

Political Science 264  
**American Government and Politics**  
University of Waterloo

**Term:** Fall 2012

**Class Time:** T & Th 11:30am-12:50pm

**Format:** Lectures

**Classroom:** Arts Lecture 208

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 1-3pm

(or by appointment)

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Plagiarism detection software (*Turnitin*) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

**Prerequisite**

PSCI 101 or 110

**Course Description**

Politics in America is often a fascinating subject for Canadian students. Among other things there are more elections, few campaign financing regulations, a celebrity President, an active Congress, well-funded special interests, and sharply partisan politicians and voters. Analyzing US politics this term has the added excitement of a presidential election, a process we will follow closely.

This course is designed to provide a more thorough understanding of both the institutions and the political activism that characterizes national political life in the United States. We will examine this country's founding and federal system, the different institutions that separate the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the role of parties and interest groups, and some of the policies that inform American's economic and social fabric. We will approach the study of American political life with a critical as well as an evaluative objective in mind. Our perspective will be one of Canadians on the outside looking into the modern American state, attempting to understand its innovative and complex nature. By the end of the term, students will have a more informed appreciation of the American state, both on its own and in comparison with Canada.

**Required Text (available in the UW bookstore):**

James Q. Wilson, John J. DiIulio, Jr. and Meena Bose. 2013. *American Government: The Essentials*, 13<sup>th</sup> Ed. Boston: Wadsworth (referred to as "WD&B" in lecture schedule).

Top Hat Monocle License - \$20 (available online or at the bookstore). Information about THM will be available on our LEARN website.

## Course Evaluation

### 1. **Election Analysis 15%** Due October 4

The election analysis will ask you to examine one of the “battleground states” in the 2012 US Presidential Election. A battleground state is one in which polling shows the two presidential candidates to be in a statistical dead heat. Candidates spend a lot of time and money in these swing states to help move the popular vote their way. In a seven-page paper you will provide a clear analysis of your chosen swing states that answers a number of questions, including an identification of the key voters in the state, what the main issues are, the strategies of the candidates to win that state, and who you think will win it. *A detailed outline of the assignment will be posted on our LEARN website.*

### 2. **Midterm Test 20%** (in class) October 11

There will be an in-class exam on the material covered to October 9. The midterm may include a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. You will have an hour and ten minutes to complete the exam.

### 3. **Research Paper 30%** Due November 13

Everyone will write a 10-12 page research paper on an aspect of American politics. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your ability to write a research essay with a clear and concise argument and to demonstrate an understanding of the subject of enquiry. To write a successful paper you must take a position, construct an argument and marshal evidence to support your position. Students also must consider the arguments against their own position and, where possible, rebut those counter arguments. Your objective is to present and defend an argument in a clear, logical, and organized manner.

*A detailed description of the assignment will be posted on our LEARN website, including a selection of topics on which you can choose to write.*

### 4. **Final Exam 35%** (during regularly scheduled exam period)

A final exam will take place during the regularly scheduled exam period. The content of the entire course will be reflected in the exam which may include a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. You will have 2.5 hours to complete the exam.

### 5. **Bonus 5%** (interactive participation)

To encourage participation and discussion, PSCI 264 will use a software programme from Top Hat Monocle that acts like an iClicker. You don't need an actual clicker – your laptop, phone, tablet, iPad, iPod Touch, or other technology that can access the internet is sufficient. You must purchase a license either online from Top Hat Monocle or from the bookstore. You then register for an account and add our course. You are now ready for interactive participation! Information about THM, how to set up an account, how to use the software to participate in class, and access to 24/7 student technical support is available on our LEARN website.

<b>Course Policies, University Policies, and General Rules for PSCI 264</b>
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## Email

Email is likely the best way to get in touch with the professor or your TA outside of usually scheduled office hours. A few things to remember when emailing:

- **Please use your official UW email account.** To ensure your privacy, your professor/TA will not reply to emails sent from a non-UW account (such as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, Sympatico, etc.).
- Please address your email to the professor or TA appropriately (i.e. 'Dr. Esselment', 'Professor', Ashley, Luke, etc.).
- Please remember to sign your email with a first and last name.
- Please allow 24-48 hours for a response to your email.
- Please note that your professor and TA generally do not answer emails after 4:00pm on weekdays or on weekends (4:00pm Friday to 9:00am Monday).
- **Email should be used for brief questions that can be answered quickly.** If you want to discuss course material, assignments, or another matter in greater detail, please see the professor or TA during his or her office hours or make an appointment to meet at some other time convenient for both.

### **Course Website**

The course outline, detailed assignments, class announcements, grades, etc. will be available on the course website on LEARN. Users can login to LEARN via: <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>. Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

### **Class Attendance and Participation**

The professor will not be taking attendance at lecture but attending lectures is crucial if you are hoping to do well in the course. A 5% bonus for interactive participation is built into the course. If you are sick or must be away from class, find a friend from whom you can borrow notes. While lecture slides MAY be posted on the class website, there is no obligation on the professor to do so, nor will she be supplying any of her lecture notes to the class.

### **Late Penalties**

All late assignments (that is, assignments submitted after 4:00pm on their due date) will be penalized 3% a day (including weekends). A waiver of this penalty will only be considered in the event of an **officially documented extenuating circumstance** (this does NOT include a note from your mother). See "Extension Policy" below. Late assignments can be placed in the professor's drop box in the Department of Political Science. This is cleared out daily.

### **Final Submission Date for Assignments**

The final submission date for assignments is one week (7 days) after their due date (with the imposition of late penalties). **The instructor WILL NOT accept the assignment for grading after one week has passed without a documented extenuating circumstance.** If an extenuating circumstance may prevent you from submitting an assignment by its submission date, please contact the professor at the earliest possible convenience and be prepared to provide her with official documentation concerning your situation.

### **Extension Policy for Assignments**

All requests for assignment extensions must be directed to your instructor. Your TA does not have the authority to grant extensions.

The professor will only consider granting an extension in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance (that is, serious personal illness, critical personal or family crisis, etc.). If a situation arises that may prevent you from completing an assignment, contact the professor as early as possible, ideally before the assignment is due.

The UW Verification of Illness Form can be found at: [www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health\\_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html). Please note that midterms will not be deferred. Instead, the final exam will be re-weighted appropriately.

### **Computer Problems**

Students are expected to back up their written work and lecture notes. Extensions will NOT be granted for computer-related issues. Furthermore, students will be responsible for finding replacement lecture notes where they fail to back-up their files.

### **Grade Appeals**

If you are concerned that your assignment was not graded fairly, you should first meet with the TA who marked your work.

To request a review of your assignment from your TA and, later, your professor if required, you must provide a 1 page explanation as to why you think your assignment was improperly graded (i.e. what do you think you did that should have been given more weight?). The explanation, the original assignment, and a clean copy of the assignment should be submitted to your tutorial leader no later than 3 weeks after the assignment was **made available for return**. If you are unsatisfied after consulting and discussing the matter with your TA, the assignment will be passed on to the Professor for final grading.

**NOTE:** Students must take responsibility for picking up their marked work in a timely manner. No appeals will be considered more than 3 weeks after the assignment/exam was made available for return. *Grades may be either raised, stay the same, or lowered on appeal.* Students who wish to appeal an examination grade should follow the same procedure noted above for assignments.

### **Academic Integrity**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>.

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):**  
[http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Resources for Students

- **Counselling Services** (academic/career or personal):  
<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/>
- **The Writing Centre:** <http://elpp.uwaterloo.ca/writingcentre.html>
- **Office for Persons with Disabilities:**  
<http://www.studentservices.uwaterloo.ca/disabilities/index.html>

**Lecture Schedule**

September 11 – Introduction to PSCI 264

September 13 – The Constitutional Convention of 1787  
WD&B – Chapters 1&2

September 18 – Federalism  
WD&B – Chapter 3

September 20 – Congress  
WD&B – Chapter 13

September 25 – The Presidency and the Celebrity of the Presidency  
WD&B – Chapter 14

September 27 – The Judiciary  
Wd&B – Chapter 16

October 2 – Civil Liberties  
WD&B – Chapter 5

October 4 – Civil Rights (**Election Analysis Due!**)  
WD&B – Chapter 6

October 9 – *Midterm Review*

October 11 – **MIDTERM TEST!**

October 16 - Political Parties  
WD&B – Chapter 9

October 18 - Interest Groups  
WD&B – Chapter 11

October 23 – Media  
WD&B – Chapter 12

October 25 – Public Opinion and Participation  
WD&B – Chapters 7 & 8

October 30 - Elections and Campaigns (including electoral system)  
WD&B – Chapter 10

November 1 – *Special US 2012 Election Panel* (Room TBA)

November 6 – Presidential Election 2008 and 2012  
Readings TBA

November 8 – Political Culture  
WD&B – Chapter 4

November 13 – The Bureaucracy (**Research Paper Due!**)  
WD&B – Chapter 15

November 15 – The Policy-Making Process  
WD&B – Chapter 17

November 20 – Social Policy  
Readings TBA

November 22 – Foreign Policy  
Readings TBA

November 27 – American Exceptionalism vs. the Decline of the US

November 29 – Catch-Up and Review – Research papers handed back

### Recommended Source Materials:

1. ***The Constitution of the U.S.A.: Analysis and Interpretation***, (U.S. Government Printing Office, latest edition).
2. M. Adams, ***Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada and the Myth of Converging Values***, (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003).
3. R.J. Art & K.N. Waltz, eds. ***The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics***, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, (Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).
4. J.C. Foster and S.M. Leeson, eds., ***Constitutional Law: Cases in Context***, (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1998).
5. S.J. Wayne, ***The Road to the White House 2004*** , (N.Y.: St. Martins 2004).
6. P. Finkelman, ed., ***Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties, Vols. I-III***, (NY: Routledge, 2006).
7. D.M. Thomas & B.B. Torrey, eds. ***Canada and the United States: differences that count***, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Peterborough ON: Broadview Press, 2008).
8. S. Brooks, ***Understanding American Politics***, (Toronto: U of T Press, 2009).
9. D. M. O'Brien, ***Constitutional Law and Politics***, Volumes I & II. 6<sup>th</sup> edition, ( New York: Norton, 2008)
10. Stanley I. Kutler, ed., ***The Supreme Court and the Constitution: Readings in American Constitutional History***, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., latest edition)
11. R.E. Neustadt, ***Presidential Powers***, (John Wiley & Sons, latest edition)
12. H.W. Stanley and R.G. Niemi, ***Vital Statistics on American Politics***, (C.Q. Press, latest edition)
13. I. H. Daalder and J.M. Lindsay, ***America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy***, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003)
14. Alexis de Tocqueville, ***Democracy in America***, (any edition)
15. M. Barone, et al, ***The Almanac of American Politics 2008***, (Washington D.C.: National Journal, 2008)
16. J.D. Barber, ***The Presidential Character***, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, latest edition)
17. E.R. Wittkopf et al., ***American Foreign Policy***, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, (Belmont CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2003)

18. M. Fausold and A. Shank, eds., **The Constitution and the American Presidency** (State University of New York Press, 1991)
19. J.A. Rosati, ed. **Readings in the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy**, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998)
20. S.M. Hartmann, **From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics Since 1960**, (New York: Knopf, 1989)
21. H. Kissinger, **Does America Need a Foreign Policy?**, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001)
22. Z. Sardar & M.W. Davies, **Why Do People Hate America?** (Cambridge UK: Icon Books, 2002)
23. J. Stewart, B. Karlin, D. Javarbaum, eds., **The Daily Show with Jon Stewart Presents: America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction**, (New York: Warner Books, 2004)

## **The Media**

The observation of the political process in action is an interesting and informative way to keep abreast of American politics, such as a presidential election; daily challenges facing the president; changing foreign policy initiatives; executive-congressional conflict; and the realignment of the Supreme Court. Interest groups, congress and the president will be constantly at odds over many major issues that dominate the political landscape.

In order to keep informed about the changing nature of American politics, it is recommended that you keep abreast of the news and monitor such television programs as "State of the Union" (CNN); "Washington Week" (PBS); "Meet the Press" (NBC); "This Week with George Stephanopoulos"(ABC); "News Hour" (PBS), "Lou Dobbs Tonight" (CNN); "BBC World News" (CBC-NW) and "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" or "The Colbert Report" (COM). YouTube can also be helpful at times.

Newspapers are also a great source for information, many of which can be found in the library or accessed online. Among the best are *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and weeklies such as *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Human Events*, *The Guardian Weekly*, and *The Economist*.

Magazines and Monthlies also provide an up-to-date source of information. Depending upon your time and taste, sample some of the following and keep up to date via links provided on our web site.

**The Nation**

**Time/Newsweek**

**Campaigns&Elections**

**The National Journal**

**The National Review**

**Rolling Stone**

**Harper's**

**Washington Monthly**

**The New Republic**

**Vanity Fair**



## Vanity

Journals provide a more reflective and in-depth analysis of the issues and concerns of American academics. They cross all areas of the disciplines of political science, history, sociology, economics, law and business. They should be used as primary sources when research on essays or seminars is required.

The following are a small example of these scholarly journals –

**American Journal of Political Science**  
**Foreign Policy**  
**Foreign Affairs**

**American Bar Review**  
**Congressional Digest**  
**Harvard Law Review**

Websites are also a good way to research information and stay informed about developments in American politics, especially with the 2012 election this fall. Here are a few good ones that you can check out:

American National Election Studies: <http://www.electionstudies.org/>  
Stanford Political Communication Lab: <http://www.pcl.stanford.edu/>  
Real Clear Politics: <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>  
The Huffington Post: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>  
The Living Room Candidate: <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>  
Politico: <http://www.politico.com>  
FiveThirtyEight: Nate Silver's Political Calculus:  
<http://www.fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/>  
Talking Points Memo: <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/>  
Drudge Report: <http://www.drudgereport.com/>

Also fun? The Onion (but remember it's made-up news!): <http://www.theonion.com/>

### **Smartphone/Tablet Apps:**

For US politics, a great (free!) app is "Real Clear Politics". It culls together the best analysis, commentary, opinion from many different newspapers and posts it on the app each morning and evening. It also has the latest polls on Obama and Romney generally and in swing states, as well as polls on Congressional races.

As the course continues, and as students find other good apps for US politics, I will post them on our course LEARN website.