

PS 0200: THE AMERICAN POLITICAL PROCESS
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
TH 12:00-3:15PM
5201 WW POSVAR HALL
SYLLABUS: SUMMER 2019

INSTRUCTOR: Jacob Schiller
OFFICE: 4433 Posvar Hall
E-MAIL: jes298@Pitt.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Monday, 10am-12pm, and by appointment.

PURPOSE AND CONDUCT OF THE CLASS:

This course is designed to provide students with a basic working knowledge of the basic goals of the constitutional framers, giving students an understanding of the purposes of the American political system; the essential structures (or institutions) within the American political system, the behavior (broadly defined) of the actors within the American political system, the purpose and performance of the linkage institutions in the United States (possibly including political parties, elections, and interest groups); and the types of policies that are often produced by a system with the characteristics of those found in the United States.

REQUIRED BOOK:

- Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. 2020. *The Logic of American Politics*, 9th edition. Los Angeles: Sage. ISBN: 9781544322995

STUDENT STUDY SITE

- <https://edge.sagepub.com/kernell9e>

EVALUATION:

The student will be evaluated on two exams, a research paper, the presentation of that paper, 5 assignments, and class participation. Any late work will lose a full letter grade per day late. An assignment due Tuesday at noon will go from an A to B if submitted between Tuesday at 12:01 PM and Wednesday at noon, from a B to a C if submitted between Wednesday at 12:01 PM and Thursday at noon, etc.

EXAMS: Use of books and/or notes for exams is expressly prohibited. The exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and essay questions based on both the assigned readings and class discussion. Exams are to be taken at the scheduled time only; there will be no make-up exams given unless there is a university-approved excuse. **Exams are not cumulative.**

RESEARCH PAPER AND PRESENTATION: Students will pick a topic at the beginning of the semester on which to write their paper. Successful papers will define the issue, situate the topic in contemporary American politics, outline arguments on both sides of the issue, discuss proposed changes to the topic and will take a stand on the issue, justifying either the status quo or a proposed reform.

ASSIGNMENTS: A weekly assignment will be handed out by the end of class on Thursday (as well as posted to courseweb) and will be due in class (or to courseweb) by the beginning of class on Tuesday. Assignments are designed to be a practical

application of the material discussed in class and should reinforce the course principles. Students may work together on assignments, but every student should submit a separate submission in their own words for evaluation. *You should not be submitting a word for word identical work to any other student.*

PARTICIPATION: In order to promote learning objectives, the class sessions are designed to be interactive and involve small group activities. Students should show up to class prepared to be active participants. Assigned readings should be finished before class and students should not be distracted with non-class related material (internet surfing, texting, emailing, etc.)

Numerically, the grade will consist of the following components:

Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	40%
Research Paper:	15%
Presentation of Paper:	5%
Assignments (5):	10%
Participation:	10%

The following grade scale will be used in this class:

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

MAKE-UP EXAMS:

All exams and quizzes are to be taken at the scheduled time. The **only** exception to this is for a university-approved absence. Failure to take an exam/quiz at the scheduled time will result in a grade of zero (0).

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All students are advised to be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's standards of academic integrity (<http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/ai1.html>). These principles will be strictly enforced in this course. Plagiarism of any part of your discussion essays or research paper are examples, but not an exhaustive list, of violations of these standards of academic integrity. Anyone thought to have violated the standards of academic integrity will face the full force of university-sanctioned penalties, including, but not limited to, failing the class.

POLICY ON CELLPHONE AND LAPTOP USE IN CLASS:

The use of cellphones and laptops in the classroom has gone from potentially useful to highly problematic. In order to preserve a positive learning environment for all students, I have developed a policy for dealing with these potential distractions that will be in effect in this class, including recitation sections.

- If you are caught texting in class, your final grade will be reduced by 5 points per infraction. So, if you earn an 88 in the class and are caught texting once, your final grade will be 83. If you are caught twice, your grade will be 78.
- If your cellphone rings in class, you will lose 5 points per infraction off your final grade.
- While I cannot prevent you from taking notes on your laptop, if I see that you are checking your email, facebook, etc. during class, you will lose 5 points per infraction off your final grade. If you think I (and other professors) don't know when you are taking notes and when you are doing something else, then you are, quite frankly, delusional. You will be caught.

The reason I feel the need to adopt a policy like the one above is because I have noticed students becoming increasingly rude over the past few years. Moreover, this rudeness adversely affects other students and harms the learning environment in general. If you don't like this policy or feel that you cannot comply with it (or do not want to comply with it), then please drop the class. I am not going to engage in any discussion about it and I am certainly not going to listen to any excuses or explanations after the fact.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

This paragraph is copied directly from a University policy. Each student is issued a University email address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This email address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read email sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an email forwarding service that allows students to read their email via other service providers (e, g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo, Gmail). Students that choose to forward their email from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If email is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University email address. To forward email sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, login to your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to <http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html>.)

STATEMENT ON CLASSROOM RECORDING

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom or recitation lectures, discussion, and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources

and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412)648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412)228-5347 for PS ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. All discussions between you and me will remain confidential.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Below is a schedule of assignments for the class. Note that these are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. However, if there are to be any changes to the below assignments, the instructor will let you know as far in advance as possible. All readings are to be completed by the beginning of each class. Short additional readings may be assigned in class. Also, any readings that are not from the assigned text can be found on Courseweb.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due
Tues	June 25	Introduction to course, Chapter 1	Chapter 1	
Thurs	June 27	The Constitution and Federalism	Chapters 2, 3	
Tues	July 2	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	Chapters 4, 5	Weekly Assignment #1
Thurs	July 4	NO CLASS		
Tues	July 9	Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5), Congress	Chapter 6	Weekly Assignment #2
Thurs	July 11	The Presidency and The Bureaucracy	Chapters 7,8	
Tues	July 16	The Federal Judiciary and Institutions Recap	Chapter 9	Weekly Assignment #3
Thurs	July 18	Public Opinion & Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	Chapters 10, 11	Rough Draft Due
Tues	July 23	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Chapters 12, 13	Weekly Assignment #4
Thurs	July 25	Media, Peer Review of Papers	Chapter 14	Weekly Assignment #5 (Peer Review of Papers)
Tues	July 30	Finish Textbook, Final Exam Prep, Paper Presentations		-Presentations to be uploaded to Courseweb by noon.
Thurs	Aug 1	Exam 2		-Final Essay Due by 11:59 PM