



Course Syllabus

Introduction to American Government

GVPT 170
Fall 2019

Learning Outcomes

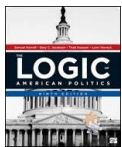
This course introduces students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. The course is framed around understanding collective action problems. A collective action problem exists when people would be better off if they cooperated, but they can't help acting in their own interests, even if that makes everyone worse off. Over time, the U.S. has developed institutions to solve many collective action problems. We will investigate the kinds of collective action problems we have faced in our history, the solutions we've come up with to address them, and the success we've had in resolving them. Students will be strongly encouraged to apply the basic ideas of politics to current events, as well as to how government affects their own lives.

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

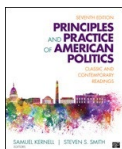
- To understand the structures and processes of American government and politics, the collective action challenges inherent in this system, and the practical implications of political structure and contestation in our lives.
- To develop critical reading skills, especially the ability to integrate both theoretical arguments and empirical evidence.
- To demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contemporary political debates.

Required Resources

Course website: <https://umd.instructure.com/courses/1267616>



The Logic of American Politics
Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser and Vavreck
Ninth Edition (2019).



Principles and Practice of American Politics
Kernell and Smith (Editors)
Seventh Edition (2019)

Bundle ISBN#9781544390727

E-Books Bundle ISBN# 9781544390833



You need to purchase a physical “clicker.” Visit the Students section of clickers.umd.edu for details. **You may not use a phone app**, and you will want some spare CR2032 batteries.

Dr. Stella Rouse

srouse@umd.edu

Class Meets

Lectures

Mondays & Wednesdays
10:00am – 10:50am
LeFrak #2205

Discussion Sections

Refer to your schedule

Office Hours

Mon & Wed 1-2 pm
and by appointment
Tydings #1137

Teaching Assistants

Victoria Worley

Sections: 101, 102, and 103
vtworley@umd.edu

Brittany Frechette

Sections: 104, 105, and 106
bfrechet@umd.edu

Nick Miras

Sections: 107, 108, and 109
nmiras@terpmail.umd.edu

Course Communication

We will use ELMS as our primary source of communication. Students are responsible for ensuring they know how to use ELMS and that their email is registered. Lack of communication with ELMS is not an excuse for not being aware of class schedule changes. Please be professional in your communication/correspondence.

Other Resources

- Included in bundle (at no additional cost) is “2018 Congressional Elections” Elizabeth Theiss-Morse and Michael Wagner. We will be discussing this small book/pamphlet during our section on Elections.
- Textbook (The Logic of American Politics) and the reader (Principals and Practice) are available on reserve at the UMD Library’s “Top Textbook on Reserve” program. The books can be checked out for 4 hours at a time. **The latest edition of the books may not be available on reserve. You are responsible for material not covered in earlier book editions.** More information about the program can be found here: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/access/top-textbooks>
- “The Logic of American Politics” student companion website: <https://edge.sagepub.com/kernell9e>
This site is a particularly good resource for review of course materials.
- Student resources for “The Logic of American Politics” in ELMS
- Additional course readings will be assigned throughout the semester. These readings will be provided as website links and/or articles, and will be used to complement the textbooks and the lectures.
- Current events make up an important component of this course. As such, students will be required to stay informed about the major events making news (via web, tv/radio, newspaper, etc.)

Course Expectations

In line with a college-level course, students are expected to complete reading assignments before class and to participate in any discussion of relevant subject matters. Irregular attendance and non-completion of the reading assignments will be reflected in the student’s overall class performance. Further, students are expected to exhibit the ability to be analytical, to grasp concepts and theories, and to convey an understanding of the material both during class/section discussions and through written assignments.

Students are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to learning. As such, our classroom will be a place where people can feel comfortable expressing diverse opinions without fear of ridicule or intimidation. It is expected that students will remain respectful of others, regardless of whether or not they share similar opinions and beliefs. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed.

Texting or talking on cell phones, having independent conversations during lecture/class discussions, and repeatedly coming to class tardy or leaving early will not be tolerated.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

In particular, I will highlight two policies:

- 1) **Academic Integrity:** The work done in this course is expected to be solely the effort of each individual student. Cheating and plagiarism (representing the words or ideas of others as one's own or copying the work of another without giving proper credit) will not be tolerated. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the course (regardless of prior class achievement) and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you are unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the Office of Student Conduct's "What is Academic Dishonesty?" available here: <https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/academic-dishonesty>
- 2) **Students Who Need Accommodations:** Every effort will be made to accommodate students who are registered with Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) and who provide a University of Maryland ADS Accommodation form. This form must be presented to your TA **no later than September 8, 2019**. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with ADS or who fail to provide the necessary documentation. I will not allow make-ups to ADS students if the information is provided **after** exams are taken.

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Electronic Device Policy

No computers, phones or tablet devices are permitted during our class meetings. I understand and have considered arguments for permitting laptops and tablet computers in the classroom. However, in my experience (and based on the research evidence) the reality is that they present an irresistible distraction and detract from the cooperative learning environment. Researchers have found that these distractions do in fact interfere with learning and active participation. For that reason, **the use of computers and phones will not be permitted during class meetings (except when required for ADS accommodations).** If a computer is needed to accomplish a class objective for the day, I will provide it or give you advanced notice to bring one with you.

I expect you to make the responsible and respectful decision to refrain from using your cellphone in class. If you have critical communication to attend to, please excuse yourself and return when you are ready. For more information about the science behind the policy watch: youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk

Get Help When You Need It!

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit tutoring.umd.edu to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. In particular, everyone can use some help sharpening their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting ter.ps/writing and scheduling an appointment with the campus Writing Center. You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (see go.umd.edu/assistance), and if you just need someone to talk to, visit counseling.umd.edu or [one of the many other resources on campus](#).



Most services are free because you have already paid for them, and **everyone needs help...** all you have to do is ask for it.

Learning Assessments

Learning Assessments	#	Points Each	Category Total	Category Weight
Pre-Class Quizzes (PCQ): pre-class reading quizzes via ELMS	10	10	100	15%
Clicker Questions (CQs): in-class “clicker” questions	145	1	145*	10%
Reaction Papers: short writing assignments	5	20	100	20%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	25%
Final Exam	1	100	100	30%
Total Points:			545	100%

*Note: CQ points are calculated at about 4 points per each class meeting (starting on September 4th) across 36 meetings (including both lecture and section meetings). It is likely that in some meetings there will be a few more or a few less CQs. The total will be around 145 points.

Grading Procedures

- Pre-class Quizzes (PCQ): There will be **ten PCQs** throughout the semester. Each will be due prior to the class when the topic will be discussed (via ELMS). The material you are responsible for knowing prior to taking each PCQ is outlined in the course schedule below. The first PCQ is on information contained in the syllabus (i.e., a syllabus quiz). This is an easy way to earn 10 points! You will be able to take the syllabus quiz until you earn a perfect score.
- Clicker Questions (CQs): Each class lecture will contain questions that you are expected to answer based on the assigned readings. There will be **on average about four CQs per lecture** (beginning Wednesday, September 4th), but it may vary a bit from meeting to meeting. I will count eight points as additional credit (about two class meetings-worth) at the end of the semester to account for absences, delays, and or technical problems that are encountered throughout the semester. **It is your responsibility to make sure your clicker is registered and working.**
- Writing Assignments: Students will be required to submit **five** writing assignments during the semester. The assignment needs to be about two pages in length and follow the format that will be discussed in class. Further details about the rules of this assignment will be given in class.
- Exams: There will be two exams – a midterm and a final. Each will be a combination of multiple choice/identification, matching and/or short answer questions. The exams are designed to test your familiarity with the lecture material, reading assignments, and your independent ability to apply what you have learned. The final exam will not be explicitly cumulative, but inevitably, concepts covered throughout the course will be applicable.

The T.A.'s have primary responsibility for the grading of exams, assignments, and quizzes. If you have questions or concerns about your grade, please discuss it first with your T.A. during her/his office hours. Any grade disputes must be made in writing (with original document) to your T.A. no less than 24 hours and no more than 1 week after assignment is returned. Please note that in considering a dispute, the entire assignment, quiz, or exam in question is open to re-grading. In the rare circumstance where a dispute is not resolved by the T.A., Dr. Rouse will make a final decision.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. Grades will be rounded to the first decimal with .5 being the cutoff to round up to the next letter grade (exp. 79.4 is a C+ and 79.5 is a B-). To be fair to everyone, I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same thing as making the cut. It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. Please do not email your T.A. or me requesting exceptions to this rule.

Final Grade Cutoffs					
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%
		+		+	67.00%
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%
		D		F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%
		-		-	60.00%

Exam Make-ups and Late Assignments

I will only consider exam make-ups under specific and compelling documented emergencies (serious illness, accident, family crises, etc.) or university-authorized absences. I try to avoid major grading events (e.g. exams, writing deadlines) on major religious holidays. However, if for some reason a major grading event is scheduled for or due on a religious holiday a student observes, the student must notify their T.A., in writing, prior to the end of the second week of the semester and arrange to take the exam or turn in assignment prior to that date. Note that having other assignments or exams due on the same day or having computer problems are not considered emergency situations. Make-up exams or assignments may differ in format from the original ones given.

Penalty for unexcused late assignments are as follows: a deduction of a full letter grade (or 10 points) if assignment is completed after the due date and time; a deduction of an additional letter grade (or 10 points) for every day late after due date (including weekends). **Please note that the university attendance/absence policy or my policy does not apply to days when exams or assignments are due.**

Please refer to the University’s policy on attendance here:

<https://president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/files/documents/policies/V-100G.pdf>

Course Schedule

PCQ = Pre-Class Quiz submitted on-line via ELMS by 8:00 am that day

Writing assignments are due on Fridays before section meetings

DATE		DURING OUR CLASS MEETING	DUE BEFORE CLASS MEETING
WEEK 1			
Mon	8/26	Course overview and class procedures	Buy books, register clicker, access ELMS
Wed	8/28	The Logic of American Politics	Read Ch. 1 Kernell et al.
WEEK 2			
Mon	9/2	No Class (Labor Day Holiday)	
Wed	9/4	The Logic of American Politics (cont.)	Read Ch. 1 Kernell et al. PCQ 1: Syllabus
WEEK 3			
Mon	9/9	The Constitution	Read Ch. 2 Kernell et al. PCQ 2: Logic of Am. Politics and The Constitution
Wed	9/11	The Constitution (cont.)/Federalism	Read Chs. 2&3 Kernell et al.
WEEK 4			
Mon	9/16	Federalism (cont.)	Read Ch. 3 Kernell et al. PCQ 3: Federalism
Wed	9/18	Civil Rights	Read Ch. 4 Kernell et al. Writing assignment #1 due 9/20
WEEK 5			
Mon	9/23	Civil Rights (cont.)/ Civil Liberties	Read Chs. 4&5 Kernell et al.
Wed	9/25	Civil Liberties (cont.)	Read Ch. 5 Kernell et al. PCQ 4: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
WEEK 6			
Mon	9/30	Congress	Read Ch. 6 Kernell et al.
Wed	10/2	Congress (cont.)	Read Ch. 6 Kernell et al. Writing assignment #2 due 10/4
WEEK 7			
Mon	10/7	The Presidency (Miras Lecture)	PCQ 5: Congress and The Presidency Read Ch. 7 Kernell et al.
Wed	10/9	The Presidency (cont.)	Read Ch. 7 Kernell et al.
WEEK 8			
Mon	10/14	Exam Review	Study Chapters 1-7; Bring questions to class
Wed	10/16	*MIDTERM EXAM*	Rub Testudo for good luck! And Study!!

WEEK 9		
Mon	10/21	The Bureaucracy Read Ch. 8 Kernell et al.
Wed	10/23	The Bureaucracy (cont.)/The Federal Judiciary Read Chs. 8&9 Kernell, et al. PCQ 6: The Bureaucracy and The Federal Judiciary
WEEK 10		
Mon	10/28	The Federal Judiciary (cont.) Read Ch. 9 Kernell et al.
Wed	10/30	Public Opinion Read Ch. 10 Kernell et al. PCQ 7: Public Opinion Writing assignment #3 due 11/1
WEEK 11		
Mon	11/4	Public Opinion (cont.) Read Ch. 10 Kernell et al.
Wed	11/6	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections Read Chs. 11 Kernell, et al. and 2018 Congressional Elections PCQ 8: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
WEEK 12		
Mon	11/11	Voting, Campaigns and Elections (cont.) Read Ch. 11 Kernell/Cong. Elec
Wed	11/13	Political Parties Read Chs. 12 Kernell et al. PCQ 9: Political Parties
WEEK 13		
Mon	11/18	Political Parties (cont.) Read Ch. 12 Kernell et al.
Wed	11/20	Interest Groups Read Ch.. 13 Kernell et al. Writing assignment #4 due 11/22
WEEK 14		
Mon	11/25	Interest Groups (cont.)/The Media Read Chs. 13&14 Kernell et al. PCQ 10: Interest Groups and The Media
Wed	11/27	No Class- Thanksgiving Holiday
WEEK 15		
Mon	12/2	The Media (cont.) Read Ch. 14 Kernell et al.
Wed	12/4	Catch Up Writing assignment #5 due 12/6
WEEK 16		
Mon	12/9	Exam Review Study chapters 8-14/ Questions for review
Tue	12/17	FINAL EXAM 8:00 am – 10:00 am

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.