

PSCI 2200 A
Introduction to U.S. Politics
Wednesdays 9:35 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Tyler Attwood
Office: B641 Loeb Building
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Phone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 1598 (*no voicemail*)
Email: TylerAttwood@cunet.carleton.ca

Course description

This course is designed to give students an institutional overview of the U.S. system of federal government, as well as historical and current insight into the broader political, economic and cultural landscape in the U.S. Of central concern is the institutional framework of the three separate and co-equal federal branches (legislative, executive and judicial – Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts). Only by understanding the origins and interaction dynamics of the three branches can the complexities of U.S. politics be fully understood.

The course is structured around a distinction between the concepts of **government** (the specific elements and institutions of the state) and **politics** (the broader social, political and economic actions within the state and civil society that determine who gets what, how and why). Thus, we focus partly on the “how questions”, or the central institutions within the three branches of American **government**, the U.S. Constitution, the electoral process, political parties and the details of creating and implementing laws and rules. Complementing this will be an analysis of American **politics** whereby we will address important “why questions.” To this end, we will explore key themes such as race, class, the activity of money and corporations, parties, elections, rights, and liberties. The combination of these two approaches will give students a more complete understanding of the political, economic, and cultural landscapes in the U.S.

Course Texts

- **By The People: Debating American Government (Brief 2nd Edition)**, James A. Morone & Rogan Kersh, Oxford University Press, 2014, ISBN: 9780190216733
- The book is available at [Haven Bookstore](#) (43 Seneca St. @ Seneca & Sunnyside) and the Campus Bookstore, as well as through various online booksellers.
- Any additional readings will be posted on CU Learn in PDF format

Evaluation

- **Tutorial participation 15%**
- **Midterm Exam 30% (in class on October 14th)**
- **Final Exam 30% (during official exam period, date/time TBA)**
- **First paper 10% (due by Sept. 30th, 11:59 pm on CU Learn)**
- **Second paper 15% (due by December 2nd, 11:59 pm on CU Learn)**

All components of the course must be completed in order to pass. For instance, if you don't submit an essay or take the midterm exam, you will receive a failing mark ([FND](#): "Failure with no deferred final examination allowed. The grade *FND* is assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the Course Outline. *FND* is assigned 0.0 grade points.")

Details regarding Term Work and Final Exam

The papers should be submitted on CU Learn via the appropriate link. **DO NOT EMAIL YOUR PAPERS OR HAND IN PAPER COPIES.**

Assignments submitted late will be penalized **5% of the value of the assignment per day late, to a maximum of 10 days after which the assignment will receive a grade of zero.**

You must provide appropriate documentation for requests of an extension on medical grounds. See "Academic Accommodations" below for additional exceptions.

NOTE: Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, case studies, assignments & exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

- **Tutorial participation (15%):** Tutorial meetings begin on **Wednesday, September 9th**. Please refer to your registration information to find out when and where your tutorial meets. In order to keep the numbers balanced, no unauthorized switching between groups is allowed. Going to the tutorials is required and part of your mark will be based on attendance. In addition, your mark will come from active participation in discussions and activities in the group. **You CANNOT earn the tutorial mark in any way other than attending and participating.** Your TA will assign this mark.
- **Midterm exam (30%):** An in-class midterm exam will be given on **Wednesday, October 14th**. The exam will take place in our regular classroom and you will have the full class time to write it. No lecture or tutorials will be given that day. The midterm exam will cover material from the lectures and chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5. I will give additional details and study suggestions in class. No make-up exam will be allowed except under the most serious circumstances and upon the presentation of documented evidence. I may change the format and content of a make-up exam.
- **Final exam (30%):** The final exam is **NOT** cumulative. The final exam will take place during the official exam period. It will cover material from the lectures and chapters 8, 10, 11, and 13. You will have three hours to complete it. Additional details and study suggestions will be given in class. No make-up exam will be allowed except under the most serious circumstances and upon the presentation of documented evidence. I may change the format and content of a make-up exam.

➤ **First paper (10%):** It's election season in the US (*it almost always is!*) and for your first short paper, you will analyze several candidates' speeches in light of the foundational ideas presented in chapters 1 & 2 of the textbook. Your goal in the paper is to present an argument that the speeches you select use, modify, undermine, or ignore certain aspects of the American political tradition. Remember that this is an analytical paper, not a normative one (i.e., you won't be arguing that one candidate is right or best). You will support your argument by describing how those foundational ideas and traditions are used by the candidates. Are certain ideas prioritized? Are others ignored? Are there contradictions or tensions between the ideas used? What are the strategic electoral reasons for using those ideas? Readings other than the textbook are not expected (except for the speeches, of course). Candidate debates as well as campaign websites or news outlets are good sources for speeches. You are not expected to analyze the entirety of a candidate's speech, only a representative segment. The paper should be 3-4 single spaced pages. I will post additional information about the first paper on CU Learn. **The first paper is due no later than September 30th, 11:59pm, on CU Learn.**

➤ **Second paper (15%):** Your second paper, which is due no later than **December 2nd, 11:59pm on CU Learn**, revolves around the three branches of federal government and their interaction. You will choose an issue or event (in either foreign or domestic politics) that is ongoing or very recent and use it to analyze how the three branches work together (or perhaps fail to work together, as the case may be). Drawing on the course material, your goal will be to illustrate how the system of government is designed to be one of 'separated institutions sharing power'. Of course, a part of your paper will be spent describing the issue or event itself, but don't make that the primary focus. You will also evaluate how well the system works to deal with the issue or problem and what should be done to make it work better. So, unlike the first paper, there is a normative element here in terms of arguing for or against something. However, you are primarily illustrating how the system works today vs. how it was designed to work by the Founders. The paper should be 4-5 single spaced pages. I will post additional information about the paper on CU Learn.

Course Topics and Class Schedule

(note that the page ranges below are approximations of what we will cover in lecture)

September 2: Introduction / Ideas that shape American politics

- ❖ By the People, Preface & Chapter 1, pp. 3-25

September 9: Ideas that shape American politics / The Constitution

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 1, pp. 25-39 & Chap. 2, pp. 43-57

September 16: The Constitution

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 2, pp. 57-81

September 23: Civil Liberties

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 4, pp. 113-133

September 30: Civil Liberties / Civil Rights

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 4, pp. 134-144 & Chap. 5, pp. 147-157

October 7: Civil Rights

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 5, pp. 157-185

October 14: Midterm exam

- ❖ Midterm exam in class today (no tutorials)

October 21: Campaigns & Elections

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 8

October 28: Fall Reading Week

- ❖ No class or tutorials

November 4: Congress

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 10, pp. 325-340

November 11: Congress

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 10, pp. 340-356

November 18: The Presidency

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 11, pp. 359-378

November 25: The Presidency

- ❖ BTP, Chap. 11, pp. 378-396

December 2: The Judicial Branch

❖ BTP, Chap. 13

Academic Accommodations

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline 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. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Grading: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

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.

Carleton E-mail Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

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 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, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/> 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.