

- Oxy's Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu)
- Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657)
- Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (myoung@oxy.edu)
- Oxy 24/7 Confidential Hotline (323-341-4141)

The College's civil rights policies, along with additional resources, can be found at: <https://www.oxy.edu/civil-rights-title-ix>. If you would like to contact the Civil Rights & Title IX Office directly, you may email Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at fulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience

Consistent with Occidental College's commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website: <https://www.oxy.edu/student-life/resources-support/orsl/academic-accommodations>

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity is a shared community value. It is built around trust and respect between members of the Occidental Community and embodies a commitment to honesty and integrity in every aspect of one's academic life.

All members of the Occidental community are committed to uphold the highest degree of academic integrity. Unless stipulated otherwise, the academic work done for all assignments is expected to be the student's own; students are expected to give proper credit to the ideas and work of others.

Generally speaking, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use another person's idea. When you use a specific phrase, you must put that phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. If you wish to submit a piece of writing that you have used in another class, you must receive my permission before doing so.

Signing the Academic Integrity Commitment at the beginning of every semester represents a student's affirmation to uphold the shared values of honesty and integrity. When signing the Integrity Commitment associated with work in a course, students are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information; nor assisted others in these actions.

Weekly Assignments and Topics

The list below indicates reading assignments, class topics, and essay due dates. All readings (excluding the required textbook) will be available on Moodle or linked below. You should do each day's readings before that day's class. I'll generally keep us on schedule but note that discussions may bleed over from one class to the next.

Date	Topics	Readings Due
Week 1		
Wed, Aug 31	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the syllabus • Textbook, Introduction: "Self-Interest as the Problem and Solution"
Fri, Sep 2	Laying the Groundwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 1: "Some Enduring Questions and Relevant Concepts" • The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. 1777. • Musgrave, Paul. 2021. "Political Scientists Turned a Blind Eye to America's Democratic Failures." <i>Foreign Policy</i>.
Week 2		
Mon, Sep 5	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS	
Wed, Sep 7	The Problem of Human Nature: Self-Interest, Factions, & Collective Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist 10." In textbook appendix. • Textbook, Chapter 2: "Big Answers, Bigger Questions: Madison's Theory of the Republic"
Fri, Sep 9	Madison's Theory: Self-interest and Ambition as the Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madison, James. 1788. "Federalist 51." In textbook appendix. • Constitution of the United States. 1788. Pay special attention to Articles I and II.

Week 3		
Mon, Sep 12	The Structure of Congressional Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGP Grey. 2011. "Gerrymandering Explained." <i>YouTube</i>. • Enten, Harry. 2018. "Ending Gerrymandering Won't Fix What Ails America." In <i>FiveThirtyEight: The Gerrymandering Project</i>. • UK Parliament. 2012. "US Elections – How do they work?" <i>YouTube</i>.
Wed, Sep 14	Biased Representation in Congress: Whose Voice Gets Heard?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronner, Laura & Nathaniel Rakich. 2021. "Advantage, GOP." <i>FiveThirtyEight</i> • Liptak, Adam. 2013. "Smaller States Find Outsize Clout Growing in Senate." <i>The New York Times</i>.
Fri, Sep 16	Citizen Participation (pt. 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 3: "Citizen Participation in Politics: An Interest in Self-Interest?"
Week 4		
Mon, Sep 19	Citizen Participation (pt. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOODLE: Schudson, Michael. 2000. "America's Ignorant Voters." <i>The Wilson Quarterly</i> 36(3): 16-22.
Wed, Sep 21	Citizen Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOODLE: Zaller, John. 1992. "Chapter 3: How Citizens Acquire Information and Convert it to Public Opinion". In <i>The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion</i>. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
Fri, Sep 23	Public Opinion, Vote Choice, and Cognitive Shortcuts (pt. 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 4: "Who's in Charge Here? Voting Choice in Elections"
Week 5		
Mon, Sep 26	Public Opinion, Vote Choice, and Cognitive Shortcuts (pt. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOODLE: Achen, Christopher. & Larry Bartels. 2016. "Democracy for realists: Holding up a mirror to the electorate" <i>Juncture</i>. 22(4), 269-275.
Wed, Sep 28	Interest Groups & Pluralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 5: "Interest Group & Pluralist Theory" • MOODLE: Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. "The Scope & Bias of the Pressure System." In <i>The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America</i>. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston
Fri, Sep 30	Biased Pluralism: A Critique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elliott, Justin & Paul Kiel. 2019. "Inside TurboTax's 20-Year Fight to Stop Americans From Filing Their Taxes for Free." <i>ProPublica</i> • MOODLE: Gilens, Martin & Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 12(3): 564-581.

Week 6		
Mon, Oct 3	The “Textbook” Congress: The Electoral Connection (pt. 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 8: “Congress: Representation and Power” MOODLE: Mayhew, David. 1974. “The Electoral Connection and the Congress.” In Terry Sullivan & Matthew Sullivan eds., <i>Congress: Structure and Policy</i>. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 1987.
Wed, Oct 5	The “Textbook” Congress: The Electoral Connection (pt. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Jacobson, Gary. 2015. “It’s Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections.” <i>The Journal of Politics</i>. 77(3), 861-873
Fri, Oct 7	Parties & the Electorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 6: “Political Parties: An Alternative to the Republic?” Carsey, Thomas & Geoffrey Layman. 2014. “Our politics is polarized on more issues than ever before.” In <i>Washington Post: The Monkey Cage Blog</i> Carsey, Thomas & Geoffrey Layman. 2014. “How our partisan loyalties are driving polarization.” In <i>Washington Post: The Monkey Cage Blog</i>
Week 7		
Mon, Oct 10	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS	
Wed, Oct 12	Parties as Organizations (part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Cox, Gary W. & Matthew D. McCubbins. 2005. “Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives.” In Steven S. Smith et al. eds. <i>The American Congress Reader</i>. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 2009.
Fri, Oct, 14	Parties as Organizations (part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Fiorina, Morris. 2014. “The (Re) Nationalization of Congressional Elections.” <i>A Hoover Institution Essay on Contemporary American Politics</i>.
Week 8		
Mon, Oct 17	The Dynamics of Modern Congressional Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skelley, Geoffrey and Nathaniel Rakich. 2022. “Why The President’s Party Almost Always Has A Bad Midterm” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>. MOODLE: Utych, Stephen. 2020. “Man Bites Blue Dog: Are Moderates Really More Electable Than Ideologues?” <i>The Journal of Politics</i>, 82(1), 392-396.
Wed, Oct 19	Race & Realignment in the American Party System (part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malone, Clare. 2020. “The Republican Choice.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>. Tesler, Michael. 2016. “How racially resentful working-class whites fled the Democratic Party — before Donald Trump.” In <i>Washington Post: The Monkey Cage Blog</i>
Fri, Oct 21	Race & Realignment in the American Party System (part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hale, Isaac & Carlos Algara. 2020. “Will Trump & Congressional Republicans Benefit from White Racial Attitudes in 2020?” <i>APSA RAISE the Vote blog</i>. Tesler, Michael. 2016. “Views about race mattered more in electing Trump than in electing Obama.” In <i>Washington Post: The Monkey Cage Blog</i>

Week 9		
Mon, Oct 24	The “Textbook” Presidency: Persuader-in-chief?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 9: “Presidential Leadership: Beyond Self-Interest?” • Article II of the Constitution of the United States. 1788.
Wed, Oct 26	The Pivotal Politics Model (part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 7: “A Pivotal Politics Model of the Policy Process”
Fri, Oct 28	The Pivotal Politics Model (part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 7: “A Pivotal Politics Model of the Policy Process”
Week 10		
Mon, Oct 31	The Presidency: Powerful or Powerless?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOODLE: Howell, William G. 2003. “Presidential Power in the Modern Era.” In <i>Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action</i>.
Wed, Nov 2	Presidential Elections (part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DeSilver, Drew. 2016. “Trump’s victory another example of how Electoral College wins are bigger than popular vote ones.” <i>Pew Research Center</i>. • Lau, Tim. 2021. “The Electoral College, Explained.” <i>Brennan Center for Justice</i>.
Fri, Nov 4	Presidential Elections (part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berns, Walter. 1996. “Third Party Candidates Face a High Hurdle in the Electoral College.” <i>American Enterprise Institute</i>. • Gelman, Andrew and Pierre-Antoine Kremp. 2016. “The Electoral College magnifies the power of white voters.” <i>Vox</i>. • Walter, Amy. 2022. “The Republican Electoral College Advantage.” <i>The Cook Political Report</i>.
Week 11		
Mon, Nov 7	2022 Midterm Election Preview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver, Nate. “When We Say 70 percent, It Really Means 70 Percent.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>. • Read the FiveThirtyEight election forecast
Wed, Nov 9	Midterm Elections Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Politics Department event from 5:40-7:10 at Bio 113 (near Sycamore Glen) • Attendance is mandatory • There is NO CLASS today
Fri, Nov 11	Federalism & State Policymaking Under Polarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anzia, Sarah. 2019. “Most research finds little evidence that interest groups influence US politics, but that’s because it’s focused on the federal government.” <i>LSE USAPP</i> blog. • Grumbach, Jacob. 2022. “The Supreme Court Just Rolled Democracy Back. You Can Measure How Much.” <i>Politico</i>

Week 12		
Mon, Nov 14	The Courts (part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 10: “The Supreme Court: Another Way Out of the Problem of Self-Interest?” Podcast, <i>Radiolab Presents: More Perfect</i>. Episode: “Kittens Kick The Giggly Blue Robot All Summer.”
Wed, Nov 16	The Courts (part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 10: “The Supreme Court: Another Way Out of the Problem of Self-Interest?” Mejia, Elena and Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux. 2021. “It Will Be Tough For Biden To Reverse Trump’s Legacy Of A Whiter, More Conservative Judiciary.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>.
Fri, Nov 18	Trends in the Two-party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drutman, Lee. 2017. “Political Divisions in 2016 and Beyond: Tensions Between and Within the Two Parties.” Voter Study Group.
Week 13		
Mon, Nov 21	Is the American Political System Broken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drutman, Lee. “Why the Two-Party System is Effing Up U.S. Democracy.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>. Taylor, Steven. February 1, 2021. “Our Political Reality.” <i>Outside the Beltway</i> blog.
Wed/Fri: Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS		
Week 14		
Mon, Nov 28	Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems (part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taylor, Steven. August 16, 2020. “Reforms: the Possible, the Improbable, and the Unpossible.” <i>Outside the Beltway</i> blog. Santucci, Jack. December 9, 2020. A modest and timely proposal. <i>voteegy.com</i> blog.
Wed, Nov 30	Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems (part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drutman, Lee. September 8, 2021. “Quiz: If America Had Six Parties, Which Would You Belong To?” <i>The New York Times</i>. <i>Optional:</i> extra credit meme due at midnight
Fri, Dec 2	IN CLASS: American Politics Jeopardy!	
Week 15		
Mon, Dec 5	NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on your final paper! I will hold extended office hours from 3-5. If you are able, please attend the POLS 300 poster session from noon-1:45 at Sycamore Glen