

**Carleton University**

**Winter 2024**

**Department of Political Science**

<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

**PSCI 2200A, Intro to U.S. Politics**

Online, synchronous

Prof. Melissa Haussman

[melissa.haussman@carleton.ca](mailto:melissa.haussman@carleton.ca)

January 8-April 8, 2024

Mondays 9:35-11:25

Office hours: M 11:30-12:30 and By appt.

**Course description:**

Our discussion will cover enormously exciting and topical questions concerning US policymakers over the past few years, as informed by longstanding practice. During the term, we will look at how the US' slave-owning past has shaped its political institutions and behavior. Each week, we will also cover the checks and balances at each level of government (legislative, executive, judicial) and how they impact policy formulation and implementation.

The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, starting in January 2023 is the most diverse in history, with 28% women in the House and Senate. One-quarter of the membership of the House and Senate is comprised of people of color. The US House has had its first woman Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, D-CA (2006-2010, 2018-2022) and now has the first black Minority Leader (Hakeem Jeffries, D-NY). We will examine the various PAC's and party-affiliated groups working for electoral diversity and fairness and social movement groups, such as Black Lives Matter and Asian Lives Matter as well. We will also cover the reactions to the January 6, 2021 coup attempt by former President Trump, including revisions to the *Electoral Count Act* of 1887 and the role of the abortion issue in holding down Republican gains in the November 2022 elections. We also look at the rise of the "Freedom Caucus" in the

House since 2015 and its use of the “Motion to Vacate” to get rid of Speaker McCarthy in 2023, for the first time in history. Taken together, we discuss the “insiders” to the governmental system at the national and sub-national levels, including political parties and PAC’s, and outsiders such as social movement organizations.

While no knowledge of US politics is assumed, it is always helpful. Ultimately, what you will come away knowing is more about the original “rules of the game” regarding the set up of the US system, particularly through the Constitution of 1788 and the Bill of Rights in 1791, and important drivers for either change or stasis.

We meet each week on Monday mornings from 9:35-11:25, and you have a one hour TA session each week additionally. I will present topics from the slides posted prior to each class. Each set of slides includes “structuring questions” to guide us through the key arguments. There will be other relevant videos/files posted to Brightspace. These are included to amplify points from class and TA sessions. The reference book to be used for the course is the Rice University open-text *American Government*, available for free download at [www.openstax.org](http://www.openstax.org) and posted on the Brightspace homepage.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, you will have achieved the ability to:

- 1) Identify and understand crucial aspects of why the US political framework is structured in the way it is-particularly regarding horizontal and vertical checks and balances.
- 2) Analyze the arguments used by both right and left-wing policy makers and citizens.
- 3) Decide whether the current actions of the US government fit with the Constitutional framers’ statements in 1787.
- 4) Contribute to the class in terms of your written and verbal participation.
- 5) Demonstrate the ability to have respectful, university-level conversations about the currently-polarized nature of US politics and the historical roots of this situation.

### **Assignments/Assessments:**

- 1) Midterm paper, 1500 words, due March 1 by 11 pm 40%

This will involve comparing at least one good and one less effective aspect of Congress, either as originally set out or as has evolved over time.

2) Participation in classes and TA groups, 15%

3) Take-home due by April 25, 2000 words 45%

This will involve assessing who we think the nominees will be for the November 2024 Presidential election, what we think the major issue (s) will be and whether the outcome will be close or not.

**Late assignments will receive a 1/3 grade penalty per day.**

### **Class Outline:**

#### **Module I-Overview of US Government and Checks and Balances**

##### **January 8 Overview**

Textbook, Ch. 1

##### **January 15 US Constitution and Federalism**

Textbook, Chs. 2, 3

##### **January 22 Civil Liberties**

Textbook, Ch. 4

##### **January 29 Civil Rights I**

Textbook, Ch. 5

##### **February 5 Civil Rights II (continued)**

#### **Module II-Institutions**

##### **February 12 Congress Part I**

Textbook, Ch. 11

##### **February 26 Congress Part II**

Readings posted to Brightspace

##### **March 4 Presidency**

Textbook, Ch. 12

### **March 11 Supreme Court and Federal-level courts**

Textbook, Ch. 13

## **Module III Political Behavior**

### **March 18 Political Parties**

Textbook, Ch. 9

### **March 25 Voting and Elections**

Textbook, Ch. 7

### **April 1 Look ahead to the 2024 elections**

Readings posted to Brightspace

### **April 8 Campaign Finance**

Readings to be posted to Brightspace

## **Appendix**

---

### **Student Mental Health**

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

**Emergency Resources (on and off campus):** <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- **Off Campus Resources:**
  - Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
  - Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
  - Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
  - Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
  - The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

## **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:

**Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances:** Please contact your instructor if you are experiencing circumstances that (a) are beyond your control, (b) have a significant impact your capacity to meet your academic obligations, and (c) could not have reasonably been prevented. Decisions on academic consideration are in your instructor's discretion; they will be guided by the course learning outcomes and the principle of good faith. Please see [here](#) for more details. For considerations relating to course work, your instructor may request that you complete the [Self-Declaration form](#). To apply for a deferral of your final exam, you must submit the Self-Declaration form to the Registrar's Office no later than three days after the scheduled examination or take-home due date.

**Pregnancy accommodation:** 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

**Religious accommodation:** 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 [click here](#).

**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](mailto: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, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

***Accommodation for student activities:*** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities 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. For more information, please [click here](#).

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

### **Sexual Violence Policy**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. 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](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support).

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

### ***Plagiarism***

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;

- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

### ***Use of Artificial Intelligence***

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

### ***Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations***

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

### **Intellectual property**

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. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

### **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

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 Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

### **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/>.

### **Official Course Outline**

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