

Pol 160: Introduction to American Politics

Fall 2019

Dr. Chelsea Ebin
Email: cebin@rollins.edu
Tel.: 407-646-2852
Office: CSS 236
Office Hours: T/R 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

Pol 160-1: 8-8:50am, CSS #230
Pol 160-2: 10-10:50am, CSS #230

Course Description:

Reading the daily news, the American political system appears to be in a state of crisis. But are we really approaching some kind of institutional breakdown or is our system of government stable? For that, matter how do our political institutions really function? And how durable are they? In order to provide students with the tools to answer these questions, this course introduces students to the study of American politics by focusing on three main core subject areas: 1) The foundations of the American political system, including the creation of American political culture; 2) American political institutions, including the Congress, Presidency, and the Courts; and 3) Political Parties and Elections, including the influence of special interest groups and the media.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand and explain the historical and theoretical foundations of the American political system;
- Identify and explain core institutions of American government;
- Critically engage with debates on key issues in American politics, including partisanship, polarization, interest group financing, gerrymandering, and social movement activism.

Books and Readings

Required Books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore and online.

The Logic of American Politics (Ninth edition), by Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. Abbreviated on syllabus as LAP

Principles and Practice of American Politics (Seventh Edition), ed. Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith. Abbreviated on syllabus as PPAP.

- **(PDF):** Stand-alone academic articles and book chapters that are designated PDF on the schedule will be available on Blackboard.

- **Online:** Many sources that are readily accessible online have been hyper-linked in the schedule of readings. To access these readings, navigate to the syllabus posted on Blackboard and click on the hyper-linked reading.
- **Students are expected to subscribe to and read a newspaper of their choice**

Assignments/ Grading

Participation: 10%

Pop Quizzes on Assigned Readings and/or News: 10%

Weekly Canvas Posts: 30% (10 @ 3% each)

In-Class Mid-Term Exam: 20%

In-Class Final Exam: 30%

Evaluation Criteria:

Student grade reports are based on the following definitions.

- Grade 'A' is reserved for work that is exceptional in quality and shows keen insight, understanding, and initiative.
- Grade 'B' is given for work that is consistently superior and shows interest, effort, or originality.
- Grade 'C' is a respectable grade. It reflects consistent daily preparation and satisfactory completion of all work required.
- Grade 'D-' is the lowest passing grade. It is below the average necessary to meet graduation requirements and ordinarily is not accepted for transfer by other institutions.
- Grade 'F' is failing.

All written assignments must be submitted electronically prior to the start of class. A late assignment will lose one full letter grade (10%) for each day (24-hour period) it is submitted after the due date. For example, if you have a written assignment that is due at the start of class on Tuesday, January 29th at 9:30 am and you submit this assignment any time after 9:30am on the 29th but before 9:30am on the 30th, you would lose one letter grade.

Course Schedule*

All assigned reading should be completed prior to that day's class.

****Reading schedule subject to change at professor's discretion.***

Week 1:

Monday, August 26 – [Commencement Schedule] Course Introduction

Wednesday, August 28: LAP, Chapter One, ‘The Logic of American Politics.’

Friday, August 30: Guest Lecture with Professor Montgomery on selecting media sources.

Week 2:

Monday, September 2 – NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 4: LAP, Chapter Two, The Constitution; The Constitution, appendix LAP.

Friday, September 6: ***Canvas Post Due.***

Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*, Appendix A on the Terms “Democracy” and “Republic,” (PDF); Gordon Wood, Introduction to The Radicalism of the American Revolution (3-8); Gordon Wood, Sections III and V (on Revolution and Republicanism), *The American Revolution* (PDF).

*Last day to withdraw without transcript notation

Week 3:

Monday, September 9: The Federalists: Federalist Papers # 1, 10, 51 and Anti-Federalists: Brutus #1, 3, 4

Wednesday, September 11: PPAP: 2-3, Samuel Kernell, “The True Principles of Republican Government: Reassessing James Madison’s Political Science”; [Jeffrey Rose, “America is Living James Madison’s Nightmare,” *The Atlantic*.](#)

Friday, September 13: ***Canvas Post Due.***

Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*, Chapters 1, 3, 6 (PDF).

Week 4:

Monday, September 16: In-class activity: What, if anything, would you change about the US Constitution?

Begin reading LAP: Chapter Three, Federalism

Wednesday, September 18: LAP: Chapter Three, Federalism

Friday, September 20: ***Canvas Post Due.***

PPAP: 3-1, Donald F. Kettl, “Federalism: Sorting Out Who Does What.”

Week 5:

Monday, September 23: LAP: Chapter Four: Civil Rights

Wednesday, September 25: PPAP: 4-1, Rebekah Herrick, “Public Opinion and Minority Interests”; Haider-Markel, Donald P., Alana Querze, and Kara Lindaman. "Lose, Win, or Draw?: A Reexamination of Direct Democracy and Minority Rights." *Political Research Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2007): 304-14 (PDF)

Friday, September 27: ***Canvas Post Due.***

Kiefer Cox, “The Voting Rights Act under Review: Shelby County v. Holder and the Consequences of Change,” 60 Wayne L. Rev 493 (2014-15) (PDF).

Week 6:

Monday, September 30: LAP: Chapter Five, Civil Liberties

Wednesday, October 2: PPAP: 5-1, Jonathan Rauch, “In Defense of Prejudice: Why Incendiary Speech Must Be Protected.”

[Snyder v. Phelps](#): Read outline and Court decision

Friday, October 4: ***Canvas Post Due.***

Free Speech: [The First Amendment and Social Media, Teen Vogue](#); [Regulating Free Speech on Social Media, Brookings Institute](#);

Civil Asset Forfeiture: [Sarah Stillman, “Taken,” The New Yorker](#); [Timbs vs. Indiana](#) (facts and conclusion); [Defining What's Excessive In Police Property Seizures Remains Tricky, NPR](#)

Week 7:

Monday, October 7: LAP: Chapter 6: The Congress

Wednesday, October 9: Excerpt from Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress by Barbara Sinclair (PDF)

Friday, October 11: ***Canvas Post Due.***

PPAP 6-2, Sarah A. Binder, “Legislating in Polarized Times”; Cynthia R. Farina, “Congressional Polarization: Terminal Constitutional Dysfunction?” (PDF)

Week 8:

Monday, October 14 – NO CLASS

Wednesday, October 16: MIDTERM REVIEW

Friday, October 18: IN-CLASS MIDTERM

Week 9:

Monday, October 21: LAP: Chapter 7: The Presidency

Wednesday, October 23: PPAP: 7-1, Richard E. Neustadt, from “Presidential Power”; 7-2, Samuel Kernell, from “Going Public”; 7-3 Shirley Anne Warshaw, “The Struggle to Govern in the Trump White House: Competing Power Centers, Personalities, and World Visions.”

Friday, October 25: ***Canvas Post Due.***

LAP: Chapter Nine: The Federal Judiciary

Week 10:

Monday, October 28: PPAP: 9-1, Antonin Scalia from “A Matter of Interpretation,”; 9-2, Stephen Breyer, from “Active Liberty.”

Wednesday, October 30: LAP: Chapter 11: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Friday, November 1: ***Canvas Post Due.***

PPAP: 11-1, Samuel L. Popkin, from “The Reasoning Voter”; 11-2, Gary C. Jacobson, “No Compromise: The Electoral Origins of Legislative Gridlock”; 11-3, Michael Schudson, “America’s Ignorant Voters”

Week 11:

Monday, November 4: LAP: Chapter 12, Political Parties

Wednesday, November 6: PPAP: 10-2, Morris P. Fiorina, from “Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America”; 12-2, Lee Drutman, “Doom-Loop Partisanship.”

Friday, November 8: ***Canvas Post Due.***

Noel, Hans. “Ideological Factions in the Republican and Democratic Parties.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667, no. 1 (September 2016): 166–88 (PDF); [German Lopez, “The Supreme Court’s big racial gerrymandering decision, explained,” Vox](#).

*Last day to withdraw from class (W deadline)

Week12:

Monday, November 11:

LAP: Chapter 13: Interest Groups

Wednesday, November 13: In-Class Screening of *Dark Money*

Excerpt from Mark Rozell, et al., *Interest Groups in American Campaigns: The New face of Electioneering* (PDF).

Friday, November 15: In-Class Screening of *Dark Money*

PPAP: 13-1, E.E. Schattschneider, “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System”

Week13:

Monday, November 18: LAP: Chapter 14: The News Media

Wednesday, November 20: Kevin Roose, [“The Making of a Youtube Radical,” The New York Times](#); Excerpt from Robert Faris, et al. [Partisanship, Propaganda, and Disinformation: Online Media and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election](#) (August 2017). Berkman Klein Center Research Publication 2017-6 (PDF); PPAP: 14-1, Hunt Alcott and Matthew Gentzkow, “Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election.”

Friday, November 22: ***Canvas Post Due.***

Chapter 3 from [Earl and Kimport, Digitally Enabled Social Change](#); Freelon, Deen, Charlton McIlwain, and Meredith Clark. “Quantifying the Power and Consequences of Social Media Protest.” *New Media & Society* 20, no. 3 (March 2018): 990–1011 (PDF);

Week 14:

Monday, November 25: Doug McAdam, et al., "There Will be Fighting in The Streets": The Distorting Lens of Social Movement Theory," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*: February 2005; Ruth Milkman, "A New Political Generation: Millennials and the Post-2008 Wave of Protest," *American Sociological Review* (PDF).

Wednesday, November 27 – NO CLASS

Friday, November 29 – NO CLASS

Week 15:

Monday, December 2:
The Trump Presidency (PDF)

Wednesday, December 4: 2020 Election
Reading TBA

Friday, December 6: In-Class Final Review

Final Exam Schedule:

Pol 160-1 (8 AM class): Monday, December 9th from 2 PM –4 PM

Pol 160-2 (10 AM class): Monday, December 9th from 11 AM – 1 PM

Course and College Policies:**Note on classroom decorum**

This course asks students to engage with many of the most polarizing questions in American politics. A plurality of views are presented in our course readings and will be discussed in class. Students are encouraged to critically engage with the readings in order to formulate and express their own perspectives on these issues. The classroom should be a place where we debate political ideas and policies freely; for everyone to feel empowered to speak, students must be committed to civil and respectful dialogue. Students are expected to refrain from ad hominem attacks and to ground their positions in relation to established political theories and empirical evidence. **Furthermore, electronic use is prohibited in the classroom unless given permission by the professor. If you would like to use electronic devices in this class, please meet with the professor during office hours or by appointment.**

Participation Rubric

10 pts Stellar attendance and <i>daily</i> participation that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics. (0-1 absences)	8 pts Strong attendance and consistent participation in course discussions that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics. (0-2 absences)	7 pts Strong attendance and some participation; OR average attendance and very strong participation in course discussions that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics (0-2 absences)	5 pts Strong attendance and little participation; OR average attendance and strong participation in course discussions that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics. (0-3 absences)	4-0 pts Average attendance with no participation; OR poor attendance with some participation; OR participation in course discussions does NOT reflect engagement with assigned readings and course topics. (2-4 absences)
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Attendance

Students may have one absence without any grade reduction and two absences without significant penalty. Three absences will result in a significant reduction of the student's grade. (For guidelines, see participation rubric.) Five or more absences may automatically result in a failing grade.

Recording Device Use

In order to protect the integrity of the classroom experience, the use of recording devices is limited to either the expressed permission of the faculty member or with proper documentation from the Office of Accessibility Services. Information about accommodations through Accessibility Services can be found at <http://www.rollins.edu/accessibility-services/>. Recording without the proper authorization is considered a violation of the Rollins Code of Community Standards.

Accessibility Services (updated 5/20/19)

Rollins College is committed to equal access and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 create a foundation of legal obligations to provide an accessible educational environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. It is the spirit of these laws that guides the college toward expanding access in all courses and programs, utilizing innovative instructional design, and identifying and removing barriers whenever possible.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services, located on the first floor of the Olin Library, as soon as possible. You are encouraged to schedule a Welcome Meeting by filling out the "First Time Users" form on the

website: <https://www.rollins.edu/accessibility-services> and/or reach out by phone or email: 407-975-6463 or Access@Rollins.edu.

All test-taking accommodations requested for this course must first be approved through the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and scheduled online through *Accommodate at least 72 hours before the exam*. Official accommodation letters must be received by and discussed with the faculty in advance. There will be no exceptions given unless previously approved by the OAS with documentation of the emergency situation. We highly recommend making all testing accommodations at the beginning of the semester. OAS staff are available to assist with this process.

Academic Honor Code Reaffirmation (updated 7/18/18)

<http://www.rollins.edu/honor-code/documents/academic-honor-code-rollins-college.pdf>

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. The student commitment to uphold the values of honor - honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility - particularly manifests itself in two public aspects of student life. First, as part of the admission process to the College, students agree to commit themselves to the Honor Code. Then, as part of the matriculation process during Orientation, students sign a more detailed pledge to uphold the Honor Code and to conduct themselves honorably in all their activities, both academic and social, as a Rollins student. A student signature on the following pledge is a binding commitment by the student that lasts for his or her entire tenure at Rollins College.

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others. This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to the paper, quiz, test, lab report, etc., the handwritten signed statement:

"On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work."

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Citation Expectations

As per the Academic Honor Code, plagiarism is defined as “Offering the words, facts, or ideas of another person as your own in any academic exercise.” In order to avoid plagiarism, all students are expected to use proper citation norms. **This includes citing *all* works you have consulted in your bibliography and providing citations in the body of your written work for all material that is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. For our course, all assignments will use Chicago Manual of Style or MLA citations.**

Absences – religious holidays and/or campus business (catalogue website updated 8/19)

The professor will accommodate a reasonable number of excused absences for religious holidays and official off-campus college business such as academic conference presentations and athletic competitions. However, per the College's policy on excused absences (<https://catalog.rollins.edu/>), students must discuss with the professor the dates of the anticipated absences no later than the last day of the drop period. Students must present to their professor written evidence of the anticipated absences and discuss with him/her how and when make-up work should be completed prior to missing the class. Students should not expect to receive allowance for excused absences if they do not meet with the professor beforehand and clarify the dates as necessary. Absences will be addressed by the faculty member in accordance with his/her attendance policy. The professor retains the right to determine what would be considered to be a reasonable number of absences (excused or otherwise) for the course. A student will not fail a course because the number of religious observances and/or college business absences exceed the number of absences allowed, except if excessive absences make it impossible to fulfill the expectations of the course. The student's class participation grade in the course, though, may still be affected.

Credit Hour Statement for Rollins Courses

This course is a four-credit-hour course that meets three hours per week. The value of four credit hours results, in part, from work expected of enrolled students both inside and outside the classroom. Rollins faculty require that students average at least 2 ½ hours of outside work for every hour of scheduled class time. In this course, the additional outside-of-class expectations are the completion of: all readings prior to class and 10 Canvas posts.

Title IX Statement (updated 5/20/19)

Rollins College is committed to making its campus a safe place for students. If you tell any of your faculty about sexual misconduct involving members of the campus community, your professors are required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. Your faculty member can help connect you with the Title IX Coordinator, (TitleIX@rollins.edu or 407.691.1773). You will be provided with information, resources and support. If you would prefer to speak to someone on campus confidentially, please call the Wellness Center at 407.628.6340. They are not required to report any information you share with the Title IX Coordinator.

Misconduct under Title IX includes gender-based discrimination and harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence including fondling and assault, sexual coercion/force, sexual-based communication, sexual exploitation, interpersonal violence including dating and domestic violence, stalking, complicity and retaliation. Everyone is protected under the following protected statuses: sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity (including transgender status), gender expression, and sexual orientation. For information, visit <https://www.rollins.edu/sexual-misconduct/>.