

# POSC 122 Politics in America: Liberty and Equality

## Syllabus

Location: Anderson 223 (online for Week 1)  
10:00-11:10 pm MW or 9:50-10:50 F (and online)  
Carleton College  
Spring 2021

Instructor: Krissy Lunz Trujillo

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Phone: 608-440-0026

Office Hours: 12:00pm – 2:00pm Tuesdays online via zoom – [signup here](#)

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Library Liaison: Sean Leahy ([smleahy@carleton.edu](mailto:smleahy@carleton.edu))

\*\*\*\* **Course Moodle Website:** <https://moodle.carleton.edu/course/view.php?id=35935> \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* **Course Zoom Meeting link:**

<https://carleton.zoom.us/j/4732794566?pwd=cng4YU16cWZFbkJgT1NZL2dBK1F4dz09>

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## I. Course Description and Objectives

An introduction to American government and politics that focuses on Congress, Presidency, political parties and interest groups, the courts, public opinion, elections, the media, and the Constitution.

In other words, this course is designed to be an introduction to U.S. politics, specifically addressing:

- The debates and intentions surrounding the formation of the U.S. government
- The purpose, responsibilities, etc. of the three branches of government
- The role of parties and interest groups
- The role of the public, including elections and public opinion
- The role of the media in the political system

In learning about these things, I hope you will achieve the following by the end of the course:

- Students will learn foundational knowledge of how U.S. government works.
- Students will have some knowledge on current issues in American politics, and be conversant on these topics.
- Students will understand how citizen interests have and can be heard in the policy-making process.
- Students will gain a better understanding of why the left and the right – as well as other divisions - have become so polarized politically.
- Students will be able to apply ideas and theories learned in class to contemporary U.S. political events, topics, and phenomena.
- Students will learn critical thinking skills by evaluating issues critically, and by evaluating information to search for political bias.
- As a writing intensive course, students will gain experience with the writing process, as well as with writing pieces that are critical or research-oriented in particular.

## II. Course Expectations

In this course, I expect you to be professional, respectful, and engaged. What does this mean?

This means that, barring extenuating circumstances, you should complete your work on time, do your readings and assignments on time, and watch the video lectures.

In addition, during the in-class or discussion components of the course, I expect you to minimize distractions for other students, show up on time, participate in class discussions, and be respectful of other students and the instructor during the discussions. Discussions about politics can become heated as our opinions have deep-seated roots in our psychology and morality. Furthermore, these topics are particularly salient since this class is occurring around the 2020 presidential election. Therefore, respectful and open-minded discourse is a must. Phone use during in-person class is not allowed. Laptop/tablet use during in-person class is fine, but only for note-taking and/or for referencing materials relevant to the class.

You can expect me, the instructor, to prepare and post course material sufficiently in advance, return graded assignments in a timely fashion, show up to discussions on time, be available in

and outside of office hours, return your emails within 24 hours, notify you of changes to expectations well in advance, and be respectful, professional, and engaged.

### III. Required Textbook

There is one required textbook for this course, though there will be several other required readings posted on Moodle. See Moodle website for most recent updates. The [Schedule below](#) also has other readings – though these are subject to revision.

The required textbook is:

**By the People: Debating American Government, by James Morone and Rogan Kersh, brief version, any edition (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> easiest to find).**

### IV. Course Structure

#### How is this “Hybrid” class going to work?

This course is primarily going to be administered through Moodle. Assignment sheets, announcements, additional readings, other materials, and any video lectures from myself will be posted here. You will turn in your assignments on the Moodle course site as well. Obviously, you will do the textbook readings on your own like you normally would.

However, there will also be in-person discussions (8-10 people plus the instructor) and one in-person exam. You will be divided into groups and only attend one of the three classroom meeting times per week. If you attend the ‘wrong’ session, or are unable to attend your regular session one week, it’s not a big deal – just let me know that you’ll be attending on a different day.

As per the college’s requirements, you must wear a mask or facial covering when attending in-person discussion, office hours, or the exam. Refusal to do so will result in you having to leave that particular session.

\*\*\*Note that the first week of this course will be held exclusively online.\*\*\*

#### What Happens If We Go Fully Online?

***Be prepared for this scenario.*** If we are required to move courses to fully online mode, this will be the plan:

1. All components currently online will stay as-is.
2. Group discussion days and assignments will stay as-is, and will be moved to synchronous Zoom meetings. That said, there may be a fourth meeting time added for those with vastly different time zones from Central US Standard Time.

3. The exam will be online, open book, open note, and I will give you two days to complete and turn it in.

## V. Course Assignments/Grading

### Assignment Information

The final grade for the class will be based on the following:

- **Two Critical Reflection Papers** (10% each, 20% total) – (Fri 4/23 and Fri 5/28)
- **Final Exam (30%)** – Week 10 (Mon 5/31 or Wed 6/2)
- **Research Paper (40%)**
  - **Paper topic, 5%** - due Week 5 (Wed 4/28 by 5:00pm)
  - **Extended outline, 10%** - due Week 7 (Fri 5/14 by 5:00pm)
  - **Final draft of the paper, 25%** – due during Finals (Sun 6/6 by 5:00pm)
- **Participation (10%)** - ongoing

Some additional information on each of these assignments can be found below, though more information will be provided throughout the term:

#### Critical Reflection Papers (10% each, 20% total) .

Critical reflection in an academic context does not mean summarizing or writing as an emotional outlet; rather, it is where you use course materials to 1) compare theories critically or to current events, 2) evaluate key core problems or issues with the readings/ideas. You should also discuss implications of these discrepancies or reflections.

Given the above definition of critical reflection, these papers can take a few different forms. They can evaluate one reading or idea using a contemporary political phenomenon, for example, or put two readings/ideas in dialogue with one another. You can base these on in-class discussions, as well as on readings, lectures, or other course materials. If you have an idea of what you would like to write, but not sure whether it would fall under critical reflection, please do not shy away from asking the instructor. This is also strongly suggested if you are having trouble coming up with a critical reflection topic.

Each critical reflection paper should be around 3 pages, double-spaced, using 12-point font. The papers can reflect topic(s), theme(s), reading(s), discussion(s), etc. from any week or weeks in class. **You must submit at least one paper sometime during the first half of class before the end of Week 4 (by Friday 4/23 at 5:00pm), and the second paper must be turned in by the end of Week 9 (Friday 5/28 by 5:00pm).** You can, of

course, submit both papers during the first half of class. Please submit the papers on the course Moodle website.

Feel free to contact our Writing Assistant or Library Liaison for additional help with writing, research, etc. This is not required for the Critical Reflection papers, but are another resource for you to do well. And of course, please contact me with any questions or struggles you may be having.

### *Final Exam (30%).*

Given the more writing-intensive purpose of this course, the exam will be fairly short in nature, and is meant to assess 1) your knowledge of ideas and concepts learned, and 2) basic analysis of these ideas and concepts. These will be closed note/closed book exams. The exam will be comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be during Week 10. See the information sheet for more detail.

### *Research Paper (40%).*

The purpose of the research paper is three-fold: 1) to further investigate an area that interests you, 2) to improve writing skills and practice, 3) to make an argument, backed by evidence, that applies concepts learned in class to the ‘real world.’ The research paper will be graded three parts.

The first step of your research paper is coming up with a topic. ***You must send me a preliminary topic for your research paper by Wednesday of Week 5 by 5:00pm.*** How do you come up with a topic? Think about areas of politics that interest you. Take a look at later weeks on the syllabus, read news outlets, and come up with a list of broad areas you think are interesting. Pick one or two, and then do some more research on the topic. Once you are more familiar with the topic, if you hadn’t been already, think about gaps or missing areas of knowledge and pose this as a question. Questions can take multiple forms, such as “Why do people do or think X?” or “How effective is Y?” or “In theory, Z is supposed to do A, but does it actually accomplish this?” Sometimes, good questions involve a ‘puzzle’; so instead of “Why do people think B?”, it’s “Why do people think B, even though we’d expect them to think C?” That said, to get an A paper, the question does not have to be a puzzle.

Then, you find what others have said on the topic. After that, list and compare which explanations seem more plausible than others. For example, suppose you brainstorm ideas and decide you are interested in what motivates people to go vote. You find out that there are several possible explanations, including voting as a form of self-expression, voting as a civic duty, and voting to increase the chances of certain preferred policy preferences getting made. Then, you can evaluate these different theories and decide that self-expressive voting is the most convincing. This is your main argument. You can then

begin making an extended outline of your paper. More information is available on the information sheet for the outline assignment. ***Your extended outline for your research paper is due Friday of Week 7 by 5pm.***

Once you get feedback on your outline, you fill in the missing parts of the paper with full sentences containing more detailed information to further illuminate the different points, offer critical reflection of these points, and convince the reader (me) of your argument. ***The final paper, which will be approximately 10 pages total (double spaced, not counting works cited page/figures/appendices/title page), is due Sunday 6/6 by 5pm.*** Again, more detailed information can be found in the corresponding assignment sheet on Moodle.

If you need any help, guidance, or reassurance with any of these steps, please reach out to me, your instructor. I'm happy to help. It's the primary reason why I'm here teaching at an institution highly focused on undergraduate learning.

In addition, you will need to meet at least once with either our Writing Assistant or our Library Liaison. You can meet with them on this research paper at any stage, though your grade will be docked if you do not meet with at least one of them. You will meet with them to go over how to research your paper, how to write a research paper, editing/revision, etc. – whichever things you feel you need help with. More information will be available on this in the assignment sheets.

Participation (10%). As mentioned above, you are expected to participate in class discussions and make an effort to engage with the course material. Regularly attend class, come prepared to discuss the topics and materials, ask questions on material you do not understand, and participate in discussions with thoughtful and respectful comments/questions.

**\*\*\*Late assignments will incur a 5-percentage point deduction per day, barring extenuating circumstances. \*\*\***

## Grading Scale

The course will follow a standard grading scale:

- A: Achievement outstanding relative to the basic course requirements
  - A 93 or higher
  - A- 90-92
- B: Achievement significantly above the basic course requirements
  - B+ 87-89
  - B 83-86

- B- 80-82
- C: Achievement meeting the basic course requirements
  - C+ 77-79
  - C 73-76
  - C- 70-72
- D: Achievement worthy of credit but below the basic course requirements
  - D+ 67-69
  - D 63-66
  - D- 60-62
- F: Achievement significantly below basic course requirements
  - Anything below 60

### Grade Dispute Policy

If you wish to dispute a grade on your assignment, please type a short memo that addresses the reasons why you think your grade should be changed and send it to me via email ([klunz@carleton.edu](mailto:klunz@carleton.edu)) at least 24 hours after you received the grade for this assignment. Once received, I will arrange a meeting with you to discuss the grade further. Note that once you initiate a grade dispute process, there is a chance that your grade will be *lowered* upon further consideration.

### Extensions

You will have one opportunity to extend a deadline for an assignment no questions asked. Any additional extension requests must be due to extenuating circumstances. I cannot grant extensions past the last day of classes (Wed. 6/2) due to the Carleton-wide policy, again unless there are extenuating circumstances. To have an extension, you must tell me at least four hours before the assignment is due (via email, in-person, or over the phone).

### A Note on Office Hours

Office hours are a time where you come to my office and we can chat one-on-one. Err on the side of coming to office hours on occasion (you don't have to come every time, and you are not required to come). To sign up, go to Moodle and pick a slot, or email me to set up a meeting time.

Typically, I will answer questions about the course, including things we're covering right now, assignments, and how you're doing generally. I'm also happy to talk about things like going to grad school, life after Carleton (I was a Carleton grad), and political science as a discipline. Don't be nervous about coming or worried about what we'll talk about – even if we spend 20 minutes talking about non-class related or seemingly trivial topics, it's helpful for you because I'll get to know you and can potentially write recommendations for you for future job applications or graduate school applications. Nothing you say in office hours, and no questions

you ask, will result in a lower grade – office hours are not graded, nor will any questions asked in office hours about a specific assignment result in a lower grade on that assignment.

Nobody told me this when I was an undergraduate (the joys of being first generation), and therefore didn't take advantage of office hours as much as I should have, so I thought it would be important to include this here.

## VI. Schedule

The following is an overview of the course. Note that additional readings may be added to some weeks; this change will be advertised at least 10 days before the first discussion section for that week. Please refer to Moodle for more detailed instructions and updates, and to get access to the readings marked “(M)”. Complete the week's readings before you attend the class discussion.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Required Readings:

*This Syllabus*

Other:

*Read the Critical reflection papers assignment sheet (M)*

Get ahold of the textbook

### **Week 2: Ideas, Founding, and Constitution**

Required Readings:

*Chapter 1 of By the People*

*“Liberty, equality aren't mutually exclusive” by Danielle Allen (M)*

### **Week 3: Federalism**

Required Readings:

*Read Chapters 2 and 3 of By the People*

*Federalist Papers (no. 10 and 51) (M)*

*Antifederalist Papers (no. 3) (M)*

Other:

*Read assignment sheet for the final paper topic.*

Optional Readings:

[\*"Why Trump bans from Twitter, Facebook Don't Violate the First Amendment"\*](#)

### **Week 4: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

Required Readings:

*Chapters 4 and 5 of By the People*  
Brown et al. 2003. "Introduction: Race Preferences and Race Privileges." In  
*Whitewashing Race*. (M)

Read "Race, Criminal Background and Employment,"  
<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2009/11/14/race-criminal-background-and-employment/> (also (M))

Other:

*Critical reflection paper 1 due by end of week (Friday 4/23 at 5pm to Moodle)*  
*Read POSC 122 Course Library Guide*

Optional Readings:

[Harvard study](#) finding systemic racism as the cause for racial prison disparities  
Article on how citizen initiatives led [to limited voting rights for ex-felons](#)

### **Week 5: Congress and the Courts**

Required Readings:

*Chapter 10 and 13 of By the People*  
Casillas et al. 2011 (M)

Other:

*Final paper topic due to instructor (email) by Wednesday 4/28 before 5pm.*  
*Read final paper outline information sheet.*

Optional Readings:

*Federalist No. 78* (M)

### **Week 6: Parties and Congress: Interest Groups**

Required Readings:

*Chapter 9 of By the People*  
Barber and McCarthy reading (M)  
Iyengar and Westwood reading (M)

Optional Readings:

Bawn, Kathleen et al. 2012 (M)  
Aldrich and Rhode 2009: "Congressional Committees in a Continuing Partisan

Era."

### **Week 7: The Presidency and the Bureaucracy**

Required Readings:

*Chapter 11 and 12 of By the People*  
Neustadt (1961), Ch. 3 (M)

Dickenson 2009 (M)

Other:

Final paper outlines due on Moodle, Friday 5/14 by 5pm.

### **Week 8: Campaigns and Elections**

Required Readings:

*Chapter 8 of By the People*

*Get Out the Vote* excerpt by Green & Gerber (M)

Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2017 (M)

Other:

*Read final paper information sheet*

*Read final exam information sheet*

### **Week 9: Public Opinion, Political Behavior, and the Media**

Required Readings:

*Chapter 6 and 7 of By the People*

Prior, Markus. 2005. (M)

Other:

Critical Reflection Paper 2 due to Moodle by end of week (Friday 5/28 by 5pm)

Optional readings:

Kinder and Kam, *Us Against Them* excerpt (M)

Zaller, John. 1992. [The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion](#)

Converse et al.'s [The American Vote](#)

### **Week 10: Final Exam**

*No required readings*

Other:

## **FINAL RESEARCH PAPER UPLOADED TO MOODLE BY SUN 6/6 by 5pm**

### **VII. Academic Honesty**

In writing course papers, students must document all passages, paraphrases and/or ideas that are borrowed from any source, and direct quotations must be placed within quotation marks. Similarly, papers must represent research conducted for the course in which they are assigned and no other; it is not appropriate to submit a paper that has already been or will be submitted to another course. Finally, papers must be the product of students' own work. Papers written by anyone other than the student, including

those purchased from commercial research services, are unacceptable.

All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources! A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <https://www.carleton.edu/writing/plagiarism/>.

## VIII. Additional Carleton Policies and Student Support

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – HELPDESK

The ITS helpdesk is a centralized support center for all students, staff and faculty on campus. For students, we support their personally-owned devices including a drop-off repair service for software and some minor hardware issues. The helpdesk also supports and maintains 13 [public computer labs](#) and their associated printers across campus. To contact the ITS helpdesk, go to <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/its/services/helpdesk/> or you can call, email, or contact the helpdesk directly by phone at 507-222-5999 (x5999 from on campus). Phone is best for time-sensitive requests. You can also email [helpdesk@carleton.edu](mailto:helpdesk@carleton.edu) (Any email sent to this address automatically opens a support ticket) or contact the Web Help Desk: <https://helpdesk.carleton.edu/> to open your own ticket.

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Burton Hall 03) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, sensory, or physical), please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, by calling 507-222-5250 or sending an email to [cdallager@carleton.edu](mailto:cdallager@carleton.edu) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

### TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact [aztechs@carleton.edu](mailto:aztechs@carleton.edu) or visit [go.carleton.edu/aztech](http://go.carleton.edu/aztech).

## LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Steve Schauz, Academic Skills Coach, is eager to help you develop learning strategies that work in the Carleton context. His goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you're more efficient and effective. For details and resources: [Learning Strategies & Time Management](#). If you prefer to learn these skills and strategies on your own, visit "[Helpful DIY Resources](#)."

## LIBRARY RESOURCES

Your librarian for this course and for Political Science is [Sean Leahy](#). You may also email [reference@carleton.edu](mailto:reference@carleton.edu). Librarians are excellent sources of assistance with your research in this class. You can drop by the library's [Research/IT desk](#) to ask any question you have, at any point in your process, or chat with a librarian online 24/7. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information on hours and librarians, visit the Gould Library website at [go.carleton.edu/library](http://go.carleton.edu/library).

## WRITING SUPPORT

The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their [online appointment system](#). Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), call her at x5998, or stop by her office in 420D 4th Libe. She can arrange once- or twice-a week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

## STUDENT HEALTH

Carleton College urges you to make yourself--your own health and well-being-- your priority throughout this ten-week term and your career here. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Sleep, exercise, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you flourish at Carleton. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other resources, such as [Student Health and Counseling](#) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

Carleton College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment/misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify our college's Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose whether you or anyone

involved is identified by name). For more information about your options at Carleton, please go to: [https://apps.carleton.edu/dos/sexual\\_misconduct/](https://apps.carleton.edu/dos/sexual_misconduct/).