

American Political Systems  
Political Science 1150-02  
Spring 2024

Steven Rogers

Class time: MWF 11:00am



### Tests:

This course will have a midterm and a final exam. The midterm exam is on Wednesday, March 6, and you will be notified by February 21 of the Course Topics you will be responsible for on the exam. The final exam will be cumulative and take place on Monday, May 13 at 8am. Exam questions will be multiple-choice, short answer, and essay-based. 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. They will require you to review and critique a debate concerning Presidential powers. The first paper will be 4 – 5 pages and due Monday, February 19. The second paper will be 5 – 6 pages and due Monday, April 15. You will receive more details about the assignments at least three weeks before the papers are due.

### Attendance

Students are expected to attend lectures, complete the readings, and contribute to class discussions. Attendance will be taken in each class and is part of the course grade. Each student is permitted two unexcused absences. Due to public health safety, if a student needs to miss class for a health reason, the absence will be excused if the student emails Professor Rogers within 36 hours of the missed class period. If a student is absent for three or more consecutive classes due to health reasons, excused absences will require documentation of the health reasons (e.g., from University Health Services). If unable to attend a lecture, Professor Rogers will make an honest effort to post recorded lectures to Canvas. It, 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%	Throughout Semester
Attendance	5%	Throughout Semester

When determining the final grade, the following grading scale will be used. Professor Rogers will round final grades. Depending on the distribution of grades, Professor Rogers reserves the right to impose curves to assignments and final grades.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93% - 100%	B	83% -		

## Course Outline

The following listing of topics outlines the subjects we will cover in class and the reading assignments for each topic. This tentative outline aims to give you an overview of the course. Professor Rogers will notify you throughout the semester when you will be responsible for specific readings in class and on the Canvas calendar.

## Topic 3: Congress

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
  - Understand key rules and procedures that influence how a bill becomes a law, such as the previous question motion, open and closed rules, the filibuster, and presidential vetoes.
  - Recognize the importance of Members' of Congress goals and how Members achieve these goals.
  - Explain what collective action problems, public goods, and negative agenda power are

## Topic 4: The Executive Branch

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
  - Identify the similarities and differences between Neustadt, Kernell, and Canes-Wrone arguments about how the President can most effectively use his/her informal powers.
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## Topic 5: Representation

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
  - Define the concepts of "delegate representation" and "trustee representation"
  - Explain how majority-minority districts promote descriptive representation but potentially inhibit substantive representation.
  - Explain why women are less likely to run for office, according to the Gendered Perceptions Hypothesis.
  - Explain the extent to which individuals of different races, genders, and classes are descriptively and substantively represented in the U.S. government.
  - Identify reasons why there is (and is not) polarization in the US Congress, according to Barber and McCarty.

### Readings

- Burke, Edmund. "The Great Chain of Being" in Canon (Section 21). [5 pages]
- Kollman 13.3": "The Role of the Party in the U.S. House of Representatives" in *Party Politics in the U.S. House of Representatives*. [11 pages]
- Gill 2013: "The Role of the Party in the U.S. House of Representatives" in *Party Politics in the U.S. House of Representatives*. [4 pages]
- Gill 2013: "The Role of the Party in the U.S. House of Representatives" in *Party Politics in the U.S. House of Representatives*. [11 pages]
- Suggested Readings:
  - [The paradox at the heart of the most diverse Congress ever](#)
  - A. J. Alesina, Wacziarg, and Wacziarg. "The Role of the Party in the U.S. House of Representatives" in *Party Politics in the U.S. House of Representatives*. 1963. [11 pages]
  - Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer. "How the record number of female lawmakers will change Congress" [4 pages]
  - Matthews, Dylan.



## Topic 6: The Judiciary

### Learning Objectives

- A student will be able to
  - Describe the main functions of District Courts, Courts of Appeals, and the US Supreme Court, along with the basic structure of the federal court system.
  - Explain the implications of Marbury v. Madison.
  - Identify differences between the legal, extralegal, and strategic models of decision-making.
  - Explain some of the strategies justices will partake in to achieve their policymaking goals, according to Epstein and Knight.
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## Topic 12: The Media

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
  - Define priming and by-product learning
  - Provide evidence of priming effects, drawing from Iyengar and Kinder's research
  - Describe how one's media environment and preferences can shape levels of political knowledge

### Readings

- Iyengar, Shanto. 1987. "Is Anyone Doing the Thinking?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53: 1151-1161. [26 pages]
- Suggested Reading
  - Gilens, Martin. 1999. "Why Not Us? The Power of Money in American Politics." *Journal of Democracy* 20(2): 125-141. Chapters 5 and 6
  - D'Augelli, Robert M., and Robert J. Gelles. 1990. "The Effects of Media on Political Knowledge: A Test of the 'Media Effects' Hypothesis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 59: 103-113.
- Suggested Podcast/Video
  - [Journalism in the 21st Century](#) | Matthew Baum
  - [Are claims that social media polarizes us overblown?](#) | The Science of Politics

## University Services

### Student Success Center

The Student Success Center (SSC) supports students in reaching their goals in and out of the classroom.



