

PLSC 111: Introduction to US Politics

Date and Time: TBD

Location: TBD

Instructor: Michael Catalano

Email: mcatala4@binghamton.edu

Office: LNG 77

Office Hours: TBD

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Course Description

PLSC 111 is a survey course designed to help students better understand American politics by introducing them to some of the basic facts, theories, and methods of studying American politics. We accomplish this in the traditional way, through lectures, reading, discussion sections, and assignments. In addition, we will consider current events when applicable to class. In PLSC 111, American politics are found in the lectures, the assigned readings, and the daily news. Students are responsible for all three.

The course will be roughly divided into four parts.

Course Description

The course will be roughly divided into four parts.

Part One deals with some theoretical accounts and constitutional background of American politics.

Part Two focuses mainly on the individual behavior of ordinary citizens and politicians, including campaigns and elections as well as interest groups and political parties.

Part Three examines the main institutional features of American government.

Part Four shifts to policy making in various realms, from campaign financing to foreign affairs.

Course Goals

The goal of this course is to make students informed consumers of American politics.

As a survey course, PLSC 111, will introduce students to the main elements of American politics and the questions animating them, topics that are explored in greater depth in more specialized courses that build off of this knowledge.

Part of the pedagogical approach involves linking current events to topics explored where applicable and asking students to apply their knowledge to a series of essay assignments that call on them to use their knowledge to take and support a position on issues discussed in class.

In sum, PLSC 111 will help students become more informed observers of American politics and help prepare them for more advanced courses in Political Science by introducing them to core facts, concepts, and theories.

Required Texts/Readings

1. Bianco, William T., and David T. Canon. 2019. *American Politics Today, 6th Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (APT)
2. Green, Donald, and Alan Gerber. 2019. *Get Out the Vote!, 4th edition*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. (Green&Gerber)
3. Kinder, Donald, and Nathan Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal Nor Conservative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Kinder&Kalmoe)
4. Mayhew, David. [1974] 2004. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (Mayhew)

Grading Structure

Basis of Grade Calculation

<u>Item</u>	<u>% of Overall Grade</u>
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Quizzes	20%
Essays (3 in total)	30%

Grading Scale

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	65-69
F	<65

Academic Integrity

Faculty and students have a responsibility to abide by and vigorously promote the highest standards of academic integrity.

Students are to carefully review the Student Academic Honesty Code, which can be found on-line in the University Bulletin.

Have questions? Ask me!!

Violations will receive a grade of 0.00 (F) for the class and likely proceedings before the Academic Honesty Committee.

Students with Special Circumstances

Students who have a disability requiring accommodation (as documented by Services for Students with Disabilities) should be sure to contact me in the first week or so of classes so that we can discuss the logistics of providing any accommodation(s) to which they are entitled.

Student athletes and students who are in the military should also be sure to contact me in the first week or so of classes so that we can develop a plan (if necessary) to help students simultaneously meet their academic obligations for this class and their athletic or military responsibilities.

I am also happy to discuss any other special circumstances (family illness, childcare) that students are experiencing so that we can plan accordingly to permit students to navigate both their academic and other obligations.

Stress and Mental Health

If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, I encourage you to seek support as soon as possible. I am available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in class.

I can also help you in reaching out to appropriate campus resources, including:

- Dean of Students Office: 607-777-2804
- Decker Student Health Services Center: 607-777-2221
- University Counseling Center: 607-777-2772
- Interpersonal Violence Prevention: 607-777-3062
- Harpur Academic Advising: 607-777-6305
- Office of International Students & Scholar Services: 607-777-2510
- Ombudsman: 607-777-2388 (main campus)
- Services for Students with Disabilities: 607-777-2686 (Voice, TTY)

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1	<i>Course Introduction</i>	APT Ch 1
	<i>Settlement and Revolution</i>	
Week 2	<i>Constitution</i>	APT Ch 2
	<i>Federalism</i>	APT Ch 3
Week 3	<i>Civil Liberties</i>	APT Ch 4
	<i>Public Opinion I</i>	APT Ch 6
Week 4	<i>Public Opinion II</i>	<i>Kinder&Kalmoe</i> entire
	<i>Race and Racism</i>	Shelby County v. Holder SCOTUS Opinion

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 5	<i>Civil Rights</i>	APT Ch 5
	<i>Interest Groups</i>	APT Ch 10
Week 6	<i>Political Parties – Development</i>	APT Ch 8
	<i>Political Parties – Function</i>	APT Ch 8
Week 7	<i>Midterm</i>	
	<i>No class: Break</i>	
Week 8	<i>Presidency - Nominations</i>	APT Ch 9
	<i>Presidency – Leadership</i>	Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha and Ronald J. McGauvran. 2017. “Presidential Leadership, the News Media, and Income Inequality.” <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 71(1): 157-171.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 9	<i>Presidency - Institutions</i>	APT CH 12
	<i>Congress – Development</i>	APT Ch 11
Week 10	<i>Congress - Institutions</i>	<i>Mayhew</i> entire
	<i>Congress - Policymaking</i>	Sarah Binder. 2022. “It’s not just Manchin. Here’s why Congress struggles to pass climate bills.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/07/26/manchin-climate-biden-democrats/
Week 11	<i>No class: Spring Break</i>	
	<i>No class: Spring Break</i>	
Week 12	<i>Judiciary – Institutions</i>	APT Ch 14
	<i>Judiciary – Decision-making</i>	Monkey Cage Article – Pamela Clouser McCann and Charles Shipin. 2022. “The Supreme Court’s EPA decision could undo almost every major federal law.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/10/29/supreme-court-just-took-case-epas-authority-its-decision-could-undo-most-major-federal-laws/

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 13	<i>Political Participation</i>	<i>Green&Gerber</i> entire
	<i>State Politics</i>	Jake Grumbach and Christopher Warshaw. 2022. "In many states with antiabortion laws, majorities favor abortion rights." https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/06/25/roe-dobbs-scotus-opinion-abortion-restrictions-rights-polarization/
Week 14	<i>Media</i>	APT Ch 7
	<i>Bureaucracy</i>	APT Ch 13
Week 15	<i>Economic Policy</i>	APT Ch 15
	<i>Social Policy</i>	APT Ch 16
Week 16	<i>Foreign Policy</i>	APT Ch 17
	<i>Final Exam</i>	