

POLS 101 (Section 1): American Politics and Public Policy
Occidental College
Updated January 24, 2024

Spring Semester, 2024
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
1:55-2:50 PM
Room: Johnson 104

Instructor: Dr. Isaac Hale (he/him)
Email: halei@oxy.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 11:00 AM – noon
Friday, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Office: Johnson Hall 308

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of public policy, government, and politics in the United States. Throughout the semester, we will explore the founding of American government, the structures of our political system, the institutions that comprise government in the United States, contemporary public policy issues, and the political behavior of American citizens, interest groups, and political parties.

This introduction course cannot cover every facet of the entire subfield of American Politics – that is simply too much to ask in a single semester. If this class piques your interest, you are highly encouraged to seek out additional upper division American Politics courses which will provide more detailed explorations of specific topics in the sub-field. Instead, this class will attempt to provide a broad overview of the main concepts and research areas that dominate American Politics.

This class seeks to address a core question: does the American political system embody the ideals of a representative democracy? Our exploration of this inquiry will lead us to investigate how **citizen behavior** and **political institutions** perform in the context of American government. We will begin the course by observing how James Madison’s “republic” provides a theoretical underpinning for democratic representation in the American political system. Next, we will focus on how individual citizens form political attitudes and make political choices. Emphasis will be placed on how these actual processes do or do not comport with the Madisonian framework. Finally, we will examine American political institutions, including political parties, electoral systems, the presidency, Congress, and the judiciary. We will consider how each of these institutions does or does not fit into Madison’s ideal democratic framework and assess the health of each institution in the context of our modern democracy.

Participation will be a large portion of your grade, and you cannot expect to succeed without reading all the assigned material and coming to class. With that being said, this is an introduction course, and there is no expectation that you have taken any previous political science courses. Do not be shy to speak up, even if you are not certain about something. There is no penalty for engaging in debate or questioning what I am telling you – in fact, both are heavily encouraged!

I have taken several steps to make this course as engaging and accessible as possible. There will be no final exam for this course. Instead, the course will have brief assignments throughout the semester and a final

paper. This will help ensure that students face less pressure and that each graded assignment is worth less of the total grade.

One final note – this course is meant to be fun! While the material in this class will take a broad perspective on American politics, our discussions should be extremely relevant to current political events. If there is something happening in the news that is relevant to our class, I will be sure to allocate time to discuss it. Major legislation, elections, scandals, news stories, and policy debates are all fair game!

Course Objectives

The student learning outcomes for this course are as follows:

- Gain a nuanced understanding of the Madisonian design of national American institutions and assess whether modern institutions comport with this ideal
- Engage with advanced models of policymaking
- Acquire tools to assess the quality of representation in the United States
- Explore the origins and evolution of the two-party system
- Interrogate the quality of American democracy, both historically and in the present day
- Learn about potential reforms to American political institutions, and how such reforms might affect political outcomes
- Apply knowledge from the class to contemporary political events, including the 2024 presidential primary
- Produce a final paper that demonstrates a mastery of the topics covered in this course

Required Texts

There is one required text for this course. The first edition is out of date (American politics have changed dramatically since 1989!), so please make sure you get the second edition. Electronic and paper editions are available for rent and purchase via the bookstore.

- Stone, Walter J., and James A. McCann. 2021. *Republic at Risk: An Introduction to American Politics*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

You may access all other readings through Moodle portal for this class or via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

Core Program Requirements

POLS 101 fulfills a U.S. Diversity (CPUD) core program requirement.

Class Expectations

Credit Hour Policy

POLS 101 is a 4-unit course. On average, you should expect to spend at least twelve (12) hours a week (including in-class time) on this course.

Lecture Slides

Slides will be used in class on most days. Slides will be posted to Moodle following the class session.

Online Access

All readings and documents for this course (except the textbook) can be accessed through the Moodle website or via hyperlinks in the syllabus schedule. Messages will be sent by me via Moodle, so make sure you have email notifications for Moodle messages activated.

Email

I welcome questions and comments by email. When you email us, you should compose your email as you would any piece of professional correspondence. We will respond to your emails as quickly as possible, but please do not expect a quick response to email sent on weekends or after 5pm on any day.

Laptops and Other Electronics

Generally speaking, laptops are not allowed in class. [Numerous studies confirm that](#) students who take notes by hand retain more information over time and that laptop bans improve student engagement in smaller classes. It is also far less distracting to others when there is not constant typing and visual distraction going on during a lecture/discussion. As such, laptops, phones, and other electronic devices are not allowed in class.

If you have a documented learning disability that is helped by typing your notes, contact me and I will be happy to consider an exception. Furthermore, if you have a very compelling reason why you strongly prefer to take notes during lecture with a laptop, you may write me an email letting me know, and we can discuss the matter individually. Any laptops approved for use in-class must not be used for web surfing during class.

You may bring an e-reader, tablet, or another “lie-flat” device to access readings in class. You may not use it for tasks such as surfing the web or email. You are encouraged to bring printouts of the readings to class.

Desk Name Tag (yes, this is required)

To facilitate discussion, I ask that you place a name tag on the desk in front of you in class each day. Although attendance will not be taken, showing up to class with your desk name tag will greatly affect your participation grade. One way to make this name tag is to take an 8½ x 11-inch piece of construction paper or lightweight cardboard, fold it in half lengthwise (so it’s now 4¼ x 11 inches), and write your name on one side so that your name is upright when you put the folded piece of paper like a tent on the desk in front of you. Please write your full name (**FIRST AND LAST**—using whatever name you prefer to be called as your first name) in **LARGE, VERY DARK, BOLD** letters. I will bring nametag supplies on the first day of class.

Grading

Grading for this course will be calculated as follows:

Response Papers (best 10 out of 12)	60%
Analytic Essay	30%
Participation	10%
Total:	100%

The final letter grade will be assigned according to the standard table:

93-100: A	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+
90-92: A-	83-86: B	73-76: C	60-66: D
	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	00-59: F

If you are 0.5 points or less from the next letter grade at the end of the course, the grade submitted to the registrar will be rounded up to the next letter grade. You will not be able to see this rounding on Moodle.

All graded items listed above are detailed in the sections that follow.

Response Papers

There are no exams in this class. However, 30% of your grade will be determined by **twelve (12)** short response papers. The response papers are a means for you to engage on a deeper level with the (often complex!) articles and chapters we are reading for class.

There will be a response paper every week EXCEPT:

- No response paper week 1
- No response paper week 8, spring break
- No response paper week 15, the last week of class

Each response paper will be short, roughly 1-2 pages each (single-spaced). Each one should take you no more than an hour or two to complete.

Since you may miss or drop two response papers, no make-up papers will be offered. For the same reason there is no need to inform me if you are unable to submit a response paper (or decide not to). All response papers will be graded out of 6 points. Each paper (not including the two dropped papers) will be worth 6% of your final grade.

Prompts will be posted to Moodle on Wednesdays. You will have four days to complete each response paper, meaning submissions will close at 11:59 PM each Sunday.

- Due to President's Day, the response paper following Week 4 will instead be due at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, February 20th

Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and **single-spacing**. All response papers will receive comments from me on Moodle. You do not need to include a bibliography and in-text citations in your response paper **unless** you refer to a source besides the assigned readings.

Analytic Essay

In lieu of a final exam, you are required to submit an analytic essay for this class. Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, **double-spacing**, and proper citation format (see section below). Additionally, please number each page. The essay should be **five-six pages long** (and should certainly not exceed seven). This page limit does not include a bibliography, which should be at the end of your paper.

Essays will be graded on content (evidence provided), analysis (claims drawn about the evidence provided), structure (clarity of thesis and logical “flow” of the essay), and mechanics (grammar, punctuation use, sentence and paragraph composition, etc.). The following elements are part of an A paper:

1. **A clear thesis** presented in the first paragraph and argued throughout. Include “In this essay I will argue that…” or something similar.
2. **Evidence to support your thesis** in the form of facts, ideas from existing research, and thoughtful, balanced analysis.
3. **Clear structure**, including an introduction, a conclusion, and reasonably sized body paragraphs. Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence that introduces that paragraph.
4. **A bibliography** with a complete list of your sources. Some guidelines:
 - Include a **minimum of five (5)** sources total.
 - At least **three (3) academic sources** for each paper. These should be *academic articles* or *university press books*.
 - At least two of your three academic sources must be from outside the class (meaning that it is not on the syllabus).
 - Google Scholar can be very useful for finding sources
 - Lectures and the textbook may be cited, but do **not** count towards your required sources.
5. **Appropriate and sparing use of quotes**. Quotes do not speak for themselves. They should always be preceded by context and followed by analysis of that quote.
6. **Clear writing** with few grammatical errors.

Essay prompts will be posted on Moodle. The essay is due on the scheduled final exam day (TBA), at midnight (11:59 PM).

Participation

Your participation grade will be based on the overall effort you put into the class, including the effort you put into your assignments, your attendance in class (and having a desk tag!), and your participation in discussions. Come to class, participate in class discussions, earn a good participation grade, and get more out of the class. It’s a win-win. You are also encouraged to bring up news stories, relevant examples, and “dank” American politics memes.

Extra Credit Meme

You may earn extra credit by creating and submitting a meme related to course content. The extra credit is worth up to one point on your final grade (e.g., raising an 89% final grade to a 90%). In order to receive full credit, the meme must be used correctly! I suggest using <https://knowyourmeme.com> to make sure you are using your meme correctly. You can create memes using meme generators such as <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>. Your meme may be shared in class, so be creative!

- The meme is due Wednesday, April 24th at 11:59 PM

Late Submissions

Do not wait until the night before it is due to begin to work on an assignment. Life is complicated and full of unexpected surprises. Plan for uncertainty by managing your time efficiently. Even if your work is

not complete because something unexpected interfered, submit what you have accomplished prior to the emergency. After-the-fact extensions will be granted only under extreme circumstances, and at my sole discretion.

If you know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit a partially completed assignment early — and then appeal for an extension.

Assignments submitted late will have 10% deducted from their final score for every day they are late. This penalty begins immediately following the day and time the assignment is due and will not be prorated.

Grade Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the grade you receive on an assignment, please take the following steps:

- 1) Review any comments/feedback I have provided.
- 2) If you still have questions, come to my office hours, or contact me by email.
- 3) If you still believe the grade you received is in error, submit a one-paragraph written request for a regrade by email. If the request is approved, your work will receive a completely new evaluation by me. Your score may increase, decrease, or stay the same.

Disabilities

All academic and housing accommodation requests are managed by Disability Services & Student Support (DSSS). It is a student's responsibility to contact DSSS if they need accommodations or additional support. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity is a shared community value. It is built around trust and respect between members of the Occidental Community and embodies a commitment to honesty and integrity in every aspect of one's academic life.

All members of the Occidental community are committed to uphold the highest degree of academic integrity. Unless stipulated otherwise, the academic work done for all assignments is expected to be the student's own; students are expected to give proper credit to the ideas and work of others.

Generally speaking, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use another person's idea. When you use a specific phrase, you must put that phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. If you wish to submit a piece of writing that you have used in another class, you must receive my permission before doing so.

Signing the Academic Integrity Commitment at the beginning of every semester represents a student's affirmation to uphold the shared values of honesty and integrity. When signing the Integrity Commitment associated with work in a course, students are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information; nor assisted others in these actions.

Support Services

A number of services are available here at Occidental College to make sure that you excel in your academically and socially.

There are a number of opportunities for **academic support**. Please visit the following website at <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/student-success> to see the variety of services offered, including writing support, tutoring, research assistance, language tutoring, and academic coaching.

The Emmons Wellness Center provides **medical services and counseling**. Visit their website for information on specific services provided: <https://www.oxy.edu/student-life/resources-support/emmons-wellness-center>

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience

Consistent with Occidental College's commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website: <https://www.oxy.edu/student-life/resources-support/orsl/academic-accommodations>

Sexual Harassment and Assault Resources

In the event that you write or speak about having experienced discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic or sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual and/or gender-based harassment), as a designated Responsible Employee, I must inform the Civil Rights & Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about resources and support services at Oxy, as well as reporting options both on and off-campus. You have no obligation to respond to the Civil Rights & Title IX Office or to meet with them to discuss support services and reporting options.

If you do not want the Civil Rights & Title IX Office contacted, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with:

- Oxy's Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu)
- Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657)
- Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (myoung@oxy.edu)
- Oxy 24/7 Confidential Hotline (323-341-4141)

The College's civil rights policies, along with additional resources, can be found at:

<https://www.oxy.edu/civil-rights-title-ix>. If you would like to contact the Civil Rights & Title IX Office directly, you may email Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

Weekly Topics & Readings

The list below indicates reading assignments and class topics. All readings (excluding the required text) will be available on Moodle or linked below. You should do each day's readings before that day's class. I'll generally keep us on schedule but note that discussions may bleed over from one class to the next.

Date	Topics	Readings Due
Week 1		
Mon, Jan 22	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the syllabus • Textbook, Introduction: "Self-Interest as the Problem and Solution"
Wed, Jan 24	Laying the Groundwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, Chapter 1: "Some Enduring Questions and Relevant Concepts" • The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. 1777. • Musgrave, Paul. 2021. "Political Scientists Turned a Blind Eye to America's Democratic Failures." <i>Foreign Policy</i>.
Fri, Jan 26	The Problem of Human Nature: Self-Interest, Factions, & Collective Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist 10." In textbook appendix. • Textbook, Chapter 2: "Big Answers, Bigger Questions: Madison's Theory of the Republic"
Week 2		
Mon, Jan 29	Madison's Theory: Self-interest and Ambition as the Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madison, James. 1788. "Federalist 51." In textbook appendix. • Constitution of the United States. 1788. Pay special attention to Articles I and II.
Wed, Jan 31	The Structure of Congressional Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGP Grey. 2011. "Gerrymandering Explained." <i>YouTube</i>. • Enten, Harry. 2018. "Ending Gerrymandering Won't Fix What Ails America." In <i>FiveThirtyEight: The Gerrymandering Project</i>. • UK Parliament. 2012. "US Elections – How do they work?" <i>YouTube</i>.
Fri, Feb 2	Biased Representation in Congress: Whose Voice Gets Heard?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronner, Laura & Nathaniel Rakich. 2021. "Advantage, GOP." <i>FiveThirtyEight</i> • Liptak, Adam. 2013. "Smaller States Find Outsize Clout Growing in Senate." <i>The New York Times</i>.

Week 3		
Mon, Feb 5	Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 3: "Citizen Participation in Politics: An Interest in Self-Interest?"
Wed, Feb 7	Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 5: "Interest Group & Pluralist Theory"
Fri, Feb 9	Biased Pluralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elliott, Justin & Paul Kiel. 2019. "Inside TurboTax's 20-Year Fight to Stop Americans From Filing Their Taxes for Free." <i>ProPublica</i> MOODLE: Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. "The Scope & Bias of the Pressure System." In <i>The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America</i>. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston
Week 4		
Mon, Feb 12	Biased Pluralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anzia, Sarah. 2019. "Most research finds little evidence that interest groups influence US politics, but that's because it's focused on the federal government." <i>LSE USAPP</i> blog. MOODLE: Gilens, Martin & Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 12(3): 564-581.
Wed, Feb 14	Public Opinion, Vote Choice, and Cognitive Shortcuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 4: "Who's in Charge Here? Voting Choice in Elections" MOODLE: Schudson, Michael. 2000. "America's Ignorant Voters." <i>The Wilson Quarterly</i> 36(3): 16-22.
Fri, Feb 16	Public Opinion, Vote Choice, and Cognitive Shortcuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Achen, Christopher & Larry Bartels. 2016. "Democracy for realists: Holding up a mirror to the electorate." <i>Juncture</i>. 22(4), 269-275.
Week 5		
Mon, Feb 19	PRESIDENT'S DAY – NO CLASS	
Wed, Feb 21	Representation in the "Textbook" Congress: the Electoral Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Mayhew, David. 1974. "The Electoral Connection and the Congress." In Terry Sullivan & Matthew Sullivan eds., <i>Congress: Structure and Policy</i>. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 1987. MOODLE: Jacobson, Gary. 2015. "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections." <i>The Journal of Politics</i>. 77(3), 861-873
Fri, Feb 23	The Legislative Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, Lynn Vavreck, & Timothy R. Johnson. "Chapter 6: Congress." In <i>The Logic of American Politics</i>. Read pages 231-266

Week 6		
Mon, Feb 26	The Legislative Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, Lynn Vavreck, & Timothy R. Johnson. "Chapter 6: Congress." In <i>The Logic of American Politics</i>. Read pages 266-293
Wed, Feb 28	The President: Unitary Executive or "Persuader-in-Chief"?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 9: "Presidential Leadership: Beyond Self-Interest?" Article II of the Constitution of the United States. 1788.
Fri, Mar 1	2024 Election Preview: Everything <i>But</i> the Presidency!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading TBA
Week 7		
Mon, Mar 4	Public Opinion in California Campus event with Raquel Centeno (USC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOCATION AND TIME TBA Scott Keeter. <i>Pew Research</i>. "Public Opinion Polling Basics"
Wed, Mar 6	Parties as Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 6: "Political Parties: An Alternative to the Republic?"
Fri, Mar 8	Parties as Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Fiorina, Morris. 2014. "The (Re) Nationalization of Congressional Elections." <i>A Hoover Institution Essay on Contemporary American Politics</i>. Azari, Julia. 2016. "Weak parties and strong partisanship are a bad combination." <i>Vox</i>.
Week 8		
Mon, Mar 11	SPRING BREAK– NO CLASS	
Wed, Mar 13		
Fri, Mar 15		

Week 9		
Mon, Mar 18	Race & Realignment in the American Party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malone, Clare. 2020. “The Republican Choice.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>. Tesler, Michael. 2016. “How racially resentful working-class whites fled the Democratic Party — before Donald Trump.” In <i>Washington Post: The Monkey Cage Blog</i> Tesler, Michael. 2016. “Views about race mattered more in electing Trump than in electing Obama.” In <i>Washington Post: The Monkey Cage Blog</i>
Wed, Mar 20	Race & Realignment in the American Party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOODLE: Hajnal, Zoltan. “Understanding the Demographic Sources of America’s Party Divisions.” In <i>More Than Red and Blue: Political Parties and American Democracy</i>. American Political Science Association and Protect Democracy
Fri, Mar 22	NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Hale will be attending the fall 2024 Southern California Political Institutions and Political Economy Conference at Claremont Graduate University
Week 10		
Mon, Mar 25	Presidential Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DeSilver, Drew. 2016. “Trump’s victory another example of how Electoral College wins are bigger than popular vote ones.” <i>Pew Research Center</i>. Lau, Tim. 2021. “The Electoral College, Explained.” <i>Brennan Center for Justice</i>.
Wed, Mar 27	NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Hale will be presenting at the 2024 meeting of the Western Political Science Association (WPSA) in Vancouver
Fri, Mar 29		

Week 11		
Mon, Apr 1	Presidential Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berns, Walter. 1996. "Third Party Candidates Face a High Hurdle in the Electoral College." <i>American Enterprise Institute.</i> Gelman, Andrew and Pierre-Antoine Kremp. 2016. "The Electoral College magnifies the power of white voters." <i>Vox.</i> Walter, Amy. 2022. "The Republican Electoral College Advantage." <i>The Cook Political Report.</i>
Wed, Apr 3	The 2020, 2022, & 2024 Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abramowitz, Alan. 2022. "Are Latinos Deserting the Democratic Party? Evidence from the Exit Polls." <i>UVA Center For Politics</i> blog post Algara, Carlos, Sharif Amlani, Sam Collitt, Isaac Hale, and Sara Kazemian. 2022. "For many 2020 presidential election voters, economic concerns about COVID-19 restrictions trumped public health." <i>LSE USAPP</i> blog post Cohn, Nate. 2023. "Why Trump Is So Hard to Beat." <i>The New York Times.</i> Igielnik, Ruth, Scott Keeter, & Hannah Hartig. 2021. "Behind Biden's 2020 Victory." <i>Pew Research.</i>
Fri, Apr 5	California Politics in 2024 Campus event with California State Senator María Elena Durazo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:00 PM LOCATION TBA Kamal, Sameea. 2023. "Year in review: Legislators respond to hot labor summer, crime concerns." <i>CalMatters.</i> Walters, Dan. 2024. "It's a new year, but California will continue to struggle with existential issues in 2024." <i>CalMatters.</i>
Week 12		
Mon, Apr 8	The Pivotal Politics Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 7: "A Pivotal Politics Model of the Policy Process"
Wed, Apr 10	The Pivotal Politics Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook, Chapter 7: "A Pivotal Politics Model of the Policy Process"
Fri, Apr 12	The Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the United States Attorneys. "Introduction To The Federal Court System." <i>U.S. Department of Justice.</i> Millhisier, Ian. 2022. "The case against the Supreme Court of the United States." <i>Vox.</i> Podcast, 5-4. Episode: "The Shadow Docket with Steve Vladeck"

Week 13		
Mon, Apr 15	The Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epps, Daniel and Ganesh Sitaraman. 2018. “How to save the Supreme Court.” <i>Vox</i>. • Leiter, Brian. 2017. “Let’s start telling the truth about what the Supreme Court does.” <i>The Washington Post</i> • Mejia, Elena and Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux. 2021. “It Will Be Tough For Biden To Reverse Trump’s Legacy Of A Whiter, More Conservative Judiciary.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>.
Wed, Apr 17	Trends in the Two-party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drutman, Lee. 2017. “Political Divisions in 2016 and Beyond: Tensions Between and Within the Two Parties.” Voter Study Group.
Fri, Apr 19	Trends in the Two-party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOODLE: Mason, Lilliana. “Mass Political Behavior and Party Incentives.” In <i>More Than Red and Blue: Political Parties and American Democracy</i>. American Political Science Association and Protect Democracy.
Week 14		
Mon, Apr 22	Is the American Political System Broken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOODLE: Paul Pierson & Eric Schickler. 2022. “Polarization and the Durability of Madisonian Checks and Balances.” In <i>Democratic Resilience: Can the United States Withstand Rising Polarization?</i> Cambridge University Press.
Wed, Apr 24	Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor, Steven. February 1, 2021. “Our Political Reality.” <i>Outside the Beltway</i> blog. • Taylor, Steven. August 16, 2020. “Reforms: the Possible, the Improbable, and the Unpossible.” <i>Outside the Beltway</i> blog. • <i>Optional</i>: extra credit meme due at midnight
Fri, Apr 26	Reform Needed? Potential Reforms from Comparative Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drutman, Lee. June 16, 2021. “Why the Two-Party System is Effing Up U.S. Democracy.” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>. • Drutman, Lee. September 8, 2021. “Quiz: If America Had Six Parties, Which Would You Belong To?” <i>The New York Times</i>.
Week 15		
Mon, April 29	IN CLASS: American Politics Jeopardy & Snacks!	