

PSCI 2200 A
Introduction to U.S. Politics
Mondays & Wednesdays 11:35-2:25
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Tyler Attwood
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Course description

This course is designed to give students both 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 of 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 historical origins and dynamics of interaction of the three branches can we fully comprehend the complexities of U.S. politics.

The course material is framed 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, the course focuses 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 United States.

Course Texts

- **American Government: Power and Purpose**, Theodore J. Lowi, et al., **Brief 13th edition**, WW Norton, 2014, ISBN: 9780393922462 (pbk.)
- The book is available at [Haven Bookstore](#) (43 Seneca St. @ Seneca & Sunnyside) and the Campus Bookstore, as well as through various online booksellers. You are strongly encouraged to get the most recent edition (13th Brief). Older editions will not prepare you as well for the exams.
- The Lowi book is also available from the publisher as an e-book at a reduced price; see [here](#) for the downloadable version and [here](#) for the online version.

- Additional readings are posted on CU Learn in PDF format.

Evaluation

- **Midterm Exam 30% (in class on May 21st)**
- **Final Exam 40% (during official exam period, date/time TBA)**
- **Reflection Papers – 2 @ 15% each = 30% (due May 26th & June 16th)**

All components of the course must be completed in order to pass. For instance, if you don't submit the essay, 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 reflection papers should be submitted on CU Learn via the appropriate submission link. I will go over this at the first class. **DO NOT EMAIL ME 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.** Weekends are included in the calculation of late penalties.

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

- **Midterm exam (30%):** An in-class midterm exam will be given on **Wednesday, May 21st**. The exam will take place in our regular classroom and you will have the full three hours of class time to write it. No lecture will be given that day. The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and term-based short answer questions. You will have a choice for the short answer questions. The midterm exam will cover material from Lowi Chaps. 1, 2, 3, and 4. I will give additional details and study suggestions closer to the date of the exam. 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 (40%):** The format of the final exam will be exactly like the midterm exam: multiple choice and term-based short answer questions. The final exam is **NOT** cumulative. The final exam will take place during the official exam period (June 20-26). It will cover material from Lowi Chaps. 5, 6, 8, 10, and 11. You will have three hours to complete it. Additional details and study suggestions will be given before the exam.
- **Reflection Papers (2 @ 15% each = 30%):** You are required to submit two short analytical commentaries. The first one is due no later than Monday, May 26th, and the second no later than Monday, June 16th. You should submit both papers on CU Learn. Your papers will be written in response to a set of debate-style readings I have posted on CU Learn. Make sure that you choose a set from the appropriate group:

First you will need to read each piece in the set you choose. Each author presents a different perspective on the issue, and a part of your paper will be devoted to briefly summarizing the positions

of each author. This can come either as a synthesized contrastive way or in a one-after-another presentation of points (i.e., one author, then another, then the last). You are also expected to provide your own thoughts on the issue. You may wish to side with one author, or you may decide that your views on the issue are not perfectly represented in the readings and therefore you can explain your views. In short, you will be summarizing the positions and presenting your own views. Of course, you need to justify your views! You may find that some additional outside research is required (and I encourage this).

You will be marked on the accuracy of your summarization and the quality of your arguments. A grading rubric will be provided on CU Learn. Each paper should be 4-5 pages (1.5 spacing, 12 point font, 0.5" margins). Please include a works cited page (which doesn't count in the page total) and ensure that you follow a consistent, acceptable citation style.

First Paper

- "What Does It Mean To Be An American?" (Liu, Warshawsky, Elazar)
- "How Democratic Is The Constitution?" (Levinson, Lane/Oreskes)
- "Same-Sex Marriage" (Douthat, Raimondo, Rauch)

Second Paper

- "Pork-Barrel Politics" (Cato, Friel, Rauch)
- "Voter Identification" (Davidson, Spakovsky, Foley)
- "Red America vs. Blue America – Are We Polarized?" (Fiorina, Wilson, Judis)

Course Topics and Class Schedule

Monday, May 5: Government and Politics in the US Context + The Founding

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 1 (pp.2-16) & Chap. 2 (pp. 24-36)

Wednesday, May 6: The Constitution

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 2 (pp. 36-56)

Monday, May 12: Federalism & the Separation of Powers

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 3 (pp. 58-83)

Wednesday, May 14: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 4 (pp. 84-129)

Monday, May 19 – Victoria Day Holiday

- ❖ No class

Wednesday, May 21

- ❖ Midterm exam in class today

Monday, May 26: Congress, Part 1

- ❖ First reflection paper due
- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 5 (pp. 130-150)

Wednesday, May 28: Congress, Part 2

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 5 (pp. 150-167)

Monday, June 2: The Presidency, Part 1

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 6 (pp. 168-185)

Wednesday, June 4: The Presidency, Part 2

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 6 (pp. 186-203) & Chap. 7 (pp. 212-219, 224-225)

Monday, June 9: The Federal Courts

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 8 (pp. 238-272)

Wednesday, June 11: Elections

- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 10 (pp. 312-356)

Monday, June 16: Political Parties

- ❖ Second reflection paper due
- ❖ Lowi, Chap. 11 (pp. 358-380, 389-393)

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 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.

Grading: Assignments and exams will be graded with a percentage grade. To convert this to a letter grade or to the university 12-point system, please refer to the following table.

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

Grades: Final grades are derived from the completion of course assignments. Failure to write the final exam will result in the grade ABS. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

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 <http://facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety> 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.