Course Description

This course is an introduction to American Politics. However, it will go beyond a simple survey of the civics, law, and history of the American political system. First, our focus will be on the scientific understanding of politics. We will examine how various agents and institutions inside and outside governments interact with each other. More specifically, we will emphasize goal-directed behavior on the part of political agents, who operate within an institutional setting and an historical context. Second, our ultimate goal is to have liberal education. By engaging live discussions and debates with each other, students can develop strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. The topics that we will intensively discuss include: (1) Constitution; (2) federalism; (3) individual rights and liberties; (4) Congress; (5) the presidency; (6) bureaucracy; (7) courts; (8) public opinion; (9) voting behavior; and (10) interest groups.

Prerequisites

No specific pre-requisite course except for high-school civic education.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. understand how the “collective-action” frameworks explain American Politics; for instance,
   a. Why was the Constitution constructed as it was?
   b. How do the President, Congress, bureaucratic agencies, and Supreme Court interact among one another?
2. analyze historical transformation of our democracy; for instance,
   a. How have state, local, and federal governing authorities interacted and coexisted?
   b. How have individual rights and liberties been protected and guaranteed?
   c. How do our federal governments, including Congress, the presidency, and the Supreme Court, evolve over time?
3. describe how our “representative” democracy works; for instance,
   a. How does each branch of our representative government work?
   b. Does the public provide clear signals to elected politicians?
   c. How do citizens arrive at their vote choices?
   d. How representative our federal governments are in reality?
4. lastly but most importantly, express their opinion on various reform issues by participating in the class debates.

This course fulfills the Social Science General Education Requirement (GER) through its focus on:

- the study of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and/or socio-cultural factors associated with individual behavior, collective action, or societal development; and
• the study of human collectivities, organizations, institutions, and cultures, their infrastructures, and interrelationships.

This 3-credit course meets for 2 hours of lecture and 1 hour of discussion section per week during the semester. Students are expected to set aside a minimum of 6 hours each week studying the material and working on assignments to achieve the learning goals of the course.

Required Texts and Materials

A required textbook is available at the UWM bookstore:

And, (strongly) recommended textbooks are also available at the UWM bookstore (either is fine):

This course will have a site on the Canvas system ([https://uwm.edu/canvas/](https://uwm.edu/canvas/)). The site will be used to share course materials including, but not limited to, lecture notes (with blanks)—make sure that you print them in advance and bring them to the class.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that students regularly read national as well as local newspapers. *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are two excellent sources of news on politics and government.

Course Requirements and Grading

The final course grade will be based upon five parts:

1) **Midterm Exam** (25%): The exam will be taken in class on *October 23rd, Wednesday, at 9:00AM*. It will consist of multiple-choice, T/F, “definition,” and some short-answer questions.

2) **Final Exam** (25%): The exam will be taken in class during the university-wide final exam period (*December 16th, Monday, at 10:00AM*). It will be cumulative, and consist of multiple-choice, T/F, “definition,” and some short-answer questions.

3) **Public Debates** (35%): Graduate Teaching Assistant will run Discussion Sections (DIS 601-605). Students will debate with each other on a given topic from the required textbook. This portion of grade is determined primarily by GTA, with advice of Professor Park.

4) **Class Attendance** (15%): Lecture attendance is extremely important for an introductory class, and it is mandatory for students to come to class on time and stay until the end of class time. Attendance will be checked and the grading will be:

   \[
   \frac{\text{Min (24, # Times Attended)}}{24} \times 15
   \]

   Because we meet 27 times in total throughout the semester, the above formula roughly means that students can “legally” miss the classes up to three (3) times without it adversely impacting your grade. My past experience is that this portion is the most important key to a better course grade in the end because there will be less variation in exam and debate scores.
5) **Class Participation** (Bonus, up to 5%): There will be a lot of opportunities where students can participate in class activities, and express their opinions and thoughts. Note that *quality* is more important than quantity in general.

Students who take this course under the Pass/Fail option must receive a grade of C or better in order to obtain a Pass on their final grade. A final grade of “incomplete” will only be given under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of Professor Park.

As a general rule, make-ups for exams will not be given. Students who miss exams because of scheduled activities of an official University student organization, a religious holiday, or a verifiable illness should contact Professor Park *in advance* of missing an exam so that alternative arrangements can be made.

If there is a dispute regarding a grade, re-grading is possible under two conditions:
- We will have a "cooling" period of at least TWO business days. Any complaints or disputes will NOT be considered in this period.
- Then, all complaints must be *typed* and must clearly express specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbooks, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.

**Classroom Policies and Instructor Availability**

All students are expected to behave professionally in this class. Professor Park is intolerant of disruptive behavior in the classroom, including talking during lectures, reading newspapers, and especially the ringing of cell phones or pagers. Laptops may be used to take notes in class, but not for playing games, checking emails, or surfing the internet. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom in order to preserve the learning environment for other students. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of others' opinions. Please do not intimidate, patronize, or ridicule anyone else during the course of classroom activities.

If students would like to speak with Professor Park outside of class time, feel free to stop by the office (Bolton 666) during regularly scheduled **office hours** (**Mondays and Tuesdays 10:00AM – 10:50AM**). If students are unable to attend office hours, but would like to meet with Professor Park, make an appointment via email.

**Email** is a convenient way to continue contact between professor and students outside of class. Students should take advantage of this opportunity but should also do so in a professional manner. Please refer to the document, **Email Etiquette** (uploaded to Canvas and distributed manually on the first meeting), to understand how to write a professional email.

**Academic Integrity and Student Disabilities**

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has detailed its policies on academic integrity ([http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)). Students should acquaint themselves with policies concerning cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and academic interference. Any submission of work by a student in this course constitutes a certificate that the work complies with university policies on academic integrity.

Any student with disabilities of any kind (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, systemic, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations should contact Professor Park and the Accessibility Resource Center ([https://uwm.edu/arc/](https://uwm.edu/arc/), Mitchell 112, archelp@uwm.edu, 414-229-6287) at the beginning of the semester.
Tentative Schedule


1. Schedule for Lectures
   - Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00AM – 9:50AM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Scheduled Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Logic 1 or Power 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principles in American politics</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Logic 2 or Power 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constitution</td>
<td>9/11, 16</td>
<td>Logic 3 or Power 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>9/18, 23</td>
<td>Logic 4, 5 or Power 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil rights and liberties</td>
<td>9/25, 30, 10/2</td>
<td>Logic 6 or Power 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>10/7, 9</td>
<td>Logic 7 or Power 6</td>
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<td>Presidency</td>
<td>10/14, 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review for Midterm</td>
<td>10/21</td>
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**Midterm Exam** 10/23 Wednesday
- Bureaucracy                       | 10/28, 30      | Logic 8 or Power 7 |
- Judiciary                          | 11/4, 6        | Logic 9 or Power 8 |
- Public opinion                     | 11/11, 13      | Logic 10 or Power 9 |
- Elections                          | 11/18, 20, 25  | Logic 11 or Power 10 |
- Political parties                  | 12/2, 4        | Logic 12 or Power 11 |
- Interest groups & News media       | 12/9           | Logic 13 or Power 12 |
- Review for Final                   | 12/11          |                 |

**Final Exam** 12/16 Monday at 10:00AM

2. Schedule for Debates
   - Meeting time varies depending on your enrolled section (DIS 601-605).
   - Schedule is subject to change by your own GTA.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Week starting 9/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 1 – Constitution</td>
<td>Week starting 9/16</td>
<td>Debating 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 2 – Federalism</td>
<td>Week starting 9/23</td>
<td>Debating 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 3 – Civil rights and liberties (I)</td>
<td>Week starting 9/30</td>
<td>Debating 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 4 – Civil rights and liberties (II)</td>
<td>Week starting 10/7</td>
<td>Debating 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 5 – Congress</td>
<td>Week starting 10/14</td>
<td>Debating 15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Debate</strong> (due to exam)</td>
<td>Week starting 10/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 6 – Presidency</td>
<td>Week starting 10/28</td>
<td>Debating 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 7 – Judiciary</td>
<td>Week starting 11/4</td>
<td>Debating 19</td>
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<td>Debate 8 – Public opinion</td>
<td>Week starting 11/11</td>
<td>Debating 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 9 – Elections</td>
<td>Week starting 11/18</td>
<td>Debating 9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No Debate</strong> (Thanksgiving break)</td>
<td>Week starting 11/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate 10 – Interest groups</td>
<td>Week starting 12/2</td>
<td>Debating 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Week starting 12/9</td>
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