

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
POLS W1201 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Prof. Judith Russell

Spring 2008 MW 9:10–10:25am Fayerweather 310

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Office hours: MW 10:30 am to 1pm 702 IAB

Teaching Assistants: David O'Connell djo2115, Beth Harkavy beh2114, Jason Kelly jpk2003

This course is a critical introduction to American political institutions and behavior. Structurally the American system finds form in the Madisonian Model, the method of government established by the Framers and based on separation of powers, checks and balances, and overlapping centers of political power. Our system seeks to balance elite and mass interests, participation, and control. Tension and contradiction have been threaded throughout the American system since its inception: the tension between liberty and equality, the contradiction between our political ideals and our institutions, and the ambiguity in the very concept of democracy itself. Over the semester we will test the continued viability of the Madisonian Model as we consider our institutional framework, the values it embodies, and its performance. In our class attention is given to: constitutional theory and principles, the constitutional system, political culture, political institutions (the presidency, congress, the judiciary, the bureaucracy), public policy (civil rights and civil liberties, social welfare policy, economic policy, employment policy) consent and political participation (public opinion, mass media, elections and voting, parties, groups and interests) and political corruption. This course does not fulfill political science major credits at Barnard College.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend class regularly and participate. You are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections. Your attendance and participation will be considered in your final grade for the course. An attendance sheet circulates in this class, responsibility for signing it is yours. It is expected that you will complete assigned readings before class and section meetings so that your contributions will be informed and relevant.

Students must register for and attend a discussion section. You cannot take this course unless you are registered in a section

2. Complete two examinations. A **take-home midterm** will be distributed on **March 3rd** and should be returned by **March 10th**. A **final examination** will be given during exam week.

3. Complete the research paper. An **8-10 page analytical research paper is required.** Topics will be discussed in class and discussion sections and should reflect the content of the course as well as an interest of yours. I expect you to identify a paper topic and submit a preliminary bibliography by **March 3rd** in a **two-page overview of your paper** containing a clear thesis statement and your argument in brief. Your bibliography should be drawn *primarily* from *scholarly books, journals, articles and chapters*, not journalistic or online resources. No Wikipedia sources. Late papers will receive a grade penalty.

GRADING Your course grade is determined as follows: 30% for the midterm exam, 30% for the final exam, and 30 % for the paper. Your participation in discussion sessions and class account for 10%.

READINGS All readings are required and on reserve at the Butler Library Reserve Room and through E-Reserves.

The books below are available for purchase at the Columbia University Bookstore:

Samuel Kernell and Gary C. Jacobson *The Logic of American Politics Third Edition* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2006)

Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith Eds. *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings Third Edition* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2007)

Robert Goldwin and William Schambra Eds. *How Democratic is the Constitution?* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1980)

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (any edition)

Judith Russell, *Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)

Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America* (Vintage edition only)

The articles and chapters below are on reserve:

James Fallows “He was Slick, Thank God “in *The Atlantic Monthly* February, 2001

James Fallows “Why We Hate the Media,” in *Breaking the News/How the Media Undermine American Democracy*, by James Fallows

Charles Lindblom, “The Science of Muddling Through” *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959) 79-88

Richard M. Pious, *The American Presidency*: Ch. 1 “The Creation of the Presidency” and Ch. 2 “Prerogative Powers”

Robert Putnam, “Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec 1995), pp. 664-683.

Topics and Readings

January 23 **Introduction to the course**

I. Constitutional Theory and General Principles of American Government

January 28 **The Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, and the Declaration of Independence**

Kernell and Jacobson *The Logic of American Politics* Ch. 2

Kernell and Smith *Principles and Practice of American Politics* (K&S *Principles*)

Ch. 1: Olson (1-1) Hardin (1-2)

January 30 **The Federalist Papers**

Madison, Hamilton and Jay *The Federalist Papers* Nos.10, 51, 47, 49, 58

February 4 **How Democratic is the Constitution?**

Goldwin and Shambra *How Democratic is the Constitution* Chs. 1,3,4,6

February 6 **Federalism**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 3

K&S Principles Ch. 2: Roche (2-1), Burns (2-4)

K&S Principles Ch. 3 Kettl (3-2)

II. American Political Culture

February 11 **Political Culture in America**

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* Vols. I and II (Vintage Edition ONLY)
VOL I Author's Intro, Chs. III, IV, VIII (pp 165 -179), Chs XIV, XV, XVII.
VOL II Second Book: Chs I-IX. Third Book: Chs V, III, XIII, XVIII, XXI.
Fourth Book: Chs I-III.

February 13 **Democratic Tensions: Liberty/Equality**

Cont. Tocqueville readings

Robert Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec 1995), pp. 664-683.

February 18, 20 **Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 4

K&S Principles Ch.4: Glazer (4-2)

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 5

K&S Principles Ch.5: Rosenberg (5-1) Lee (5-2) *Miranda v. Arizona* (5-3) *Roe v. Wade* (5-4)

III. Political Institutions

February 25, 27 **Congress**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 6

K&S Principles Ch. 6: Fenno (6-1) Mayhew (6-2) Smith (6-3)

March 3, 5 **The Presidency**

Paper proposals due in class March 3rd.

Take Home Midterm distributed March 3rd in class (due March 10th in class)

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 7

K&S Principles Ch. 7: Neustadt (7-1)

Richard M. Pious, *The American Presidency*, Chs. 1 & 2.

March 10 **The Bureaucracy**

Take home Midterm due in class

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 8

K&S *Principles* Ch. 8: Wilson (8-1) Moe (8-2) Singer (8-3)

March 12 **The Judiciary**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch.9

K&S *Principles* Ch. 9: Scalia (9-1) Breyer (9-2), Hamilton (9-3) Binder (9-4)

March 17--21 is Spring Break

March 24 **The Judiciary Continued**

IV. Politics and Political Influence

March 26, 31 **Elections, Political Parties, Voting, Finance**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Chs 11, 12

K&S *Principles* Ch. 11: Popkin (11-1) Jacobson (11-2)

K&S *Principles* Ch. 12: Aldrich (12-1) Bartels (12-2) Valelly (11-3)

April 2 **Opinion and Media**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Chs, 10, 14

K&S *Principles* Ch.10 Asher (10-1) Stimson et. al.(10-2) Schudson (10-3) Fiorina (10-4)

K&S *Principles* Ch. 11 West (11-3)

K&S *Principles* Ch. 14 Hamilton (14-1)

“Why We Hate the Media,” in *Breaking the News/How the Media Undermine American Democracy*, by James Fallows

April 7, 9 **Groups, Interests and Influence**

Kernell and Jacobson *Logic* Ch. 13

K&S *Principles* Ch. 13: Schattschneider (13-1) Vaida (13-3)

Take another look at Federalist No 10

V. The National Agenda: Public Policy in the US

Please note: Your texts do not have sections on public policy. The substantial information in this segment on public policy will be drawn from class lectures and additional readings on topics which will be assigned where necessary as we approach this section. You will be responsible for this material.

April 14 **Incrementalism**

Charles Lindblom, “The Science of Muddling Through” *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959), 79-88

April 16, 21 **The Welfare State and Social Policy**

April 23 **Employment Policy**

JRussell, *Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty*

April 28, 30 **Economic Policy**

Research papers due in class April 28

James Fallows “He was Slick, Thank God “in *The Atlantic Monthly* February, 2001

May 5 **The Crisis of American Democracy and the Madisonian Model**