
Political Science 40: Introduction to American Politics Summer Sessions C 2024

Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:45a.m.-12:50p.m. (Pacific Time)

Class Location: Zoom link, <https://ucla.zoom.us/j/96150732738>

Instructor: Grant Baldwin (baldwinegrant@g.ucla.edu)

Office Hours: Online, by appointment only

Why Study American Politics?

Tradition holds that as Dr. Benjamin Franklin left the halls of the Constitutional Convention in 1787 a woman waiting outside called to him and asked, "Well Doctor what have we got? A republic or a monarchy?" Franklin responded, "A republic, *if you can keep it*" [emphasis added].

The American experiment has long been lauded as a success story for democracy. The federal Constitution carefully harnesses individuals' ambitions to create a type of politics where the people's will rules but individual rights are still protected. It is worth noting, however, that for much of the union's history these rights were not equally extended to all Americans.

Now in the 21st century it seems Dr. Franklin's warning rings truer than ever. Many of the commonplace features of democratic governance have been put under scrutiny. Just in your lifetime, you have borne witness to unprecedented levels of political conflict and polarization, eroding trust in our nation's once respected political institutions, a mob's attempt to overthrow the results of an election, and an assassination attempt on a presidential candidate.

The first step to keeping our republic is learning how it works and how its citizens operate within it. Democracy, by its nature, requires much of its citizens. By taking this course, you will engage with some of the harder questions pressing on our civic lives.

Course Description:

Hello students! And welcome to Pol Sci 40! This course acts as an introduction to the way that political scientists analyze politics in the United States. Do not expect a simple rehash of what you learned in your high school government class. The course covers the basic problems humans run into as they attempt to make collectively binding decisions, with a particular focus on the United States of America as a case. Significant attention will be given to the factors that motivated the creation of the American political system and how that system operates in practice. Additionally, the course will prioritize the study of mass political behavior in the United States.

The course has no official prerequisites. This is a lower division course designed for first and second year undergraduate students, although all students are welcome to

enroll. For those wishing to declare Political Science as their major, this course satisfies one of the pre-major requirements.

A Note on Online & Summer Learning:

This class is to be held synchronously online during the “C” session of Summer Sessions. This means that while we are meeting virtually, you are required to attend class during our designated meeting time (10:45a.m.–12:50p.m. PST on Tuesdays and Thursdays). Be sure to join class from a place with a reliable internet connection and free from distractions. Recordings of our class meetings will not be posted after the fact.

Additionally, this Summer Sessions course squishes material from what would normally be taught in a ten week quarter into just six weeks! As such, it may feel like you have to read or write more in a shorter period of time compared to classes you normally take throughout the school year. However, with the proper amount of dedication, effective time management, and active participation in class sessions, you can succeed in the course and make the most of this learning experience.

Learning Outcomes:

Beyond attaining a mastery of the curriculum, at the end of this class students should be able to (1) more comfortably discuss (and disagree about) politics with others in a civil manner, (2) more confidently read and analyze primary historical sources and contemporary social science literature, and (3) more effectively craft written arguments from theory and evidence. Most of all, successful students in this course will attain tools that will allow them to act as better citizens as they practice politics in their everyday lives.

Expectations, Grading, and Assignments:

This syllabus acts as this course’s “constitution” in that it outlines the expectations surrounding the assignments, course schedule, and how grades will be calculated. Any questions about these items should be answered below. But, just like the U.S. Constitution, this syllabus is a “living” document, meaning that any information provided here is subject to change throughout the term. If anything does change, the change will be widely publicized.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

In-Class Participation	10%
Reading Quizzes	25%
Research Question Project	30%
<i>Proposal & Optional Consultation (5%)</i>	
<i>Annotated Bibliography (5%)</i>	

Final Paper (20%)
Final Exam

35%

And final letter grades will be allocated in this manner:

≥97%	A+
93-96%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
≤59%	F

In-Class Participation – Attendance in class sessions is essential for your success. Repeated or chronic absences will result in a poor participation grade and will also likely impede your ability to succeed on other assignments. If you cannot make it to class, please let me know ahead of time. When attending class, participation is expected. Participation can appear in many forms, such as contributing to class discussions, getting involved during learning activities, and refraining from using computers, tablets, and smartphones irresponsibly.

Reading Quizzes – Assigned readings are to be completed *before* the corresponding class session. Not only will you feel lost without having done them, but you also will not be able to fully contribute to discussions or participate in learning activities. To encourage proactive reading, an online reading quiz will be posted on the course website every week. The quizzes will cover the readings associated with each week and will close ten minutes *before* the Thursday class session every week (10:35a.m., PST). The lowest reading quiz score will be dropped from your final grade. This essentially means that you may miss one week's quiz for any reason without it hurting your grade.

With every assigned reading, I will post a corresponding set of guidance questions on the course website. The guidance questions serve to help you as you read to know what exactly I am expecting you to pull from the readings. Each reading will be associated with 2-4 guidance questions.

The reading quizzes will be two questions picked at random from any of the week's readings' associated guidance questions. You are to answer each question in less than 150 words and complete the quiz within a 20 minute time limit. You are free to refer to the

reading and your notes while you take the quiz, but the quiz must be taken by yourself. No collaboration with other students.

Research Question Project – The Research Question Project is this course’s version of a term paper. For this project, I am asking you to craft a question that asks to what extent a phenomenon *causes* another within the realm of American politics. These are the types of questions that modern day political scientists try to ask when they carry out their research. It is okay if you are unsure the answer to your question. That is, after all, why scientists ask questions and conduct research! Once you have established your question, you are to craft an argument that answers the question using evidence from existing high-quality political science research. The prompt for this project is as follows:

Throughout the course, we have focused on how we can use the scientific method to systematically study politics in the United States. The key to excellent scientific practice is to begin with an excellent question. In a 3-4 paged double-spaced paper,

- Identify a *causal* research question that asks the relationship between two theoretically related phenomena.
 - o A causal question differs from a descriptive question. A causal question asks, “to what extent does a change in X cause a change in Y?” These questions focus on understanding why something happens and the relationship between two variables. By contrast, a descriptive question only asks what is going on without trying to determine why it is happening. Some examples of causal questions in research on American politics would look like, “Does the partisanship of parents (X) determine the partisanship of their children (Y)?” or, “Do campaign donations from interest groups (X) affect how members of Congress vote on legislation (Y)?” Whereas a descriptive question would ask something like, “How often are women elected to the House of Representatives?”
- Find 3-5 high quality pieces of political science or other social science research that can help you answer your question. By high quality, I mean published in peer-reviewed journals or books by academic presses.
 - o Finding high quality scientific research to use as evidence in a writing assignment may be a new experience for you. Scientific articles and books are not always the first results that pop up from a Google search. Rest assured that there are plenty of easy ways to find the types of sources you are looking for. I recommend the following:
 - Google Scholar (like a Google search but for academic papers and books): <https://scholar.google.com>
 - JSTOR (another search type resource): <https://www.jstor.org>
 - UCLA Library’s Political Science Research Guide: <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/c.php?g=180384&p=1187951>
- Craft an argument that connects the theory, data, and evidence from the research you found to your research question. Provide a clear answer to your question early

on in the paper and use what you have learned from your research as evidence to support your answer.

You are free to ask a question on whatever aspect of American politics that interests you most. You are also free to use at most one of the course's assigned readings as one of your sources. This assignment is designed to prepare you for the type of research papers you may be assigned to write later on in higher division political science courses. The key to succeeding is asking a distinct question, making a clear stance on how you think the question should be answered, and finding and correctly synthesizing evidence from existing research to answer your question.

Leading up to the final draft, there will be a number of smaller assignments aimed to help guide you toward success.

- First, by Friday, August 16th at 11:59 p.m. you must submit your proposed question. Submit your proposal in a one page document that contains your name, the question you intend to ask, and the reference to one potential source you plan to refer to in the final assignment. This proposal will be worth 5% of your final grade.
- Second, from Monday, August 19th to Thursday, August 22nd you will be able to sign up for a one-on-one consultation with me to discuss your proposal. The consultations will take place over Zoom and will be shorter than 15 minutes. The consultation is optional but may be beneficial as you prepare to write the larger essay.
- Third, by Friday, August 30th at 11:59 p.m. you must submit an annotated bibliography. This bibliography should contain each of the 3-5 sources you plan to cite in your final draft. For each source, (1) write out the full citation for the source as it should appear in the Works Cited page in your final draft, (2) describe the source's research question, (3) describe the method the author(s) answer their question, i.e., the research methods or data they employ, (4) summarize the results, and (5) include a sentence or two that explain why the source will be useful in answering your original question.
- Lastly, the final draft of the paper will be due Monday, September 9th at 11:59 p.m. The paper needs to be 3-4 double spaced pages written in a professional font at 12pt. In addition, the essay must contain a Works Cited page that properly lists all of the sources you refer to in the text. The Works Cited page does not count toward the 3-4 page minimum requirement. This means the paper can be at the longest 5 pages total—4 pages of text, 1 Works Cited page. The paper should be written in, and sources should be cited according to the American Political Science Association (APSA)'s citation style. (For more information see, <https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/sample-page/references/>).

A grading rubric for the assignment's final draft will be posted on the course website prior to the assignment's deadline.

Final Exam – The final exam will serve the purpose of testing your knowledge of the curriculum and your ability to engage in scholarly arguments surrounding that curriculum. As such, you will not be necessarily expected to memorize names, dates, and places, but instead to engage with important ideas.

The final exam will be administered on the class website from Friday, September 13th at 7:00a.m. to Saturday, September 14th at 11:59p.m. The exam will be cumulative, meaning that it will cover all the course material from the beginning of the term. It will also consist of multiple choice style questions as well as four short answer essay questions, each requiring a response of no more than 150 words. While taking the test, you will have full access to your notes and the assigned readings. However, the test must be completed on your own – no collaboration with other students or peers. Once you open the test on the course website, you will have 6 hours to complete it – although I imagine many, if not most, students will complete it much more quickly than that.

The readings’ guidance questions, reading quizzes, class discussions, and Research Question project are designed to prepare you to succeed at answering the questions on the final exam. Final exam question prompts may be expanded or modified forms of previously provided reading guidance questions. This way, the reading guidance questions and feedback from previous reading quizzes can act as a study guide to prepare you for the exams.

Course Schedule:

Required readings will be posted in electronic form to the class website. There is no official textbook requirement. Although, you may buy physical copies of any of the books we read portions from if you so choose. All reading materials are also available either digitally or in print from the UCLA library. You may NOT distribute the online versions of the reading materials to anyone not enrolled in the course.

Class Session	Required Readings	Assignments
Week 1		
Session 1 (8/6): <i>Why Study American Politics? Can Politics be Scientific?</i>	(1) Course Syllabus (2) Allen (2020). “The Constitution Counted my Great-Grandfather as Three-fifths a Free Person, Here’s Why I Love it Anyway.” <i>The Atlantic</i> .	
Session 2 (8/8): <i>What Problems do Governments Solve?</i>	(1) Kollman (2011). “Collective Dilemmas and the Need for	Reading Quiz 1 closes, 10:35a.m.

<i>How Should We Expect People to Behave?</i>	Government." Excerpt from <i>The American Political System</i> . Pgs. 10-22. (2) Shepsle (2010). "Rationality: The Model of Choice." Excerpt from <i>Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions</i> . Pgs. 13-34.	
Week 2		
Session 3 (8/13): <i>Where Did Our Government Come From? How is it Supposed to Work?</i>	(1) Selections from Madison (1787). "Federalist Papers No. 10" and "Federalist Papers No. 51." (2) Dahl (2003). Excerpt from <i>How Democratic Is the American Constitution?</i> Pgs. 1-23, 37-39.	
Session 4 (8/15): <i>What Does it Mean to be Represented in Politics?</i>	(1) Dovi (2011). Excerpt from "Political Representation." In <i>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> . Pgs. 1-7. (2) Hayes & Hibbing (2017). "The Symbolic Benefits of Descriptive and Substantive Representation." <i>Political Behavior</i> 39: 31-50.	Reading Quiz 2 closes, 10:35a.m.
(8/16)		Research Question Project Proposal due, 11:59p.m.
Week 3		
Session 5 (8/20): <i>How Should We Expect Government Officials to Behave?</i>	(1) Herrick, Moore, & Hibbing (1994). "Unfastening the Electoral Connection: The Behavior of U.S. Representatives when Reelection Is No Longer a Factor." <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 56(1): 214-227. (2) Baum (1994). "What Judges Want: Judges' Goals and Judicial Behavior." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 47(3): 537-778.	
Session 6 (8/22):	(1) Aldrich (2011). "Why Parties Form." Excerpt from <i>Why Parties?: A Second Look</i> . Selection of pages.	Reading Quiz 3 closes, 10:35a.m.

***Are Political Parties
Bad for Democracy?
(pt. 1)***

Week 4

Session 7 (8/27):
***Can We Trust
Ordinary People to
Make Political
Decisions?***

(1) Achen & Bartels (2004). "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks."

Session 8 (8/29):
***Are Political Parties
Bad for Democracy?
(pt. 2)***

(1) Kalmoe & Mason (2022). "Radical Partisan Psychology." Excerpt from *Radical American Partisanship: Mapping the Violent Hostility, Its Causes, and the Consequences for Democracy*.

(2) Barber & Pope (2024). "Does Issue Importance Attenuate Partisan Cue-Taking?" *Political Science Research and Methods* 12(2): 435-43.

(8/30)

Research Question Project Annotated Bibliography due, 11:59p.m.

Week 5

Session 9 (9/3):
***Do Campaigns &
Elections Matter?***

(1) Jacobson (2015). "How Do Campaigns Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 31-47.

Session 10 (9/5):
***Why/When Do
People Turn-out to
Vote?***

(1) Gerber, Green, & Larimer (2008). "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.

Week 6

(9/9)

Research Question Project Final Draft due, 11:59p.m.

Session 11 (9/10): <i>How Does Race & Ethnicity Shape Politics in the U.S.?</i>	(1) Kinder (2023). "Prejudice and Politics." Excerpt from <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology</i> (3 rd Ed.).	
Session 12 (9/12): <i>How Do We Make Sense of U.S. Politics Moving Forward?</i>	(1) Hersh (2020). "College-Educated Voters Are Ruining American Politics." <i>The Atlantic</i> . (2) Not a reading assignment, but make sure you are registered to vote if you are eligible! Find information about how to make sure you are registered at https://www.vote.org . (3) See course website for links to volunteer with a number of political campaigns or organization. Democracy needs participation!	Reading Quiz 6 closes, 10:35a.m.
(9/13 - 9/14)	Final Exam open 7:00a.m. 9/13 - 11:59p.m. 9/14	

Statement on Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating, academic dishonesty, and plagiarism as defined in the UCLA Student Conduct Code ([102.01a-g](#), [102.02](#)) will not be tolerated. I will take instances of academic dishonesty very seriously and ignorance regarding how the university defines academic dishonesty is not an acceptable defense.

Plagiarism involves using another's work without the proper attribution. This can take the form of directly "copying and pasting" the written work of another or presenting another's ideas, data, or research as if it was created wholly by the student. If in doubt, cite the sources from which you are drawing your information. Any assignment submission in this course must be the original work of the student and acknowledge the sources from which it draws from.

For the purposes of this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) or large language learning models such as ChatGPT to procure any portion of a submitted written assignment is not permitted.

Statement on Assignment Deadlines & Late Work:

As a general rule, no assignment submission will be accepted after its posted due date. All assignment expectations and due dates are given up front at the beginning of

the term, so it is up to each student to manage their time effectively in order to submit assignments before they are due.

There is a limited set of circumstances where I would allow for an extension of an assignment deadline. These include a letter from the university's Center for Accessible Education (CAE) forwarded to me at the beginning of the term to ensure any special accommodations are met or an unforeseen incident such as a serious illness or accident. In either case, students wishing for extensions should reach out to me long before the assignment is due.

Resources for Students:

Center for Accessible Education (CAE) –

Facilitates academic accommodations for students with disabilities.

A255 Murphy Hall

(310) 825-1501

<https://www.cae.ucla.edu>

Title IX/Sexual Harassment Prevention Office –

Provides support for students that experience, witness, or wish to report instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

2255 Murphy Hall

(310) 206-3417

www.sexualharassment.ucla.edu

UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) –

Supports students' mental health needs.

(310) 825-0768 – 24/7 crisis support line

John Wooden Center West

221 Westwood Plaza

<https://counseling.ucla.edu>

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion –

Provides resources relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Report incidents of discrimination and harassment.

(310) 825-3935

welisten@equity.ucla.edu

<https://equity.ucla.edu/about-us/>

LGBTQ Campus Resource Center –

Provides education and advocacy services to foster a safe and inclusive environment for the LGBTQ community.

220 Westwood Plaza B36, Student Activities Center

acofino@lgbt.ucla.edu

<https://www.lgbtq.ucla.edu/>

Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC) –

Additional writing assistance for undergraduates. In-person, online, and walk in appointments. Multiple locations and times available across campus.

(310) 206-1320

<http://wp.ucla.edu/wc/>