

Introduction to American Politics
POLI 210
Fall 2017

Rick K. Wilson MWF 9:00 – 9:50
Herzstein 118, x3352
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<http://rkw.rice.edu/>
Office Hrs: M W 1-2 T 11-12 (or by appointment)

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes.

American Politics introduces you to basic concepts developed by political scientists to explain the American political process.

We will begin by considering the theoretical underpinnings and historical development of the U.S. political system. We will then look at the major national political institutions. Following that we will focus on public opinion, elections and other crucial features of the representative relationship. Finally we will deal with instances of policy making.

At the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Understand the basic approaches to understanding American Political Institutions.
2. Understand the basic approaches to understanding political behavior.
3. Understand fundamental concepts in the design of public policy.

Grading Policies.

Grades will be based on the following: two examinations (30% each) and problem sets (40%). You are expected to keep up-to-date with *all* reading assignments and to be prepared to discuss the readings during class. Expect to be called on in class to discuss the readings. The Honor Code is in effect for all class assignments.

Required Stuff.

There is a textbook. It is pretty basic and will be supplemented with other readings. The textbook is free and available as an electronic download (download for free at <http://cnx.org/content/col11995/latest/>). You will be expected to use electronic documents available from the library or posted on CANVAS.

The textbook: Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewicz. *American Government*. OpenStax.

You will be invited to signup for **MobLab**. This is an on-line program that will be used for the experiments. It costs \$12.00 and is good for the semester. *It is important that you signup prior to participating.* The email will include a classcode

that you will need in order to participate. You can also download the **MobLab** app for your smartphone or tablet. The app is free, but you'll have to be a registered user.

In addition, there is a “lab fee” of \$5.00 for this class. During the semester you will be participating in a number of in-class experiments. The experiments will illustrate various topics in the course. The data from the experiments will be posted and you will be asked to “analyze” these data (see the brief discussion of “problem sets” below). During the experiments you will accumulate “points” that will be earnings in the experiments. At the end of the class the total amount of money collected will be returned to class members. You will receive a share of the total pot based on your proportion of the total points. Your earnings at the end of the course will be calculate by the following formula:

$$\text{\$ Earnings} = \text{\$ Total Pot} * (\text{Your total points} / \text{Total points in the experiment})$$

It is conceivable that you could earn nothing or that you could earn the total amount in the pot. Most likely you will earn some amount in between. If you happen to miss a class on the day in which an experiment is run, you will earn no points for that day. However, you will still be able to see the posted data and the problem set attached to the experiment. You will be able to write the assignment for that class period.

Problem Sets.

There will be a number of problem sets to solve over the course of the semester. These problem sets may involve some math and they will certainly involve some analytic thinking. You can expect 7 such assignments over the course of the semester. The problem sets and due dates will be posted on Canvas.

Other Information.

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students should contact Disabled Student Services in the Ley Student Center.

My office hours are posted above. However, I am around a great deal, so feel free to drop on by. Before turning up, however, you might want to check to see if I'm in the office. Give me a call or send me an email.

As well, there are two TAs for this course. They will grade problem sets and exams. They hold their own office hours. Your TAs are:

David Vawter Hughes - dvhugh3s@gmail.com

Office Hours: T 2:30-4:00; TH 2:30-4:00 Herzstein 123

Andrew Wood - andrew.r.wood@rice.edu

Office Hours: MWF 1:00-2:00 Herzstein 123

Course Dates and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Aug. 21	Introduction	What is Politics? Krutz et al., Chapter 1
Aug. 23	Constitutional Foundations	Madison, The Federalist Papers, Nos. 10, 39, 51, 57, 62, 69 These can be found at: http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa00.htm Krutz et al., Chapter 2, Appendix B
Aug. 25	Constitutional Legacy	John H. Aldrich. 2015. "Did Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison 'Cause' the U.S. Government Shutdown? The Institutional, Path from an Eighteenth Century Republic to a Twenty-first Century Democracy." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 13(1): 7-23. Jonathan Rauch. 2016. "How American Politics Went Insane." <i>The Atlantic</i> . July/August 2016 Issue.
Aug. 25	Assignment 1	
Aug. 28	The Federal System	Krutz et al., Chapter 3
Aug. 30	The Federal System	
Aug. 30	Assignment 1 Due	
Sept. 1	The Federal System	Coral Davenport and Adam Nagourney. 2017 "Fighting Trump on Climate, California Becomes a Global Force." May 23, 2017. <i>New York Times</i> . https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/us/california-engages-world-and-fights-washington-on-climate-change.html
Sept. 4	Spatial Models 1	Keith Krehbiel. 1988. "Spatial Models of Legislative Choice." <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i> . 13(3): 259-273. (Don't read the entire paper!)

Sept. 6	Spatial Models 2	
Sept. 8	Spatial Models 3	Dennis L. Plane and Joseph Gershenson. 2004. "Candidates' Ideological Locations, Abstention, and Turnout in US Midterm Senate Elections." <i>Political Behavior</i> 26(1): 69-93.
Sept. 8	Assignment 2	
Sept. 11	Civil Liberties	Krutz et al., Chapter 4
Sept. 13	Civil Rights	Krutz et al., Chapter 5
Sept. 13	Assignment 2 Due	
Sept. 15	Civil Rights	Daniel C. Lewis. 2011. "Direct Democracy and Minority Rights: Same-Sex Marriage Bans in the U.S. States." <i>Social Science Quarterly</i> 92(2): 364-383.
Sept. 18	Public Opinion	Krutz et al., Chapter 6
Sept. 20	Public Opinion	Justin Reedy, Chris Wells and John Gastil. 2014. How Voters Become Misinformed: An Investigation of the Emergence and Consequences of False Factual Beliefs." <i>Social Sciences Quarterly</i> 95(5): 1399-1418.
Sept. 22	Public Opinion	John Sides. 2016. "Stories or Science? Facts, Frames, and Policy Attitudes." <i>American Politics Research</i> . 44 (3): 387-414.
Sept. 22	Assignment 3	
Sept. 25	Voting and Elections	Krutz et al., Chapter 7 Morris P. Fiorina. "The 2016 Presidential Election – An Abundance of Controversies." Hoover Institution, Series #10 (2017)
Sept. 25	Assignment 3 Due	
Sept. 27	Voting and Elections	Jon C. Rogowski and Stephanie Langella. 2015. "Primary Systems and Candidate Ideology: Evidence from Federal and State

		Legislative Elections." <i>American Politics Research</i> 43(5): 846-871.
Sept. 29	Voting and Elections	Justin H. Gross and Kaylee T. Johnson. 2016. "Twitter Taunts and Tirades: Negative Campaigning in the Age of Trump." <i>PS</i> 49(4): 748-754.
Sept. 29	Take Home Exam	
Oct. 2	Media	Krutz et al., Chapter 8
Oct. 4		Eric Lawrence, John Sides, and Henry Farrell. 2010. "Self-Segregation or Deliberation? Blog Readership, Participation, and Polarization in American Politics." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> . 8(1): 141-157.
Oct. 6	Media	Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew Gentzkow. "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 31, no. 2 (2017): 211-36.
Oct. 6	Take Home Exam Due	
Oct. 9	Fall Break	
Oct. 11	Political Parties	Krutz et al., Chapter 9
Oct. 13	Political Parties	Juraj Medzihorsky et al. 2014. "Has the Tea Party Era Radicalized the Republican Party? Evidence from Text Analysis of the 2008 and 2012 Republican Primary Debates." <i>PS</i> 47(4): 806-812 Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel and John Zaller 2016. "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System." <i>PS</i> 49(4) 701- 708
Oct. 13	Assignment 4	

Oct. 16	Interest Groups	Krutz et al., Chapter 10
Oct. 18	Interest Groups	Skocpol, Theda, and Alexander Hertel-Fernandez. "The Koch Network and Republican Party Extremism." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 14, no. 3 (2016): 681-99.
Oct. 18	Assignment 4 Due	
Oct. 20	Interest Groups	Atkinson, Matthew D, and Darin DeWitt. "Snubbing Seth Rogen: Does Celebrity Testimony Increase Congressional Hearing Attendance?" <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i> 50, no. 2 (2017): 354-58.
Oct. 20	Assignment 5	
Oct. 23	Congress	Krutz et al., Chapter 11
Oct. 25	Congress	Tracy Sulkin, Paul Testa and Kaye Usry. 2015. "What Gets Rewarded? Legislative Activity and Constituency Approval." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 68(4): 690-702.
Oct. 25	Assignment 5	
Oct. 27	Congress	Joshua L. Kalla and David E. Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> . 60 (3): 545-558.
Oct. 30	Presidency	Krutz et al., Chapter 12
Nov. 1	Presidency	Michael Bailey, Lee Sigelman and Clyde Wilcox. 2003. "Presidential Persuasion On Social Issues: A Two-Way Street?" <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 56(1): 49-58.
Nov. 3	Assignment 6	
Nov. 3	Presidency	Laura Young. 2013. "Unilateral Presidential Policy Making and the Impact of Crises."

		<p><i>Presidential Studies Quarterly</i> 43(2): 328-352.</p> <p>Ryan J. Barilleaux. and Jewel Maxwell. 2017. "Has Barack Obama Embraced the Unitary Executive?" <i>PS</i> 50 (1): 31-34.</p>
Nov. 6	Courts	Krutz et al., Chapter 13
Nov. 8	Courts/State and Local	<p>Krutz et al., Chapter 14</p> <p>Bonneau, Chris W., Jarrod T. Kelly, Kira Pronin, Shane M. Redman, and Matthew Zarit. "Evaluating the Effects of Multiple Opinion Rationales on Supreme Court Legitimacy." <i>American Politics Research</i> 45, no. 3 (2017): 335-65.</p>
Nov. 8	Assignment 6 Due	
Nov. 10	State and Local	Jessica N. Terman. 2015. "Performance Goal Achievement in Fiscal Federalism: The Influence of State Partisan Environments and Regulatory Regimes." <i>Policy Studies Journal</i> . 43 (3): 333 - 354.
Nov. 13	Bureaucracy	Krutz et al., Chapter 15
Nov. 15	Bureaucracy	<p>Joshua B. Kennedy. 2015 "'Do This! Do That!' and Nothing Will Happen: Executive Orders and Bureaucratic Responsiveness." <i>American Politics Research</i>. 43(1): 59-82.</p> <p>Einstein, Katherine Levine, and David M. Glick. "Does Race Affect Access to Government Services? An Experiment Exploring Street-Level Bureaucrats and Access to Public Housing." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> (2017).</p>
Nov. 17	Bureaucracy	<p>Matt McCubbins and Tom Schwartz</p> <p>"Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>. 28 (1): 165-179.</p>
Nov. 17	Assignment 7	

Nov. 20	Domestic Policy	Krutz et al., Chapter 16
Nov. 22	Domestic Policy	David M. Konisky and Neal D. Woods. 2016. "Environmental Policy, Federalism, and the Obama Presidency." <i>Publius: The Journal of Federalism</i> . 46 (3): 366-391.
Nov. 22	Assignment 7 Due	
Nov. 24	No Class	
Nov. 27	Foreign Policy	Krutz et al., Chapter 17
Nov. 29	Foreign Policy	
Dec. 1	Conclusion	Craig Leonard Brians. 2014. "Three General Laws of Politics and Government in America (with Appologies to Sir Isaac Newton)." <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i> 47(1): 125-130.
Dec. 1	Take Home Exam	
Dec. 13	Take Home Exam Due	