

# THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

Political Science 250

Autumn 2019

Lectures: MTWTh 12-1 (except as noted below), CF 110

Professor Salazar

Arntzen 401

Office Hours:

Tuesday 10:30-11:30

Wednesday 1-3

Other times by appointment

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<http://www.wwu.edu/faculty/salazar/>

## Lecture Outlines

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)

## Other Course Material

[Discussion Sections](#)

[Supreme Court Project](#)

## Course Focus

This is the introductory course in American government and politics. Our goal is to learn about the historical development, structure, and function of this country's politics and government. Toward that end, we will examine the concept of constitutional democracy, the nature of citizen behavior, and the workings of public policy-making institutions.

We will also examine how U.S. political institutions have contributed to the current state of our politics. More specifically, we will consider how we have arrived at a situation of growing economic and political inequality, declining access to the American Dream, and deep political polarization. Further, we have witnessed widespread rejection of democratic ideals in the electorate and at the highest levels of our government. There are certainly other important aspects of contemporary U.S. politics and we will not ignore them. But we will focus on how these four characterize early 21<sup>st</sup> century political life.

## Requirements

Examinations include two midterms given during lecture (21 October, 18 November) and a comprehensive, two-hour final (Friday, 13 December, 8-10 AM). All examinations will include short answer and essay questions.

All students will participate in a mock Supreme Court case. This assignment includes both a performance and a written component. A detailed description will be provided during your discussion sections.

Each student will be asked to submit two response papers and participate in one debate during their discussion sections. Papers are due at the beginning of the hour during the assigned discussion section. Topics and readings for this assignment will be provided during discussion sections.

### Grading and Assignments

The allocation of credit for assignments will be weighted as follows:

Assignment	Percentage of Course Grade
Midterm Examination I	20%
Midterm Examination II	25%
Final Examination	35%
Discussion Sections (Response papers and attendance 10%) (Supreme Court Project 10%)	20%

Course grades will be calculated based on a 100-point scale. The following will be used as a guide in assigning course grades.

95-100	A	73-76	C
90-94	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	<60	F

The tables above should provide sufficient information to calculate your course grade-in-progress at any time during the quarter. If you have trouble with this calculation, please ask one of the Teaching Assistants or me for assistance.

### Texts

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, Andrea L. Campbell, and Robert J. Spitzer. 2019. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. Twelfth Essentials Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

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

Sracic, Paul A. 2006. *San Antonio v. Rodriguez and the Pursuit of Equal Education: The Debate over Discrimination and School Funding*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

### Instructor's Policies:

*Mediation:* The best way to participate in this class is directly, attending class sessions and visiting office hours. Lecture outlines will be provided on the course website but they are not a

substitute for attending class. To the extent that we engage in mediated communication, most of it will take place via the internet and email. I will occasionally make announcements on Canvas but you should not rely on Canvas. There is no substitute for being in class if you want to know what the class is doing.

*Electronics:* I have nothing against electronics; they monopolize as much of my time as they do others'. However, research suggests that, for those who are able, the best way to take notes is on paper (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/note-taking-low-tech-often-best> ). If you choose to use a computer to take notes, please do so responsibly and in a manner that does not distract your classmates. Consider sitting in the back row of the lecture hall. Phones are not welcome during lectures or discussion sections. Please silence and put them away when you enter the classroom.

*Attendance:* Regular attendance is strongly encouraged. Regular attendance will be necessary to perform well on examinations. You are responsible for being aware of any announcements made during lecture or discussion sections.

*Make-up Exams:* Students are expected to take exams at the scheduled times (21 October, 18 November, 13 December). If you know now that you cannot take one of the exams at the scheduled time, you should not enroll in this class. Make-up exams will be given only when absences are due to illness or family emergency. All make-up exams will be administered on Thursday 12 December at 11 AM. Those not taking an exam will receive a zero.

*Accommodations:* Please let me know if you require any accommodations regarding lectures or examinations. I will work with the Disability Access Center, <https://disability.wvu.edu>, to provide appropriate accommodations. Western also has a policy to ensure religious accommodations. You may find the relevant information here: <https://syllabi.wvu.edu>.

*Academic Honesty:* The core requirement of academic honesty is that we do not take credit for others' work. When we draw on the work of others (through direct quotation, the use of ideas developed by other authors, or by making factual claims that are not common knowledge), we must acknowledge original sources. There are various methods for citing sources. The library maintains a collection of citation guides that you can find here: [http://libguides.wvu.edu/citation\\_style](http://libguides.wvu.edu/citation_style). You may also find information about academic dishonesty at <http://libguides.wvu.edu/plagiarism>. You may find a more general discussion about academic integrity at <http://www.wvu.edu/integrity/>. I am happy to discuss any of these issues with you.

### **General University Competencies**

Western has established a set of "competencies" associated with GUR courses. I would not presume to identify all of the "competencies" you might build during the course; students always surprise me (that is why I do this work). But if you participate in class, complete the assigned reading, take responsibility for ensuring that you understand the concepts presented in the lectures and texts, and take the writing assignments seriously, you should make progress toward the GUR competencies listed below. You should also develop some insight into the processes and institutions comprising American government and politics.

- 1) Analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms

- 7) Recognize the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of participating in, and contributing as a citizen in, a diverse society

### Class Sessions and Assigned Reading

- Please complete reading before the class session for which it is assigned.
- The schedule below is tentative and may change during the quarter; you are responsible for being aware of any changes.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic and Reading</u>
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>The Constitution and the First Two Branches</b>
September 25	<u>Equality, Freedom, and Liberal Democracy</u> Declaration of Independence (in Ginsberg)
September 26	<u>Citizenship and Governance</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 1 Dahl, Polyarchy (in Kollman) Articles of Confederation (in Ginsberg)
September 30	<u>The Constitution: Centralizing Power</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 2: 30-47 The Constitution of the United States of America (in Ginsberg) (focus on Articles I and II) Federalist 10 (in Ginsberg) Anti-Federalist 1 (in Ginsberg and in Kollman) Dahl, How Democratic is the American Constitution? (in Kollman)
October 1	<u>The Constitution: Dividing Power</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 2: 47-61 Federalist 51 (in Ginsberg) <a href="#">Federalist 39</a>
October 2	<u>Federalism I: Structure of Governance</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 3
October 3	<u>Federalism 2: Public Policy</u> Riker, Federalism (in Kollman) McCann, Shipan, and Volden, Top-Down Federalism (in Kollman)
October 7	<u>Governance of Indian Lands</u> Wilkinson, The History of Federal-Tribal Relations (library reserve)  Recommended: Wilkins, Indigenous Nations and the American Political System (library reserve)

October 8	<u>Congress in the Constitutional System</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 9 Pitkin, The Concept of Representation (in Kollman) <a href="#">Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (H.R. 8)</a>
October 9	<u>Congressional Decisionmaking</u> Fenno, Home Style (in Kollman) Bernhard and Sulkin, Legislative Style (in Kollman) Congressional Budget Office, <a href="#">The Distribution of Household Income, 2016</a>
October 10	<u>The Presidency</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 10 Neustadt, Presidential Power (in Kollman) Howell, Power without Persuasion (in Kollman) <a href="#">Executive Order 13880</a> , Collecting Information About Citizenship Status in Connection With the Decennial Census
October 14	<u>The Bureaucracy and the Exercise of Power</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 11 Wilson, Bureaucracy (in Kollman)
October 15	<u>The Executive Branch and Domestic Policy</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 13: 406-416, 432-439 <a href="#">Energy Conservation Standards for General Service Incandescent Lamps</a> , Proposed Rule
October 16	<u>Congress, The Presidency, and the War Powers</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 14: 447-452, 464-469 Fisher, <a href="#">Exercising Congress's Constitutional Power</a> Yoo, <a href="#">The Purse and the Sword</a> ,
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Citizenship and Political Participation</b>
October 17	<u>Exercising Citizenship, Political Socialization, and Political Participation</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 5: 144-157 Wong <i>et al.</i> , Asian American Political Participation (in Kollman) Hersh, Hacking the Electorate, (in Kollman)
<b>October 21</b>	<b>Examination 1: The Constitution and the First Two Branches</b>
October 22	<u>Public Opinion and Knowledge</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 5: 157-171 Lupia and McCubbins, The Democratic Dilemma (in Kollman) Zaller, The Nature and Origins (in Kollman)

October 23	<u>Political Parties in the Electorate</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 7: 204-220 Campbell <i>et al.</i> , The American Voter (in Kollman)
October 24	<u>Voting Behavior</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 7: 220-229 Tesler, Post-Racial or Most-Racial? (in Kollman) Stimson, Tides of Consent (in Kollman)
October 28	<u>Parties and Elections</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 7: 229-241 Cohen <i>et al.</i> , The Party Decides (in Kollman) Kollman, Who Drives (in Kollman)
October 29	<u>Voting Rights</u> <i>Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder</i> (in Kollman)
October 30	<u>Democracy and Elections</u> Fox and Lawless, Gendered Perceptions (in Kollman) Achen and Bartels, Democracy for Realists (in Kollman)
October 31	<u>The 2016 Election and Polarization</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 7: 232-236 Cramer, The Politics of Resentment (in Kollman) Campbell, Polarized (in Kollman) Kinder and Kam, Us Against Them (in Kollman)
November 4	<u>Inequality and American Politics I</u> Bartels, Unequal Democracy (in Kollman) <a href="#">The 9.9 Percent is the New American Aristocracy</a>
November 5	<u>Inequality II</u> Leighley and Nagler, Who Votes Now? (in Kollman)
November 6	<u>Money, Elections, and Inequality</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 7: 237-239 <i>Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission</i> (in Kollman)
November 7	<u>Interest Groups I: Representation</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 8 Kollman, Outside Lobbying (in Kollman)
November 11	<b>Holiday</b>
November 12	<u>Interest Groups II: Furthering Inequality?</u> Gilens, Affluence and Influence (in Kollman)

<b>Part 3</b>	<b>The Courts, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights</b>
November 13	<u>The Federal Court System and Judicial Review</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 12
November 14	<u>Civil Liberties, Selective Incorporation, and the Rights of the Accused</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 4: 96-103, 113-119
November 18	<b>Examination II: Citizenship and Political Participation</b>
November 19	<u>Freedom of Expression I: Speech</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 4: 105-111
November 20	<u>Freedom of Expression II: Regulating Speech</u> <a href="#"><i>McCullen v. Coakley</i></a> (pages 1-30)
November 21	<u>Religion, Corporations, and the State</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 4: 103-105 <a href="#"><i>Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores</i></a> Hammons, State Constitutions (in Kollman)
November 25	<u>Sexuality, Abortion, and the Right to Privacy</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 4: 119-120 <a href="#"><i>Griswold v. Connecticut</i></a> <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> (in Kollman) Lewis, The Right Turn in Conservative Christian Politics (in Kollman)
November 26	<u>Civil Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment</u> Ginsberg, Chapter 4: 120-139 Sracic, Chapters 1-2
November 27	<b>Holiday</b>
November 28	<b>Holiday</b>
December 2	<u>Race, the Constitution, and Education</u> <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (in Kollman) Sracic, Chapters 3-5  Recommended: <a href="#"><i>Brown v. Board of Education, 1955</i></a> <a href="#"><i>Bolling v. Sharpe, 1954</i></a>
December 3	<u>School Funding and the Courts I</u> Sracic, Chapters 6-7
December 4	<u>School Funding and the Courts II</u> Sracic, Chapters 8-9

	<p><u><i>San Antonio v. Rodriguez</i></u> (Powell and <u>Marshall</u> opinions)  (or try the link below; Marshall's opinion will be the last one:  <a href="http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=US&amp;vol=411&amp;invol=1">http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=US&amp;vol=411&amp;invol=1</a>)</p> <p>Recommended:  <u><i>Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1</i></u></p>
December 5	<p><u>School Funding and the Courts III</u>  Sracic, Chapters 10-12, Epilogue</p>
December 13 8-10 AM	<p>Final Examination</p>