POLS 530 Seminar in American Politics and Government

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<th>Time</th>
<th>1:25-4:25 Wednesday</th>
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<td>Room</td>
<td>HSS 215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Anthony Nownes</td>
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- **Office Hours**: 9-12 Tuesday, 811 McClung Tower
- **Telephone**: 974-7052
- **Email**: anownes@utk.edu

**Course Description**

This is the core seminar in the field of American politics. It is designed to introduce students to the field of American politics. Of course, neither this course nor any other can represent this vast and rich field of study. Nonetheless, the coverage of the literature is sufficiently broad to give students an introduction to the major empirical and theoretical approaches to the study of American politics.

You will be expected to complete a large number of readings. As you will see, the readings reflect a wide variety of theoretical approaches, research designs, and methodologies. I hope that by the end of this course you will be able to assess the usefulness of many different approaches to the study of American politics.

We begin with a look at the nation’s founding—especially the controversies surrounding the ratification of the Constitution. Next, we take a brief look at how the system created by the founders has evolved over time, paying special attention to how theorists and scholars have conceptualized this evolution. From here, we turn to the institutions of American government. As you will see, some of the best and most influential work in all of political science has focused upon the institutions of American government. We conclude with an examination of American political behavior.

**Course Requirements**

10% **Weekly Memos**. Weekly one (1) page memorandums are required. Each memorandum will summarize an important theme in the week’s readings and will propose a question or topic to be examined in class discussion. These one-page memorandums are due one full day before class.

30% **Attendance and Participation**. Attendance is mandatory. It is crucial that you come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned material. You will be expected to show up ready to discuss the week’s readings. Each student will lead at least one seminar discussion.

60% **Big Paper**. You have two options for the big paper. (1) **The “Research” Option**. You will submit an original research paper. The paper will be from 15-45 pages long, and will report the results of original research; (2) **The Term Paper Option**. You will submit two (2) term papers. Each term paper will be 10-15 pages long and will trace the impact of one of the field’s classic articles or books. Articles or books marked with an * are considered classics. You may choose another article or book with my permission. Each term paper will take a close look at the classic work, paying special attention to its theme, theoretical foundation, research design, methodology, and conclusion. Each paper will also trace the impact of the classic work by examining the work that followed it.

**Other Issues**

_Disability Policy_

If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS). The office is located at 191 Hoskins Library, and can be contacted at 974-6087. The ODS web page is found at http://ods.utk.edu/default.html.
Here is what the Student Handbook says about ODS and its services:
“The Office of Disability Services (ODS) seeks to eliminate the barriers persons with disabilities encounter and to work with them to achieve and maintain individual autonomy. The office’s primary objective is to provide faculty, staff, and students with access to the academic, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities of the University.

Prospective students are encouraged to contact ODS personnel so that they can be assured that the campus facilities and services are adequate to meet their needs. The office can be of service to everyone to the extent that their individual needs are made known. Contact with students prior to registration enables the office to better assess the need for interpreters, readers, accessible facilities, and other support services. Van service is also provided to those individuals with mobility limitations, whether permanent or temporary. Documentation of a disability from an attending physician or the Student Health Center is required.

Registration with the office and use of services is on a voluntary basis, however, accommodations will not be provided without notifying the office and providing proper documentation. Confidentiality is maintained. Faculty, staff, and students desiring any services are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services so that necessary arrangements can be made. The office is located at 191 Hoskins Library.

Requests for interpreting services by enrolled deaf students should be made to ODS at least one month prior to the beginning of the semester.” Hilltopics Student Handbook, p. 45.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The following is an excerpt from the University of Tennessee’s Honor Statement, which can be found in Hilltopics Student Handbook, which is the official student handbook of the University of Tennessee: “Students shall not plagiarize. Plagiarism is using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the University. Specific examples of plagiarism are: Using without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source; Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge); Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge); Collaborating on a graded assignment without the instructor's approval; Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph).” Hilltopics Student Handbook, p. 31.

The entire text of Hilltopics can be found at http://web.utk.edu/~homepage/hilltopics/default.html.

All students are expected to be familiar with the University of Tennessee Honor Statement and to abide by its terms. The entire Honor Statement can be found in Hilltopics.
The following texts are required, and can be purchased at the UTK bookstore:


We will make arrangements to make the other readings available.

For each week, you will see two sets of readings. The numbered set contains the required readings. The other set contains additional readings that may be of help to you in understanding the required readings, and may also prove useful for your research/term papers. These “second lists” are by no means definitive. They are meant only to steer you toward certain articles and books. Many important pieces of research are excluded (for various reasons). You must not conclude that because a particular work is missing that it is not useful. Part of your job in writing your paper(s) is to locate the material you need to make your case.

**Schedule**

| Theme: Ideas, Principles, and Foundations |

**Week 1**, January 15 **Introduction**

**Week 2**, January 22 **The Constitution**


*For further consideration:*

**Week 3, January 29**
**American Political Thought, Part 1: Pluralism, Elitism, and Interest Group Liberalism**


*For further consideration:*

**Week 4, February 5**
**American Political Thought, Part 2: New Approaches and Issues and the Dominant Paradigm**


*For further consideration:*

**Theme: The Institutions of American Government**

**Week 5, February 12 Congress**


*For further consideration:*


On the incumbency effect:


**Week 6, February 19 The President**


For further consideration:


**Week 7, February 26 The Bureaucracy**


**For further consideration:**

**Week 8, March 5 The Judiciary**


For further consideration:


Harold Spaeth and Jeffrey Segal, *Majority Rule or Minority Will: Adherence to Precedence on the U.S. Supreme Court* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).


**Week 9, March 12 Political Parties**


*For further consideration:*


**Week 10, March 26 Interest Groups**


For further consideration:

Theme: Political Behavior

Week 11, April 2 Voting, Part 1: The Classics

*For further consideration:*
Robert Lane, *Political Thinking and Consciousness* (Glencoe, IL: Markham, 1969).

**Week 12, April 9 Voting, Part 2: Refinements**


*For further consideration:*


**Week 13, April 16 Campaigns and Elections**


*For further consideration:*


Week 14, April 23 The Media

For further consideration:

Week 15, April 30 The Controversy Over Social Capital

For further consideration:


