

PSCI 2200A
Introduction to U.S. Politics
Monday and Wednesday 2:35-5:25 pm
Please confirm on Carleton Central

Instructor: Professor Melissa Haussman
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This course provides an introduction to unique aspects of the U.S. political system. It is vital for students to understand that the institutional framework of three separated and co-equal branches (legislative, executive and judicial) sets the stage on which the drama of U.S. politics gets played out daily. We look at both the U.S. Constitution and its evolution in the eyes of the Supreme Court to understand the constitutional bases of the separation of powers and checks and balances. This is vital to understanding that certain branches are allowed to do certain things and others are not. This course uses the institutional division of powers both “horizontally” (at one level) and vertically, through federalism (dividing powers between national, state and city levels) as a backdrop to examining current controversial issues. It is my contention that in many ways, the Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution in 1787 would not recognize the current institutional framework of US politics, given that in so many ways, the fundamentals of the system have been changed to accommodate the wealthy. We will ponder the many significant changes that have been brought to the system and their implications for the US democratic process.

Our in-depth “case study” for this class term will be to ponder the dynamics allowing the election of President Obama in 2008, and how voting behaviour in the US works. We will discuss the central thesis of *Red State, Blue State* that a combination of individual wealth, geographical location of the state and its dominant party control and cultural themes used in each election explain voting behaviour in the US.

The following books have been ordered for the course and are required. They are available at the Haven bookstore, Sunnyside and Seneca:

- 1) Karen O’Connor and Larry Sabato, *American Government: Continuity and Change* (NY: Pearson, 2010) – (Portable Edition)
- 2) Andrew Gelman, *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State* (Princeton University, 2010), Expanded ed.

Course requirements:

Midterm (May 26)

(in class, short answers and essays, choice provided)-entire class period
Will be provided

30%

Participation in class discussions (including at the end of class)

20%

Final (during Finals period, June 24-28, 2010)

Covers material since midterm, has combination of short-answer and essay
Questions (choice provided on the questions)

50%

Class outline:

- May 10 Introduction to the course, including American Political Landscape
AG, Ch. 1
- May 12 Constitution & Federalism
Read: AG, Chs. 2, 3
- May 17 Congress: Structure, First half of Pres
Read: AG, Ch. 7 & 13 (pp. 492-500 only), Ch. 8
- May 19 Rest of Pres, and Supreme Court
Read: AG, Ch. 8
- May 24 Victoria Day, no class
- May 26 Midterm, in class
- May 31, June 2 Prof away at CPSA
- June 7 Civil Liberties
Read: AG, Chs. 5
- June 9 Civil Rights
Read: AG, Ch. 6
- June 14 Elections, Part I
Read: Gelman, *Red State, Blue State*, Chs. 1-7
- June 16 Elections, Part II
Read: Gelman, Chs. 8-Afterword and AG, Parties and Voting chapters
- June 21 Review and wrap up

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Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by June 11 2010 for early summer examinations and July 30 2010 for late summer examinations.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with

the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.