

Political Science 550 UX: Advanced Seminar on American Politics

Time: Tuesdays, 6:25 pm – 9:05 pm
Location: MM 119
www.as.miami.edu/personal/cklofstad/

Professor Casey A. Klofstad
Office: 314-G Jenkins Hall
Office Hours: WED, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Phone: 305-284-8861
Email: klofstad@gmail.com

Course Description and Objectives

This seminar provides students with a survey of significant research on major topics in American Politics. We will read influential works of the past, as well as recent cutting-edge research. Particular attention will be paid to discussing the methods and theories used in the literature we will read. The purpose of the course is to acquaint students with the literature on American Politics, while also providing an opportunity for students to develop skills in critically assessing social science research.

Requirements

Participation: 15%

Attendance, completion of reading and writing assignments, and active participation in class discussion are required. I may give quizzes in class to assess your progress.

Midterm Examination: 35% (Tuesday, March 2nd; in class)

The midterm will cover the first half of the course. It will be comprised of a combination of essays and identifications. Students will be responsible for all material covered in discussion and in the readings. Make up examinations will only be given in extreme circumstances, and will not be scheduled without prior consent.

Final Exam: 35% (Thursday, May 6th; 8:00pm – 10:30pm)

The final exam will cover the second half of the course. It will be comprised of a combination of essays and identifications. Students will be responsible for all material covered in discussion and in the readings. Make up examinations will only be given in extreme circumstances, and will not be scheduled without prior consent.

Literature Reviews: 15% (due in class on the weeks of your choosing)

During three weeks of your choosing you will be required to write a summary of the readings on the syllabus for that week. The summaries are due in class on the weeks you have chosen. Each summary should be between 2 and 3 double-spaced pages in length

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any other kind will not be tolerated. By submitting materials to meet course requirements you assert that the work is your own. "Minor" infractions, such as failure to adequately cite source materials will lead to an F (0 points) on the assignment. Omission, outright copying of materials, or outright cheating in any form will lead to an F in the course and referral to the Honor Council.

Class Cancellation

In the event a class is canceled (e.g., natural disaster, instructor illness, etc.) you are still responsible for having done the work assigned on this syllabus by its due date.

Required Texts

You are required to have taken an introductory course in American politics. However, it is **strongly** recommended that you obtain an introductory American politics text, and review the chapters that pertain to each week's subject. Two good texts are *The New American Democracy* (Fiorina et al.) and *The Struggle for Democracy* (Greenberg and Page).

Class Schedule and Readings

Tuesday, January 19th: Introduction and Course Overview

Tuesday, January 26th: Public Opinion

Political Behavior of the American Electorate: Chapter 6

The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion: Chapters 1-3

The Rational Public: Chapters 1 & 10

Information, Participation, and Choice: Chapter 1

Congress as Public Enemy: Chapters 1, 5 & 8

Tuesday, February 2nd: Civic Engagement and Participation

Voice and Equality: Chapters 1-3, 9 & 17

Bowling Alone: Chapters 1-3, 15-16, 21 & 23-24

"Talk Leads to Recruitment"

"Disconnection and Reorganization..."

Tuesday, February 9th: Elections and Voting

"Electoral Realignments"

"Abortion: Evidence of Issue Evolution"

Why Americans Split Their Tickets: Chapters 1-2

"Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections"

"Money and Office: the Sources of Incumbency Advantage..."

Tuesday, February 16th: Interest Groups

The Logic of Collective Action: Chapters 1-2

"The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America"

Federalist #10

"Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias..."

"The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System" (excerpt from *The Semisovereign People*)

"The Rise of Citizen Groups"

Tuesday, February 23rd: Political Parties and Partisanship

Why Parties?: Chapters 1 & 9

Party Government: Chapter 8

The American Voter: Chapters 6-7

Partisan Hearts and Minds: Chapter 1

"Affect and Cognition in Party Identification"

Tuesday, March 2nd
Midterm Examination

Tuesday, March 9th
NO CLASS TODAY

Saturday, March 13th – Sunday, March 21st: SPRING BREAK HOLIDAY

Tuesday, March 23rd: Congress
Legislative Leviathan: Chapters 4-5 & 7
Information and Legislative Organization: Chapters 1 & 4
Disjointed Pluralism: Chapter 1
Home Style: Chapters 1-2

Tuesday, March 30th: The Presidency
Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: Chapters 1 & 3
Going Public: Chapters 1-2
Power Without Persuasion: Chapters 1 & 4
The Politics Presidents Make: Chapters 2-3

Tuesday, April 6th: The Courts and Law
The Choices Justices Make: Chapters 1-2
The Hollow Hope: Chapters 1-2 & 5
Judging on a Collegial Court: Chapters 2-3

Tuesday, April 13th: Race and Ethnicity in American Politics
Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: Introduction and Chapters 1-3
Behind the Mule: Chapters 1 & 4
Black Faces, Black Interests: Chapters 1 & 10
“Latino Attitudes toward Various Areas of Public Policy”

Tuesday, April 20th: Policy Agendas
Agendas and Instability in American Politics: Chapters 1-2
Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy: Chapters 1 & 9
Politicians Don't Pander: Chapters 1-2

Tuesday, April 27th
NO CLASS TODAY

Thursday, May 6th
Final Exam