COURSE OVERVIEW

Many of us are distinctly aware of how intimately government touches our lives: we see how the constitution outlines our personal rights and, with each new life experience, become personally aware of how decisions made by legislators impact our private lives such as how much money we are paid to how much health care is afforded to us. Government is indeed powerful but at the same time American democracy is celebrated as a unique system in which governance is informed by citizen participation. This introductory course will strengthen your understanding of American government and will cover diverse aspects of the American political system such as the three main branches of government, federalism and elections. In doing so, we will develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between American citizens and their government.

Yet, reviewing the history and features of the American political system does not accurately portray the activities of a political scientist. Rather, political scientists engage in empirical social science in which researchers seek to collect and document data and then use that data to explain why certain patterns occur within the American political system. Be careful to note that the activities in which political scientists engage to study politics is not the same as the ideological debates that are presented on cable news networks. Since many of us have not before been exposed to political science, this course will also serve as an introduction to the academic field of American politics and the procedures used in empirical social science.

REQUIRED READINGS

We will use the following materials for the course:


In addition, there may be other readings assigned throughout the semester and these readings will be posted on our Trunk class website. All four books are also available at the reserve desk in the Tisch library.
COURSE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS
1. For this course you will attend a total of three sessions each week: we will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays for lectures and you will attend one discussion section. During lecture, we will cover theories and concepts as a whole group. In discussion section, you will have the opportunity to discuss the lecture content with a smaller group to help you review material and will engage in activities to help you complete the assignments.

You will enroll in one of the following discussion sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>4:30pm-5:20pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>4:30pm-5:20pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>9:30am-10:20am</td>
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Since the purpose of discussion section will be to interact with others in the class, all electronic devices, including laptops, must be powered off during discussion section. Your participation in discussion section will be used in determining your final grade for the course.

2. Any additional class communications will be shared through our Trunk website and to your Tufts.edu email. Please be sure to check both regularly since you will be responsible for keeping updated on any changes that occur throughout the semester.

3. All readings must be completed prior to the date they are listed on the syllabus. A companion textbook to the lectures is The Challenge of Democracy which offers more detailed definitions and examples for the concepts covered in lecture as well as added historical background. In the class schedule below I will also offer an outline of supplemental readings from The Challenge of Democracy that are relevant for each lecture topic.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS
BOOK REVIEW PAPER: For this paper, you will offer a review and critique of the Jordan-Brooks or Hero book. We will discuss how to conduct this review and will complete a practice review on the Carnes book during class. This paper will be approximately 5-7 double spaced pages long. The due date will be determined by the book you choose and these dates are listed in the class schedule below.

TOPICS IN AMERICAN POLITICS “LITERATURE REVIEW” PAPER: At the beginning of the semester, you will be assigned a “hot topic” in the field of American politics research. You will write what we call a “literature review” paper on that topic in which you review how political scientists have historically carried out studies on this topic and what general conclusions about American politics can be drawn based on this research. We will review how to conduct searches for political science studies and how to write a literature review during class. This paper will be 8-12 double spaced pages. A rough draft of your literature is due on Thurs, Nov 5th and the final draft will be due on Tues, Dec 15th.

MIDTERM and FINAL EXAMS: There will be two exams. A midterm exam which will test material and readings presented during lecture up through Oct 22nd will be held during class on Thurs, Oct 29th. A final exam, covering all material presented in the course, will be held during class on Thurs, Dec 10th.

GRADING:
Your final course grade will be broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book review paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Section</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Grade Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Academic Integrity: I trust that each student will strictly adhere to the Tufts Academic Integrity standard. I remind the class that plagiarism or cheating in any form is prohibited and will result in an automatic fail for the course.
ANTICIPATED CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: TK= Reading available on Trunk website; JBGS=Challenge of Democracy

Week 1 (Sept 8 and 10) - Introduction American Government and Political Science
Thurs 9/10: Read: Wash Post “Judges with Daughters” (TK)
Simien “African American Public Opinion” (TK)

**No discussion section this week**

Week 2 (Sept 15 and 17) - Constitutional Foundations and Supreme Court
Tues 9/15: Review Constitution and amendments (TK)
Supplemental reading: JBGS chs 3 and 14

Week 3 (Sept 22 and 24) - Representation: Congress
Tues 9/22: Read Carnes, chs 1-3
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 11

Week 4 (Sept 29 and Oct 1) - Representation: President
Tues 9/29: Read Carnes, Chs 4-6
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 12

Week 5 (Oct 6 and 8) - Workshop week: Carnes book review
Tues 10/6: TBA

Week 6 (Oct 13 and 15) - Federalism
Tues 10/13: Read Hero, chs 1-3
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 4

Week 7 (Oct 20 and 22) - Federal Agencies: U.S. Census and Politics of Demography
Tues 10/20: Read Hero, chs 4-5

Week 8 (Oct 27 and 29) - Civil Rights and Politics of Race
Tues 10/27: Read Hero, chs 6-7
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 16
Thurs 10/29: Midterm Exam

Week 9 (Nov 3 and 5) - Campaigns and Elections
Tues 11/3: Read Jordan-Brooks, chs 1-3
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 9
Thurs 11/5: Two hard copies of Literature Review rough draft due at 3pm

Week 10 (Nov 12) - Mass Media
Tues 11/10 - NO LECTURE; Wed section meets today
Thurs 11/12: Read Jordan-Brooks, chs 4-6
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 6

Week 11 (Nov 17 and 19) - Citizen Participation: Voting and Non-Voting Forms
Tues 11/17: Read Jordan-Brooks, chs 7-9
Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 7
Thurs 11/19: Book review on Hero due at 3pm

Week 12 (Nov 24) - Citizen Participation: Public Opinion
**No discussion sections this week**
Tues 11/24: Supplemental reading: JBGS ch 5
Week 13 (Dec 1 and 3): Citizen Participation: Public Opinion cont.

Week 14 (Dec 8 and 10): Final Thoughts

**No Discussion section this week**

Tues 12/8: Book review on Jordan-Brooks due at 3pm
Thurs 12/10: Final Exam

Tues, Dec 15th

Hard copy of final draft of Literature Review due to Prof Masuoka’s office (Packard 309) by 4:15pm