

American Political Systems
Political Science 11502
Fall 2022

Steven Rogers

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

Class time: Tuesday & Thursday 2:15pm - 3:30pm

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 course covers the period from 1787 to 1877. The second half covers the period from 1877 to the present.

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 16 at 12pm. Exam questions will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay. If scheduling permits, there will be an out of class review session prior to the midterm and final exams.

Papers:

There will be two main written assignments in this course. These will require you to review and critique a debate concerning Presidential power. The first paper will be 4-5 pages and due on October 4, and the second paper will be 6-7 pages and due Tuesday, November 2. You will receive more details about the assignments at least three weeks before the papers are due.

Assignments and Quizzes

To review material from readings and lectures, there will be quizzes and homework assignments throughout the semester.

- x Assignments: There will be at least four assignments in this course that will focus on learning the spatial model, provide practice with short answer questions on the midterm/final, and learning how to read an empirical political science article. Short answer questions (9(0:)) TJ ET all answers should be typed and emailed to Professor Rogers in MS Word (preferred) or PDF format by 2:15pm on the due date.
- x Reading Quizzes: For each Topic (excluding Topic 2), students will complete a 4 question reading quiz. Quizzes will be conducted in class, and students will be notified in class of their due date, which typically will be the due date of the last assigned reading from a topic. For example, the Sarah Binder reading is the

class period if a student is absent of 3 or more consecutive classes due to health reasons, excused absences will require documentation of the illness (e.g., from University Health Services). If unable to attend a lecture, Professor Rogers will make an honest effort to post recordings to Canvas. It, however, will not be assured that all lecture material will be recorded (e.g. 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
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Required Texts

The following text

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 are 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, Richard. Congressmen in Committees pp. Prologue & Ch. 1. [1973] [19 pages]
- x Kollman 5.1 [18 pages]
- x Kollman 12.1 [16 pages]
- x [10 pages]
- x Suggested Reading
 - o Kollman 11 [7 pages]
 - o Kollman 53: Cox, Gary. And Mathew D. McCubbins [6 pages]
 - o Aldrich, John H. [5 pages]
- x Suggested Podcast
 - o [Pirates of the Senate](#) Sarah Binder and Greg Warwo [52 minutes]

Questions to consider while reading:

- x What are the goals of Members of Congress?
- x What is a collective action problem?
- x How do political parties help Members of Congress achieve their goals to overcome collective action problems?
- x How do the Conditional Party Government and Cartel Theory explanations for party influence differ?~ The suggested Cox, McCubbins and Aldrich readings will be helpful for this question
- x For what reasons does Congress increase in size?

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Topic4: TheExecutive Branch

Learning Objectives

x Students will be able to

- o Identify the similarities and differences between Neustadt, Kernell, and ~~W. Case's~~ arguments about how the President can most effectively use his/her informal powers.
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- o 'HVFULEH ZK\ 'XQFHUWDLQ W\HL V6 HP S R Q W D D W 9 R W R H D %
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- o Describe how the President can use executive orders to achieve legislative policy goals,

Topic 6: 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 and strategic models of decision making
 - o Explain some of the strategies justices will partake in to achieve their policymaking goals, according to Epstein and Knight
 - o Identify differences between the dynamic and constrained views of the court and why the court is constrained

Readings

- x Kollman 8.5: George, Tracy / HH (SVWHLQ '2Q WKH 1DWXUH RI 6XS PDNLQJμ > SDJHV@
- x Kollman 8.1 5RVHQEHUJ *HUDOG & DQ&RROVRZ%URQJ \$ERXW 6F [7 pages]
- x

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 Quealy, J. H. (1975). *The Myth of the Rational Voter*. Chicago: Rand McNally. (1975) 100 pages
- x Lippmann, Walter. (1925). *The Public Opinion*. New York: Macmillan. (1925) 100 pages
- x Converse, J. E. (1964). *The Nature of Public Opinion*. In *Public Opinion* (Ed. by J. E. Converse), pp. 1-147. New York: Basic Books. (1964) 147 pages
- x Zaller, J. (1978). *The Structure of Political Attitudes*. Chicago: Rand McNally. (1978) 100 pages
- x Kollman, S. (1992). *The Structure of Political Attitudes*. Chicago: Rand McNally. (1992) 100 pages
- x Suggested Readings
 - o Dropp, Kyle. (2015). *The Myth of the Rational Voter*. Chicago: Rand McNally. (2015) 100 pages
- x Suggested Podcast:
 - o [The Myth of the Rational Voter](#) by Larry Bartels (70 minutes)

Questions to consider while reading

- x What does Lippmann mean when he says...

Topic9: Partisanship & Polarization

Learning Objectives

- x Students will be able to
 - o Identify and describe the three schools of partisanship
 - o Define crosspressures, the perceptual screen, the running of the effective polarization
 - o Describe the stages of partisanship in regard to the topic of partisanship

Readings

- o +HWKHULQJWRQ 0DUN '3DUWLVDQVKLS DQG 3RODULJDV
- o Kollman &DPSEHOO \$QJXV HW DO '7KH \$PHULFDQ 9RW
- o .ROOPDQ 0DVRQ /LOOLDQD '8QFLYLO \$JUHHPHQW +

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
 - Describe the evidence White provides to show the extent to which political behavior is shaped by linked fate or the black utility heuristic as compared to self-interest
 - Understand why rural voters feel resentment according to Cramer
 - Explain what predicted support of the Bush tax cut, according to Bartels

Readings

- .ROOPDQ & UDPHU .DWKHULQH '7KH 3ROLWLFV RI 5H
Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker. [27 pages]
- White, Ismail, Chryl Laird, and Tyler. '6HOOLQJ 2XW" 7KH 3ROLWLFV RI
Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest. *American Political Science Review*.
104(4): 783

Topic 12: The Media

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
 - Define priming and framing
 - Provide evidence of priming effects, drawing from Iyengar and Kinder research

5. As a temporary amendment to the current [University Attendance Policy](#), all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official, or due to an adverse reaction to a COVID-

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email a

accessibility_disability@slu.edu by phone at 314.977.3484. Eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and