

# American Political Systems

## Political Science 11501

### Fall 2022

Steven Rogers

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Office/Student Question Hours: [Book Appointment Online](#)

Class time: Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am - 12:15pm

Class Location: McGannon 262

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## About this Course

This class is an introductory survey course of the political science American Politics subfield. By the end of this course, you should be familiar with some fundamental debates and works within American political science research. The first half of this class focuses on political institutions. Here, we will study how political elites act within the American political system to achieve their goals. The second half of the class focuses on political behavior. Here, we will focus on how voters develop and act upon their political opinions. Theories of politics and political behavior can help interpret and explain contemporary politics, so we will keep a collective eye on events in Washington throughout the course.

## Catalog Course Description

This course will provide you with an overview of the literature and theoretical concepts associated with political science as it relates to American politics. The intent is to provide you with a sample of key findings in the literature, as well as help you develop critical skills for evaluating research.

## Learning Objectives

1. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on institutional aspects of the United States government with a focus on legislative, executive, and judicial institutions
2. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on political behavior, public opinion, partisanship, and elections.
3. Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will gain a better understanding of human diversity. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.

## University Core: Ways of Thinking: Social and Behavioral Sciences

This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school, or campus. The Core is R I I H U V D O O 6 / 8 V W X G H Q W V W K H V D P H X Q L I L H G D S S U R D F K W mission and identity and our nine undergraduate [Core Student Learning Outcomes \(SLOs\)](#).

Ways of Thinking: Social and Behavioral Sciences is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below:

### University Core Student Learning Outcomes

The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are:

- x SLO 2: Integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines to address complex questions
- x SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions

Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below:

#### Component-level Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- x Understand a range of social or behavioral theories and principles
- x Use these theories and principles to acquire knowledge about individual, cultural, political, economic, or social events/processes
- x Describe competing paradigms of knowledge (from the dominant discipline or field)
- x Draw reasoned conclusions through the use of evidence and theories
- x Apply social and behavioral knowledge to better understand contemporary issues and challenges

### Course Requirements

#### Tests:

This course will have a midterm and a final exam. The midterm exam is Thursday, October 20, and you will be notified October 11 of the Course Topics you will be responsible for on the exam. The final exam will be cumulative and take place December 13 at 12pm. Exam questions will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay. If scheduling permits, there will be an

class period. If a student is absent for 3 or more consecutive classes due to health reasons, excused absences will require documentation of the health reason (e.g., from University Health Services). If a student is unable to attend a lecture, Professor Rogers will make an honest effort to post recorded lectures to CanvasIt, however, will not be assured that all lecture material will be recorded (e.g. due to technical difficulties). Regardless of attendance, all students will be responsible for all material covered in lecture.

## Grades

Your grade for this course will consist of the following components and relative weights:

| Item        | Overall Course Grade Weight | Due Date                 |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Assignments | 7%                          | Thru 30 (me) 3 (nts) 4 ( |

## Required Texts

The following texts should be available from the University Bookstore or online retailers, such as Amazon.com. Other readings will be made available online.

Kollman, Ken. 2019. *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*. New York: W.W. Norton Company. Fifth Edition. ISBN: 9780393679168

Neustadt, Richard. 1999. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from R to Reagan*. New York, NY: The Free Press. ISBN: 9780029227961

This class will briefly review some of the formal procedures of how the American government works (e.g. steps in how a bill becomes a law). It is assumed that students have a basic understanding of these processes from POLS 1100, AP American Government, or a strong high school class. If you are less familiar with how the American government works, the following book provides excellent explanations of many concepts in the course. The course outline specifies suggested Chapters or sections to read for each topic.

Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Verebeck. *The Logic of American Politics*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. ISBN: 9781483319841

## CourseOutline

The following listing of topics outlines the subjects we will cover in class and the reading assignments for each topic.

## Topic3: Congress

### Learning Objectives

- x Students will be able to
  - o Describe basic procedures of how a bill becomes a law
  - o Recognize the importance of Members Congress goals and how Members achieve these goals
  - o Explain what collective action problems and public goods are and how political parties help solve collective action problems in Congress
  - o Identify the differences between Cartel Theory, Conditional Party Government, and Pivotal Politics

### Readings

- x Fenno, Rgached [Bottom]/Type/Pagination/Subtype/Footer>> BDC q 0.00000912 0 612 792 re W\*

## Topic4: TheExecutive Branch

### LearningObjectives

- x Students will be able to
  - o Identify the similarities and differences between Neustadt, Kernell, and Casey's arguments about how the President can most effectively use his/her informal powers.
  - o 'HILQH DQG GLVWLQJXLV Kessell, Weizbach, and idler's powers
  - o 'HVFULEH ZK\ 'XQFHUWDLQ WVKHLV6 HPS RQW DQW 9 RW RH D% DQG '%ODPH \*DPHµ H[SODQDWLRQV RI YHWRHV
  - o Describe how the President can use executive orders to achieve legislative policy as argued by William Howell
  - o 'HVFULEH KRZ SUHVLGHQWLDO OHDGHUVKLS LV 'HSLV
  - o Define a principal-agent relationship and asymmetric information
  - o Identify the differences between police patrol and fire oversight

### Readings

- x .ROOPDQ 1HXVWDGW 5LFKDUG '3UHVLGHQWLDO 3RZH /HDGHUVKLS IURP 59 pages
- x Kollman 6.2: Cameron, Charles HWR %DUJDLQLQJ 3UHVLGHQW [DQG WK pages]
- x McCarty, Nolan ' :KHUH GR YHWRThe Monroe Case [2015] [3 pages]
- x 6NRZURQH 6WHSKHQ '3UHVLGHQWLDO [5 pages] HDGHUVKLS LQ 3
- x .ROOPDQ 0F&XEELQV 0DWWKHZ DQG 7KRPDV 6FKZDUW 2YHUORRNHG 3ROLFH 3DWUROV YHUVXV )LUH \$ODUPV µ >
- x Suggested Reading
  - o .ROOPDQ +RZHOO :LOOLDP \* '3RZHU ZLWKRXXW 3H \$FWLRQ µ > SDJHV@
  - o /HZLV 'DYLQ '7KH 3ROLWLFV RI neil (Section 8.2) WLDO \$SSR
- x Suggested Podcast:
  - o [Stephen Skowronek on the New Deal and Political Step](#) Stephen Skowronek [1:11]

### Questions to consider while reading:

- x What are the formal and informal sources of Presidential power? [Neustadt]
- x Why would a President veto a bill he prefers to the status quo (the current [Carney])?
- x Why would Congress pass a bill they know the President will veto? [McCarty]
- x How is Presidential leadership a struggle between the individual and the system? [Skowronek]
- x :KDW LV WKH GLIIHUHQFH EHWZHHQ 'SROLFH SDWUROµ DQ Schwartz]

### Accompanying Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, and Vavreck Reading

- x Chapter 7 (focus on the powers of the presidency)





## Topic6: The Judiciary

### Learning Objectives

- x A student will be able to
  - o Describe the main functions of District Courts, Courts of Appeals, and US Supreme Court, along with the basic structure of the federal court system
  - o Identify differences between the legal

## Topic 7: Public Opinion & Political Knowledge

### Learning Objectives

- x Students will be able to
  - o Identify the differences in Key and Lippmann's perceptions of voter competence
  - o Describe the extent to which voters have ideologies or belief systems, according to Converse
  - o Identify and describe the axioms of Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample model along with their implications

### Readings

- x 4XHDO\ .HYLQ ',I \$PHULFDQV &DQ )LQG 1RUWK .RUHD RQ 'LSORPDF\μ > SDJHV @
- x Lippmann, Walter. 1925. *The Public Opinion*. ([FHUSW 3] 4 pages)
- x Key, V. 2007. *The Responsible Citizen*. (Converse Section 47) [6 pages]
- x &ODZVRQ DQG 2[OH\ &KDSWHU ',GH[Pages]LFDO ,QFRQJUX
- o Focus on pages 133
- x Kollman 9.2 =DOOHU -RKQ 2'U'KJLQDWRXUHQD[Pages]SLQLRQ μ
- x Suggested Readings
  - o Dropp, Kyle. 2007. *How Americans Think*. (NQRZ DERXW 8NUDLQH·WKH 86 WR LQWHUYHQH μ
- x Suggested Podcast:
  - o [:KDW·V :URQJ ZLW Larry Bartels](#) [7 minutes]

### Questions to consider while reading:

- x What does Lippmann mean when he says "The public is a collection of prejudices" (Lippmann, Key)?
- x According to Converse (Converse)
  - o To what extent are voters ideological?
  - o What is constraint?
  - o \$UH LQGLYLGXDOV· RSLQLRQV DQG DWLWGXGHV VWDEO
- x What does Zaller mean when he states "individuals appear to make decisions off the top of their head" (Zaller)?

### Accompanying Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, and Vavreck Reading

- x Chapter 10 (Focus on p. 39-41)

## Topic 8: Rational Choice

### Learning Objectives

- x Students will be able to
  - o Describe why it could be rational to vote
  - o Identify ways voters can act rationally despite not being informed
  - o Define the concepts of a heuristic and expected party differential
  - o Describe the two modes of information processing according to Popkin
  - o Describe how Page and Shapiro's argument differs from Converse's

### Readings

- o .ROOPDQ /XSLD \$UWKXU DQG 0DWKHZ ' 0F&XEELQV &LWL]HQV /HDUQ :KDW 7KH\ 1HHG WR .QRZ"μ > SDJHV@
- o Popkin, Sam. The Reasoning Voter (1994) p1-6, 7281, 9495. [19 pages]
- o Page and Shapiro, The Rational Public (1992). Chapter 1. [32 pages]
- o

## Topic9: Partisanship & Polarization

### Learning Objectives

- x Students will be able to
  - o Identify and describe the three schools of partisanship
  - o Define cross pressures, the perceptual gap, the running tally and affective polarization
  - o Describe the stages of sorting in regard to the topic of partisanship

### Readings

- o +HWKHULQJWRQ 0DUN '3DUWLVDQVKLS DQG 3RODULJDV
- o

## Topic 10: Electoral Behavior and Institutions

### Learning Objectives

- x A student will be able to:
  - o Explain how elections can be a solution to a moral hazard problem
  - o Explain how elections can be a solution to an adverse selection problem
  - o Identify the differences between retrospective and prospective voting and the implications of myopic voting for these theories
  - o Explain competing explanations for Midterm Loss  $\mu$
  - o Identify different reasons why candidates  $\mu$  W K H p r e s i d e n t i a l n o m i n a t i o n

### Readings

- x Kollman 12.3: [The Role of the President in the U.S. Election Process](#) [30 pages]
- x [The Role of the President in the U.S. Election Process](#) [30 pages]
- x [The Role of the President in the U.S. Election Process](#) [30 pages]
- x Kollman 10.2: Leigha Jan and Jonathan Nagler: [The Role of the President in the U.S. Election Process](#)
- x Suggested Readings
  - o [The Role of the President in the U.S. Election Process](#)
- x Suggested Podcast
  - o [How we pick a president David Karol](#)

### Questions to consider while reading:

- x Who is most influential in selecting presidential nominees? [Cohem]Kollma
- x What does it mean that voters are myopic? [Bartels]
- x If voters respond to sporting events, what are the implications for elections serving as an accountability mechanism? [Sanders]

### Accompanying Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, and Vavreck Reading

- x Chapter 11: 44-46

## Topic 11: Groups and Self Interest

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to  
Define minimal group theory, social identity theory, black utility heuristic, and linked fate

Topic 12: The Media

## University Services

### Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services. Students create an appointment with the Student Success Center to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching. For more information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/lifeat-slu/studentsuccesscenter/index.php>

### University Writing Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/lifeat-slu/studentsuccesscenter/academic-support/universitywriting-services/index.php> or call the Student Success Center at 314-744-484.

## University Policies

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible academic conduct. The Mission of Saint Louis



the Student Handbook. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:

- o dismissal from the course(s)
  - o removal from campus housing (if applicable)
  - o dismissal from the University
- x To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with a Universitywide face mask requirement.

When a Universitywide face mask requirement is not in effect, students and instructors may choose to wear a face mask or not, as they prefer for their own individual comfort level.

### ADA Accommodations for Face Mask Requirements

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability (students) or Human Resources (instructors) to initiate the accommodation process identified in the 8 Q L Y H [ADA Policy](#). Inquiries or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#).

5. As a temporary amendment