Political Science 530: Core Seminar in American Politics
Fall 2012

Time: Wednesday, 1:25-4:25 PM
Location: TBD
Professor: Nathan J. Kelly, Ph.D.
Office: 810 McClung Tower
Email: Nathan.J.Kelly@gmail.com
Office Hours: By appointment
Course Website: Available via Online@UT

This is a graduate introduction to American politics. The aim is to acquaint you with the main lines of work in the field and to provide an opportunity for you to develop your analytic skills. At the end of the course, you should be able to pass a large portion of the comprehensive exam in American politics and have some research ideas that you might be able to implement later in a research seminar.

Course Structure and Assignments. This course will be a reading seminar. As such, you are required to do specified weekly readings. Readings will be on reserve, many articles are available also on-line through JSTOR or other electronic repository, and I encourage you to purchase any books that you think will be of professional interest as you continue your career in addition to the handful of required texts. You should expect to spend six to nine hours each week in preparation. Class participation is an important part of this sort of course, both for you and for everyone else. Thus, part of your grade will depend on your work in the seminar sessions. This should be fun!

The lion’s share of each session will be an open-ended discussion of the readings for the week. All we be expected to participate extensively in the discussions. For each meeting a few members of the seminar will have a special responsibility for leading the discussion (as well as completing extra supplemental readings and creating a document summarizing the supplemental readings), focusing attention on the theoretical concerns, and keeping us all awake. We will decide who will be responsible for each week’s discussion during our first session. The way this will happen is that we will divide into teams and the teams will then be assigned various weeks to lead discussion. The summary of supplemental readings will be due each week on the Friday before class at 5:00 PM. They should be emailed to other members of the class.

In sum, everyone in the class should read all “required readings” prior to class. Discussion leaders, in addition, should divide up the supplemental readings and read a proportional number of the readings (if three are leading, then each person should read 1/3 of the supplemental readings). Also, discussion leaders should send two documents around to the entire class via email by Monday at 5 before class:

1) A list of discussion questions that will help other students to focus their thoughts prior to the discussion in class (those who sign up for discussion leading should divide up the required readings and take responsibility for leading discussion on a proportional number of the required readings).
2) A summary of the supplemental readings (those who sign up for discussion leading should divide up the supplemental readings and write summaries for a proportional number of the supplemental readings).

In addition to this routine reading and thinking, you will take a final examination. My goal is to provide you a chance to show that you have mastered the intellectual material. The exam will be take home, open notes.

Please note that this is a “reading and writing” seminar. It is not a “lecture” course. You will benefit from this opportunity when you spend time thinking about the intellectual material you encounter. I understand that you begin this course as a “student” who completes assignments. I hope that you end it as an engaged participant who takes on the study of American politics as an exciting personal enterprise.

**Required Texts. Can be purchased by visiting my website:**
web.utk.edu/~nkelly/teaching.html or in brick and mortar bookstores:


**Grades.** Your final grade will depend on the quality of your verbal participation and written work. Grades will be assigned at the discretion of the professor. Generally, A’s will be assigned only to students with excellent performance (typically above 94%). Students who meet expectations and perform well will typically receive a B+ (typically above 86%). Grades lower than B+ (below 86%) indicate performance below expectations. If you have questions about your grade through the semester, please feel free to discuss them with me, but the overall grade will be determined by the totality of your work.

Specifically, grades will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
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**Prerequisites.** This course has no formal prerequisite. Yet, as a graduate course, it assumes that you are familiar with the basic character of American politics. If your background does not
include formal training in Political Science, or if you feel as though you might benefit from a review, you might want to purchase an undergraduate textbook and read the material carefully. Please let me know if you expect difficulties here.
COURSE OUTLINE

August 27: Course Introduction, Mechanics, Quantitative Methods Primer

September 3: Public Opinion

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:


Additional Important Readings and Classics:


**September 10: Civic Engagement**

**Required Readings:**


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


Additional Important Readings and Classics:


September 17: Voting and Elections

Required Readings:

Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:


Additional Important Readings and Classics:

The three classic classics


Some other books of relevance (presented chronologically)


Some selected articles (presented chronologically)


**September 24: Interest Groups PAPER #1 DUE**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


**Additional Important Readings and Classics:**


**October 1: Political Parties**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


**Additional Important Readings and Classics:**


**October 8: The Presidency and Political Power**

*Required Readings:*


*Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:*


**Additional Important Readings and Classics:**


**October 15: Representation in Congress  PAPER #2 DUE**

**Required Readings:**


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


**Additional Important Readings and Classics:**


**October 22: Congress as a Political Institution**

**Required Readings:**

Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:


Additional Important Readings and Classics:


October 29: Class Cancelled

November 5: Judicial Politics

Required Readings:


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


**Additional Important Readings and Classics:**


November 12: Bureaucracy

Required Readings:


Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:


Additional Important Readings and Classics:

November 19: Macro Politics

**Required Readings:**


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


**Additional Important Readings and Classics:**


**November 26: Political Economy PAPER # 3 DUE**

**Required Readings:**


**Supplementary Readings for Discussion Leaders:**


**Additional Important Readings and Classics**


**EXAM DUE 7PM DECEMBER 3**