

POL 101: Introduction to American Politics

Section 4: T/Th 2:30-3:45 in Anderson 021 (likely to be changed)

Instructor: Chris Lawrence <cnlawren@olemiss.edu>

Office: 208 Deupree Hall. Hours: T/Th 1:00-2:30 or by appointment.

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Course Web Page: <http://www.lordsutch.com/pol101/>

This course is designed to introduce you to the study of political science, with a particular focus on the politics of the United States. As the title of our text indicates, the *logic* or reasoning behind our political system will be highlighted. Students will be expected to think logically and rationally about American politics, and will be expected to demonstrate these abilities in their assignments.

Required Texts:

- Samuel Kernell and Gary C. Jacobson. 2000. *The Logic of American Politics*. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 1-56802-395-2. (K&J on syllabus.)
- Charles W. Dunn and Martin W. Slann. 2000. *American Government in Comparative Perspective*, 2nd edition. New York: Longman. ISBN 0-321-01201-1. (D&S on syllabus.)

These textbooks should be available at area bookstores (if they aren't, please let me know!). You may also be able to order it from retailers on the Internet at a discount.

You do not need a copy of *The Federalist Papers*, as the relevant papers are included in your textbooks. However, if you want a copy for your own purposes, I recommend the Penguin edition, which includes a good introduction and uses a more readable font than the more common (and less expensive) paperback edition.

Additional readings may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and will be provided for you either at the library reserve desk or as handouts in class.

Assignments and Grading: For the purposes of this syllabus, the "assigned materials" include any readings specifically assigned on the syllabus and all subjects and materials covered by the instructor during class.

There will be three examinations, including the final examination, on the dates that are indicated on the syllabus. The exams may include multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. These examinations will account for 90% of your final grade in the course. Your examination grade will be calculated in two ways:

1. All exams weighted equally (30% each).
2. Lowest exam grade weighted 20%, other exams weighted 35% each.

The grade used to calculate your final average will be the greater of these two weighted averages. This way, if you mess up the one exam, you can redeem yourself on the other two exams.

The remaining 10% of your grade will be based on your performance on other assignments, such as quizzes.

In addition, students may receive opportunities for extra credit, both in the context of examinations and in separate assignments. *All students will receive identical opportunities for extra credit.* Extra credit questions and assignments may be culled from beyond the assigned readings and lectures. In addition, extra consideration may be given for classroom participation to students who are on the bubble between one grade and another.

Policies: Attendance at class is required, per university policy. Please discuss any planned absences with me at least two weeks in advance.

The instructor reserves the right to add assignments, such as quizzes, at his own discretion.

Any form of **cheating or plagiarism**, or any other form of academic misconduct as defined by the current edition of the *M Book*, will be punished. The minimum consequence of any academic misconduct will be a failing grade on the assignment in question; more egregious (or repeated) violations may lead to disciplinary action through University procedures. Students are strongly advised to consult the instructor if they believe they may be in danger of violating this policy.

Students are expected to demonstrate basic proficiency in communicating using the English language, as defined by Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* and other references. Poorly-written assignments and responses to essay questions may receive reduced credit.

Students will be expected to demonstrate their oral communication skills through classroom discussion. Oral communication competency will be evaluated in terms of appropriate interactive skills, adequate oral delivery, the ability to construct a clear and logical message, and the ability to communicate in the context of the discipline.

This syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor.

Make-ups:

Per university policy, students will not be permitted to make up or reschedule the final examination. Other examinations may be made up at the instructor's discretion. Make up examinations must be scheduled two weeks in advance in the case of an **unavoidable** planned absence; otherwise, make ups will be given only in the case of an illness or emergency that is **documented** with a doctor's note dating from *prior* to the exam. Any student health center note describing vague symptoms dated the day of, or after, the exam will not be accepted. All make up examinations will consist *entirely* of essay questions.

Quizzes may not be made up; however, students who have been excused in advance from a class in which a quiz is given will have that quiz dropped from their average.

Dates Class Will Not Meet:

This class will not meet, and no office hours will be held, on the following days:

SPSA conference: November 8.

University holidays: November 20, 22 (Thanksgiving).

Your instructor reserves the right to cancel class on additional days with one session's advance notice. He may also adjust the syllabus as needed in light of the speed of the progress of the class; however, the exam dates will not change barring unforeseen circumstances.

Course Outline:

Date(s)	Topic	Readings (chapters)
Aug 21	First Meeting	
Aug 23	Introduction to the course and the study of politics.	K&J 1; D&S 1
Aug 28, 30	The Constitution	K&J 2; D&S 2
Sep 4, 6	Federalism	K&J 3; D&S 3; <i>Federalist</i> 51
Sep 11, 13, 18	Civil Rights	K&J 4; D&S 13
Sep 24	Drop Date	
Sep 20, 25	Civil Liberties	K&J 5; D&S 13
Sep 27	Exam 1	
Oct 2, 4, 9	Congress	K&J 6; D&S 9
Oct 11, 16	Presidency	K&J 7; D&S 10
Oct 18, 23	The Bureaucracy	K&J 8; D&S 11
Oct 25, 30	The Judiciary	K&J 9; D&S 12
Nov 1	Political Culture and Ideology	D&S 4
Nov 6	Exam 2	
Nov 8	No Class	
Nov 13, 15	Public Opinion and the Media	K&J 10, 14; D&S 5
Nov 20, 22	No Class	
Nov 27, 29	Campaigns, Elections, and Parties	K&J 11–12, D&S 7–8
Dec 4, 6	Interest Groups	K&J 13; D&S 6; <i>Federalist</i> 10
Dec 15	Exam 3 — Saturday, 8 a.m.	

Changes to this schedule will be announced in class and will be posted to the course web site.