

PSCI 2200

Professor Melissa Haussman

Dept. of Political Science

Summer 2020

May 7-June 18

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The book to be used for this course is the Rice University open-text *American Government, 2nd ed.* available for free download at: www.openstax.org and posted on the CU Learn homepage. This course assumes no previous US politics knowledge. In this course, we will center our examination, discussion and questions along the following central questions: 1) while the Founding Fathers, writing the US Constitution in secret in 1787, wished to divide up power to prevent concentration, has this served the US well over time? 2) Specifically, what consequences does the division of power (across a level of government as well as up and down between states and national government) hold for policy decisions, especially in emergencies? 3) Embedded in the checks and balances equation across Articles I and II (Congress and President) are clauses to allow each branch to try to increase its powers-we will look at examples of that. 4) Finally, what has it meant that the US has had a written, supreme Constitution since the late 18th century and a very powerful and active Supreme Court?

Course requirements:

Given the switch to an online course format, our main tools to use (and assessment formats) will consist of the following. Slides will be posted to CU Learn and will be discussed during class times, starting at 11:30 T/Th, May 7-June 18. We will be meeting virtually through Big Blue Button (as part of CU Learn) or potentially Zoom. We will discuss the “structuring questions” and answers to them during the first hour, and then you will often be expected to do individual or group on-line activities after that in either the “chat” function or in the “Forum” or “Assignments” function on CU Learn. Not all assignments will be done during class time, some can be done at other times. In addition to the free, downloadable text, I sometimes post readings to CU Learn to emphasize and expand on particular points-I will alert you to those.

Course requirements:

Since an online course format cannot completely lecture format, our virtual meetings at 11:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays will be a discussion of the day's slides (posted to CU Learn) and videos (and any other supplemental readings) which have been posted on CU Learn. The "structuring questions" for each class in the course outline will form the basis of our on-line discussion and of course you are invited to ask questions and share your thoughts (via the chat function of BBB) at that time. **This requires that you read the day's slides and look at the videos on CU Learn before we meet for class so that you can participate in the discussion.**

I will hold office hours for individual chat via Big Blue Button (or zoom) each week from 1:30-2:30, T/Th but you are also able to make appointments with me through that function and/or email me. I will also be available by email, Big Blue Button and Zoom by in advance request for students in other time zones.

Assignments/Assessments:

There will be seven short assignments during the six-week term (maximum response length 2 pages), comprising the bulk of your grade (first one at 5%, then six at 15% each). They will be mainly short answer, done on CU Learn through the "Assignments" function. Rubrics for the assignments will be posted on CU Learn. The rest of your grade (5%) comes from participation in the Forums (CU Learn) and online chats.

Outline of classes:**Module 1-Framework of the US Government and its Origins**

May 7 Intro What is Government? Read text (AG), Chapter 1

Structuring questions:

- 1) Who governs in the US?
- 2) Whom did the Founding Fathers wish to govern?
- 3) Who and what did they fear?

4) Is a certain level of participation required to call a country's political system a "democracy"?

Assignment 1 (5%): Describe yourself in terms of your Carleton University student history and what you'd like to learn about US politics (2 paras. Max).

May 12 US Constitutional Structure Read text (AG), Chapter 2

Structuring questions:

- 1) How did the Founding Fathers' fears manifest themselves in the Constitutional structure (especially from *Federalist 51*)
- 2) What core values and beliefs led to the American Revolution and the writing of the Articles of Confederation? How do these values and beliefs affect American politics today?
- 3) Do the Constitution and the Bill of Rights protect the life, liberty, and property of all Americans? Why or why not?
- 4) What are the sources of power in the Constitution to the three branches of Government?

May 14 Federalism as a "Check and Balance" on concentrated power Read AG, Ch. 3

Structuring Questions:

- 1) What are specific sources of power to the national government and to the states?
- 2) Where do we find limitations on each?
- 3) Why do certain groups emphasize the 10th amendment so much?
- 4) Describe the primary differences in the role of citizens in government among the federal, confederation and unitary systems.
- 5) How have the political and economic relationships between the states and federal government changed since the early 1800s?

Assignment 2 (15%) Re: the roles of national vs. state governments in responding to Covid. Do you agree more with the President's statements about his power (see accompanying video clips) or Governor Cuomo's and Governor Inslee's statements (video clips). Due by May 18, 4 pm.

Module 2 Rights and Liberties in the US and the continuing frameworks of separation of powers, checks and balances and federalism

May 19 Civil Liberties Read: AG, Chapter 4

Structuring questions:

- 1) Why are Civil Liberties in the US (mainly protected in the Bill of Rights), described as “negative liberties,” added to the Constitution in 1791?
- 2) What was the process of extending the Bill of Rights to the states beginning in 1897?
- 3) What are some gaps in the framework of civil liberties across the US?
- 4) Which rights and liberties do you think the US (or state) governments do a good job of protecting? Which rights and freedoms could be better protected, and how?

Assignment 3 (15%) Choice between writing on the Second or Eighth Amendment. Assignment due May 25 by 4 pm.

May 21 Civil Rights Read: AG, Chapter 5

Structuring questions:

- 1) Why does Professor Henry Louis Gates say that the Reconstruction period (1865-1877) contained positive achievements for African-Americans?
- 2) Were the post-Civil War “Reconstruction Amendments” useful to the newly-freed slaves? Which party objected to them most?
- 3) How does Professor Gates say that the rise of the Ku Klux Klan just after the Civil War’s end continue into the present time regarding white supremacy?

May 26 Civil Rights, continued

Structuring questions:

- 1) How did women's struggles for the right to vote and political citizenship
 - a) Mirror those of African-American males or
 - b) Differ from them?
- 2) Are women in the US said to be as "equal" as their counterparts in Canada?
 - a) Why or why not?
- 3) As with racial equality in the previous class, is federalism important to the status of a group's rights in the US?

Assignment 4 (15%) Compare and contrast the difficulties with "state-level" achievements for women's and African-Americans' civil rights. Due by May 29, 4 pm.

Module 3 National Political Institutions

May 28 Congress Read: AG, Chapter 11

Structuring questions:

- 1) What are the most important powers possessed by the House?
- 2) " " " Senate?
- 3) What happens when the House and Senate are controlled by different parties?
- 4) What factors have contributed to the transformation away from the "classic" legislative model and toward the new style?

June 2 President Read: AG, Chapter 12

Structuring questions:

- 1) What is the "imperial Presidency"?
- 2) Are there differences in powers and room to maneuver extended to "wartime" vs. "peacetime" Presidents?
- 3) Under what conditions might the President use direct action?

Assignment 5 (15%). Is the US President the "most powerful political actor" in the world? Cite evidence either for or against your conclusion. Due: June 5 by 4 pm.

June 4 Discussion Comparing Fights between Congress and the President

- 1) What is the theory of the “unilateral” executive, used especially during the Bush Presidency?
- 2) Why are the President’s powers of appointment and removal important?
- 3) What are the areas of disagreement regarding Congress’ vs. the President’s powers to conduct war? What tools does each branch possess?
- 4) Why does the Electoral college remain important?

June 9 Supreme Court read: AG, Chapter 13

Structuring questions:

- 1) What are two main sources of the US Supreme Court’s power?
- 2) Why is it said to be one of the most powerful courts in the world?
- 3) What are its limitations?

Assignment 6 (15%). Is an “originalist” interpretation of the Constitution possible? Why or why not? Due June 12 by 4 pm.

Module 4 Political Behaviour in the US

June 11 Political Parties and Elections read: AG, Chapters 7, 9

Structuring questions:

- 1) Why is the North-South division so important to the US political party structure?
- 2) How has it endured?
- 3) How has it changed?
- 4) What are unique features of US political parties?
- 5) Why is US voter turnout low and what can be done to change it?

June 16 Interest Groups and Campaign Finance Read: AG, Chapter 10

- 1) Why are interest groups so important in the US political structure (both nationally and at the state level)?
- 2) Why is the US the most expensive country in the world in which to run for office?
- 3) Are interest groups good or bad for democracy in the US?

Final assignment (15%). You may either do a video upload on this or a written assignment. Pick one interest group (based on economic, social or environmental

interests) and check out on www.opensecrets.org and/or www.fec.gov regarding their election spending since summer 2018. Describe whether you think your particular group's presence in the US system is problematic or beneficial and why. Due: June 22 by 4 pm.

Academic Accommodations

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/> and our website <https://carletonpss.com/>, or stop by our office in Loeb D688!"

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.