Draft Syllabus for Introduction to American Government

I. Course Information

Instructor: Daniel Kryder, Associate Professor

Office Hours/Availability – By Arrangement.

We will use the Virtual Office in LATTE for any direct communications. Please send me a message through this forum to arrange a time to speak with me directly with questions or to express concerns or if you need help with the course material or assignments. I will reply within 48 hours.

Online Meeting Room: TBD

Term: June 6 - August 10, 2016 | Course Week: Monday to Sunday, the final day of class falls on Wednesday

Overview

This syllabus contains all relevant information about the course: description, grading criteria, the texts and other materials of instruction, and weekly assignments and due dates. Consider this your roadmap for the course. Please read through the syllabus carefully and feel free to share any questions that you may have. Please print a copy of this syllabus for reference.

Orientation to LATTE

For all students who are new to working on LATTE or for those who would like to have an introduction to navigating through the course, a short tutorial is available to view on the course site.

Description

Trump. Hillary. Bernie. What is going on in American Politics? How do we comprehend what appears to be a sea change in politics today? This online course offers an overview of U.S. politics and an introduction to its institutional foundations as embodied in the three branches of government: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. We will also study political socialization, political parties and voting with a focus on the election campaigns and party conventions occurring in the summer of 2016.

You will be engaged through 3 interactive online meetings, discussions with classmates, video presentations, and assignments that have you observe and report on the nomination process - and especially the party conventions. You will be guided through the development of a term paper of approximately 12 pages throughout the ten weeks.

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Describe essential features in U.S. politics, including federalism, the three branches of government, political parties, and political culture and partisanship.
- Understand core theoretical concepts and analytical frameworks of political science, including the various manifestations of power; social and economic structures; formal and informal institutions; and the impact of race and immigration.
- Apply these theoretical frameworks to current episodes and phenomena in American politics.
- Communicate to others their insights into American politics, by means of written compositions of various topics and lengths.
Hours Requirement for Four-credit Course

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 10-12 hours per week on class work, reviewing course materials and preparing assignments, in a four-credit course whether in a classroom or online. Below is a breakdown of the estimated time that you may expect to spend per week on course work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading &amp; Notetaking</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Test Your Knowledge</th>
<th>Assignments/Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 hours</td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>5-7 hours</td>
</tr>
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</table>

While the online platform allows for a flexible schedule, there will be three required online meetings during the semester—dates and times determined at the beginning of the course. There will be one position paper of 12 pages that students will draft in four structured segments over the course of the semester.

Course Materials


Additional reading and viewing materials will be made available on a week-to-week basis in the form of pdf’s of relevant articles or links to websites.

Required Software

Word or Google Docs (available to all Brandeis students)

Online Course Content

This course will be conducted completely online using Brandeis’ LATTE site, available at http://latte.brandeis.edu. The site contains this course syllabus, assigned reading material, assignments, knowledge checks, discussion forums, links/resources to other course-related materials and sites and due dates. Access information is emailed to enrolled students before the start of the course.

To begin participating in the course, review the Welcome Message and the materials found in the Week 1 block.
Course Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Percentages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td><strong>Discussions</strong> (including original responses and replies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td><strong>Test Your Knowledge (Weeks 1-9)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 40% | **Assignments**
Term Paper: Introduction – 2 pages (Week 3)
Term Paper: Institutions – 3-4 pages (Week 5)
Term Paper: Participation – 3-4 pages (Week 7)
Convention Analysis – Oral online presentation (Week 9) |
| 30% | Final Term Paper (due Week 10) |

Description of Graded Activities and Assignments

Participation in Discussion Forum

This forum takes the place of discussions that would occur in a traditional classroom. Keep in mind that postings to the forums will be as rich as you make them. They are required so that you can reflect on the readings and share your knowledge and ideas while gaining from the insights of your peers as well. The instructor will not lead these discussions but may facilitate through probing questions or comments to which you will be expected to respond.

The discussions are an extension of your academic work, so they will require a formal style of writing. They are not the equivalent to discussion postings that you may find in online media sites or in social media. (See detailed criteria below.) You can look forward to some interesting discussions during these 10 weeks.

Requirements and Grading Criteria for Discussions (grade converted to 100 point scale in gradebook)
Post to the discussions on at least 3 different days of the course week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Post (by Thursday)</th>
<th>12 points of weekly discussion grade</th>
<th>Max. Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>Your original insights and original conclusions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence</td>
<td>Includes references with citations to weekly readings/external references</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed response</td>
<td>Answers the question(s) posed completely</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Little to no spelling or grammatical errors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Length</td>
<td>250-300 words minimum</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Replies (by Sunday)</td>
<td>8 points of weekly discussion grade (4 points each reply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive</td>
<td>Follow-on points from your personal insights and/or from the readings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200 words minimum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Little to no spelling or grammatical errors</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Deductions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All posts on only 2 days</td>
<td>-1 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All posts on only 1 day</td>
<td>-2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Post 1 day late</td>
<td>-6 points, 2 days or more: -12 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replies 1 or more days late</td>
<td>-8 points</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Test Your Knowledge

Test Your Knowledge is a timed quiz (30 minutes) at the end of each week available in LATTE. You will be tested on the weekly readings. There is no final exam or other cumulative test. Question types may vary and it will be graded within LATTE, so you will immediately see your results and the grade is automatically added to the gradebook.

Analysis of Speeches at Conventions – Group/Team work

For the analysis, you will view the Keynote speech and the Nominee’s speech and compare and contrast them at either the Democratic Convention or the Republican Convention. This will be an oral online presentation that is accompanied by slides created in Google slides or a PowerPoint. You will work with other classmates and present your analysis online on Sunday, August 7. Your presentation will be followed by a class discussion. More details and expectations are still in development.

Criteria

A detailed rubric, available in LATTE in the Assignment Guidelines, breaks out the grading criteria. Your grade will be assigned based on....

Term Paper

The term paper will follow a structure that will be outlined in the Assignment Guidelines available on the course site. The paper will be broken up into four parts that will be drafted consecutively through the semester allowing you to get feedback so that you can revise and refine the paper which will be due in its entirety in the final week of the semester.

Criteria

A detailed rubric, available in LATTE in the Assignment Guidelines, breaks out the grading criteria. Your grade will be assigned based on complexity of thought and clarity of expression, relevant and appropriate use of supporting evidence, organization and coherence of your paper, writing style and mechanics.

When you submit your assignment through LATTE, it will be sent through Turnitin to check for originality. You will get instant feedback on your work and it will help inform the instructor’s grading process. (Please review Section IV for further information on the use of Turnitin at Brandeis.)
## II. Details of Weekly Expectations

### Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Readings and Multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 6/6 | **Introduction**  
- Introduce yourself  
- Discussions  
- Introduce Position Paper  
- Test Your Knowledge | *American Politics.* Chapter 1  
*American Political Parties and Elections:* Chapter 1  
**Video:** Discussion on *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* by Morris Fiorina, C-SPAN |
| 2 6/13 | **Origins and Design of the System**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge  
- Choose topic for Term Paper  
- Online meeting (Federalist Papers and Term Paper topics), June 15 | *American Political Parties and Elections:* Chapter 2  
Wood, Gordon S. Chapter 2, "The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787"  
Madison, James. Chapter 2–3: "Federalist No. 10."  
Madison, James. Chapter 2–4: "Federalist No. 51."  
U.S. Constitution & the Declaration of Independence  
**Video:** The Declaration of Independence |
| 3 6/20 | **Presidency**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge  
- Term Paper: Introduction | *American Politics:* Chapter 2  
Neustadt, R., Chapter #.23 “The Power to Persuade”,  
**Video:** The Future of the American Presidency, panel discussion |
| 4 6/27 | **Congress**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge  
- One on one meeting with Prof. Kryder | *American Politics:* Chapters 3-4  
*American Political Parties and Elections:* Chapter 4  
Mayhew, David R. "The Electoral Incentive.”  
Desilver, Drew. “The polarized Congress of today has its roots in the 1970s” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Readings and Multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5 7/4 | **Courts**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge  
- Term Paper: Institutions  
- One on one meeting with Prof. Kryder | *American Politics.* Chapter 5  
Segal, Jeffrey A. and Cover, Albert D. “Ideological Values and the Votes of U.S. Supreme Court Justices”  
Kuhn, David P. “The Incredible Polarization and Politicization of the Supreme Court,” *The Atlantic,* Jun 29, 2012 |
| 6 7/11 | **Patterns of Participation**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge | *American Politics.* Chapter 7  
*American Political Parties and Elections:* Chapter 4  
Bartels, Larry M. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind."  
Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. "The Big Tilt: Participatory Inequality in America."  
Stimson, James A. "Perspectives on Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age"  
| 7 7/18 | **Parties and Polarization**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge  
- Term Paper: Participation  
- Republican National Convention (July 18-21) | American Politics: Chapters 8-9  
American Political Parties and Elections: Chapter 3  
Aldrich, John H. Chapter 12–1: Excerpt from *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*  
Video: “Era of Political Instability” by Morris Fiorina  
View: Keynote and Nominee Speeches at Republican National Convention (July 18-21) |
| 8 7/25 | **Elections**  
- Discussions  
- Test Your Knowledge  
- Democratic National Convention (July 25-28) | *American Political Parties and Elections:* Chapter 5  
Sides, John, and Jake Haselswerdt. "Campaigns and Elections." Chapter 11 in *New Directions in Public Opinion.*  
Issenberg, Sasha. "How President Obama's Campaign Used Big Data to Rally Individual Voters"  
View: Keynote and Nominee Speeches at Democratic National Convention (July 25-28) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Readings and Multimedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Elections</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>- Discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Online Presentation: Keynotes and Nominees’ speeches at Conventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Democracy and Difference</strong></td>
<td><em>American Politics</em>. Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>- Discussions</td>
<td><em>American Political Parties and Elections</em>: Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aldrich, John H. “‘Cause the U.S. Government Shutdown?: The Institutional Path from an Eighteenth Century Republic to a Twenty-first Century”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calendar and Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Assignments (due Sundays, except where noted)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 6-12</td>
<td>Syllabus and Academic Integrity Agreement (ungraded, Friday 6/10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 13-19</td>
<td>Select Topic for Position Paper (ungraded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>June 20-26</td>
<td>Term Paper: Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>June 27-July 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 4-10</td>
<td>Term Paper: Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>July 11-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>July 18-24</td>
<td>Term Paper: Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>July 25-31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>August 1-7</td>
<td>Online Presentation of Convention Speeches (Sunday, 8/7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>August 8-10</td>
<td>Position Paper (Friday 8/12)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Recurring Weekly Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Response to Discussion Questions</td>
<td>Due by Thursday each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replies to Discussion Questions</td>
<td>2 posts minimum due by Sunday each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Your Knowledge</td>
<td>Due by Sunday each week (Weeks 1-8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Course Policies and Procedures

Asynchronous Work

The weekly readings, discussion, Test Your Knowledge, and Position Paper may be done asynchronously; i.e., students can login to the course, read/download materials, post to the forums, and submit assignments or take the test throughout the course week. Please carefully follow the syllabus and the weekly modules to help manage your time throughout the course week; once we enter week 2 or 3, students typically become much more comfortable with the pace and flow of the course.

Synchronous Work

At three points throughout the semester, we will meet online as a class using the BlueJeans video conferencing link noted on the first page of this syllabus. These sessions are required and will be recorded so that they can be reviewed at a later date. If there are any group projects, students may use the asynchronous group forums available and, if they choose, they may use synchronous group meeting tools, such as Google Hangout, which is available to all Brandeis students through their Brandeis account. Alternatively, students who live locally may choose to meet in person.

Work Expectations

Students are responsible to explore each week's materials and submit required work by their due dates. On average, a student can expect to spend approximately 1-3 hours per week reading and approximately 7-9 hours per week completing assignments and posting to discussions. The calendar of assignments and due dates is located in Section II, and all assignments are due by the close of the associated week, Sunday midnight EST, except for the ungraded assignments in Week 1, due Thursday, and the final draft of the Campaign Policy Paper, which is due Friday of Week 10.

Late Policies

Late discussion posts are strongly discouraged as the success of class discussion is dependent upon the active engagement of all participants in the course. Late policies related to discussion posts can be found in the Evaluation Criteria located above in Section I.

Points will be deducted for late assignments according to the following scale:

- 1-2 days late - 5 points
- 3-4 days late - 10 points
- 5-6 days late - 15 points
- 7 or more days late - not accepted *Late Final Projects cannot be accepted

The Test Your Knowledge quiz will not be available after midnight on the Sunday of the week in which it is required. You must complete the quiz within 30 minutes.

On rare occasions, issues do occur that may warrant an exception to the late policy above. Please notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance of a due date if an issue arises that will make it impossible for you to meet a stated due date. Exceptions, although rare, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Confidentiality in the “Classroom”

As we proceed throughout our Discussions, I'd like to highlight a point about confidentiality in our online classroom. We can draw on the wealth of examples from our personal experiences in class discussions and in our written work. However, it is imperative that we not share information that is confidential in nature. In addition, we should respect our fellow classmates and work under the assumption that what is discussed here stays within the confines of the classroom.

Finally, for your awareness, members of the University's technical staff have access to all course sites to aid in course setup and technical troubleshooting. Select staff have access to all courses for oversight purposes. Students enrolled in online courses can expect that individuals other than their fellow classmates and the course instructor(s) may visit their course for various purposes. Their intentions are to aid in technical troubleshooting and to ensure that quality course delivery standards are met. Strict confidentiality of student information is maintained.

Grading Standards

Students are graded on demonstration of knowledge or competence, rather than on effort alone. Each student is expected to maintain high standards of honesty and ethical behavior. All assignments are meant to represent your own work. I expect students to conduct themselves courteously online. *If in my judgment a student's conduct is not courteous, I reserve the right to reduce that student's grade.*

Grades in Points and Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-63</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62-60</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 or &lt;</td>
<td>F</td>
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Feedback

Feedback will be provided on assignments within 10 days of the due date. Within 7 days of the close of each week, feedback will be provided on weekly Discussions.
IV. University-wide Standards

Learning Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please contact the Summer School Disability Coordinator immediately.

Academic Honesty and Student Integrity

Academic honesty and student integrity are of fundamental importance at Brandeis University and we want students to understand this clearly at the start of the term. As stated in the Brandeis Rights and Responsibilities handbook, “Every member of the University Community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. A student shall not receive credit for work that is not the product of the student’s own effort. A student's name on any written exercise constitutes a statement that the work is the result of the student's own thought and study, stated in the students own words, and produced without the assistance of others, except in quotes, footnotes or references with appropriate acknowledgement of the source.” In particular, students must be aware that material (including ideas, phrases, sentences, etc.) taken from the Internet and other sources MUST be appropriately cited if quoted, and footnoted in any written work turned in for this, or any, Brandeis class. Also, students will not be allowed to collaborate on work except by the specific permission of the instructor. Failure to cite resources properly may result in a referral being made to the Office of Student Development and Judicial Education. The outcome of this action may involve academic and disciplinary sanctions, which could include (but are not limited to) such penalties as receiving no credit for the assignment in question, receiving no credit for the related course, or suspension or dismissal from the University.

Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. TurnItIn is a tool that compares student assignment submissions to internet sources and a comprehensive database of other papers. It creates a report that provides a link to possible matches and a "similarity score". TurnItIn does not determine whether a paper has been plagiarized; individual faculty will make that judgment. All papers submitted to TurnItIn are kept in a separate reference database of Brandeis work, to be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in the future. Students retain copyright on their original course work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides

Further information regarding academic integrity may be found in the following publications: "In Pursuit of Excellence - A Guide to Academic Integrity for the Brandeis Community", "(Students') Rights and Responsibilities Handbook", AND " Graduate Professional Studies Student Handbook". You should read these publications. A student who is in doubt about standards of academic honesty (regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions of written work, unacknowledged or unauthorized collaborative effort, false citation or false data) should consult either the course instructor or other staff of the Summer School at Brandeis.

University Caveat

The above schedule, content, and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.