

AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

University of Rochester

As part of the ECO Program 2023

PSCI101
Summer 2023
Office Hours: 12:00PM-2:00PM on Fridays

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This course focuses on the nature of American politics and voter behavior. It aims to provide students with the tools necessary to become educated consumers of news, absent the typical polemics, through the careful analysis of different aspects of American politics: American political foundations; political institutions; voter behavior; the politics of gender, race, and social identity; parties, campaigns, and applied topics; and political philosophy. We will also briefly discuss different methods employed in the academic study of American politics. You will be asked to demonstrate engagement with course material and themes through two examinations and a research paper. To engage with lecture materials most efficiently, I recommend completing assigned readings and videos prior to coming to class.

This course is broken into four units. We will cover one unit per week. Each class meeting will cover a specific topic within that unit. Each new topic (and unit) assumes you have thoroughly understood and engaged with past topics (and units) so **please bring questions about materials to class and email me if you worry you are falling behind.** That said, each topic and unit is somewhat independent, so an absence or falling behind need not negatively impact your course participation. The key is communication!

Office Hours and Student Engagement

This is a synchronous course which meets from 2:40pm-4:00PM EST on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in **Genesee 308**. My office hours are 12:00PM-2:00PM on Thursdays and my office is located in **Harkness 315**. If you have any questions about the course, political science, or college more generally, please do not hesitate to stop by. No need to set up an appointment. If my office hours don't work with your schedule, send me an email and we will set up a time to meet.

Course Requirements:

Participation: Students should come to class having engaged with lecture materials and be prepared to participate, verbally or nonverbally, in class. The course will facilitate class participation in two ways: First, reactions. We'll open each class with a check-in question to write about and then discuss reactions to the materials for that week—did you like it? Did you dislike it? How did it make you feel? Did it make you think? Did you agree or disagree with it? Does it reflect your experience? Secondly, reflections. I will offer written participation prompts at the beginning of each class.

Self-Assessments: On the first and last day of class, students will complete a self-assessment. The goal of the first self-assessment is for me, the instructor, to get a sense of what is common

knowledge in the room and tailor the course accordingly. The second self assessment is designed to be a tangible demonstration of your ability to learn effectively, as well as a way for me to see where students are struggling and update the course in future years.

Meetings: Students must book one 15-minute meeting with me to talk about their course progress and how they believe they are doing. I will send out a link to schedule these meetings after the first week of class. Students have until the end of the term to meet with me.

Required Textbook:

All readings will be provided either on the course site or as links in this syllabus.

Lecture Recording and Distribution

If you would like to record the class for educational purposes, or because of an accommodation, please let me know. We can place your recorder on the front desk or podium so it can easily pick up my voice. Recording these lectures without the instructor's consent, or an accommodation, is prohibited.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should register with the Office of Disability resources (<https://rochester.edu/college/disability/>) and furnish me with the appropriate paperwork as soon as possible so that I can accommodate your needs.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

The University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy (<https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy/index.html>).

Don't cheat. Don't plagiarize.

Civil Discourse

This class is an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected. Conversations in this course, in any context, must be respectful and civil. Speech that is abusive, harassing, intimidating, or coercive is prohibited. If you have questions about what this means, please talk to me.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

UNIT 1

7/11 - Syllabus + Introductions

Read: [How to Do Great Work](#)

Read: [A Guide to Success in This Course \(And Beyond!\)](#)

7/13 - American Political Foundations

Read: [Federalist 10](#)

Read: [Brutus 1](#)

Watch: "[Brutus vs. Publius](#)"

Watch: "[How is power divided in the United States government?](#)"

7/14 - The President and Congress

Watch: "[How Do Executive Orders Work?](#)"

Listen (or Read): "[How Much Power Does the President Really Have?](#)"

Read: [The United States Constitution](#)

UNIT 2

7/18 - Federalism

Read: [Federalist 39](#)

7/20 - The Judiciary

Read: [Marbury v. Madison](#)

Watch: "[How a Lawsuit Works](#)"

7/21 - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Watch: "[A 3-Minute Guide to the Bill of Rights](#)"

Read: [The Bill of Rights](#) (Amendments 1-10)

Read: [R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

Read: [United Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls, Inc.](#)

UNIT 3

7/25 - Voter Behavior

Watch: "[Why Vote?](#)"

Watch: "[Why Americans Don't Vote](#)"

Watch: "[What influences American voter turnout?](#)"

Watch: "[Does Your Vote Count?](#)"

Watch: "[Why You Don't Need to Vote](#)"

Watch: "[Gerrymandering.](#)"

7/27 - Parties

Read: [Menefee-Libey Chapter 1, 6, and 7.](#)

Watch: [Hans Hassell on Invisible Primaries](#)

7/28 - Candidates

Read: Are Parties Weak Or Strong, [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)

UNIT 4

8/1 - Social Movements

Watch: [This video](#) about Bayard Rustin and [this one](#)

Read: This [brief history of the KKK](#)

Watch: [This video](#) about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

(I recommend, but am not assigning the full documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFS8SpwioZ4>)

Watch: [This video on Social Constructs](#)

8/3 - Political Philosophy

Watch: "[Political Theory: John Locke](#)"

Watch: "[Political Theory: Thomas Hobbes](#)"

Watch: "[Political Theory: Niccolo Machiavelli](#)"

Watch: "[Political Theory: Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#)"

8/4 - Final