

Politics in America: Liberty and Equality  
POSC 122 – Winter 2022  
Weitz Center for Creativity, Room 132  
(MW 11:10a.m.-12:20p.m. & F 12:00p.m.-1:00p.m. – 3a Schedule)

Instructor: Professor Christina Farhart

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00p.m.-3:00p.m. or by appointment (Weitz Commons)

Phone: 507-222-5850

Email: [cfarhart@carleton.edu](mailto:cfarhart@carleton.edu)

Office: 415 Willis Hall

Writing Assistant: Leander Cohen '22 ([cohenl2@carleton.edu](mailto:cohenl2@carleton.edu))

## I. Course Description

This course provides an overview of American government and politics. The topics covered are the historical development of American politics, federalism, political participation, institutions, public opinion, political parties, elections, and the media. In covering these topics, the course introduces the basic structures, processes, and conflicts of the American system of government.

We will grapple with some of the complex challenges of American political life, which include political inequality, partisan polarization, and the tensions between political freedom and control. First, we will discuss what “political” means, which will set the stage for our exploration of the ideas underlying the nation’s founding and its constitutional foundations. We will examine the development of rules that protect individual citizens from the government (civil liberties) and from the majority (civil rights). We will then discuss the structure and function of the American political institutions and the ways in which they work separately and together to constrain and shape political processes. Lastly, we will shift from our discussion of elites and institutions to discuss mass politics and the behavior of individuals. We will focus on the behavior of the mass public in the political process through public opinion, political parties, interest groups, and the media. Ultimately the goal of this course is to give you the basic tools needed so you will be better able to analyze, interpret, and engage with political events and governmental processes.

## II. Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to introduce you to political science and to fundamentals of government and politics in the United States. The aim of this class is not to teach you *what* to think about politics nor provide a venue for you to attempt to convince others of your political views. Rather, the goal of this class is to teach you *how* to think about politics in the United States.

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

- Understand the systematic forces—the rules, institutions, and procedures—that structure politics as practiced in the United States;
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system;
- Critically analyze political inputs (public opinion, polls, elections, etc.) and outputs (claims made by politicians and journalists, legislations and policies, media, news reports, etc.);
- Recognize how political parties, the media, and interest groups interact with political institutions to affect policy change in the United States.

### III. Required Course Readings

Lowi, Theodore J., Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabahere. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., Core Fifteenth Edition, 2019. (Power and Purpose)

- Occasionally, I will assign supplemental readings, which will be available on Moodle. This means that material for exams will come the required text, as well as from class lecture and discussion. This heightens the importance of you being in class and getting notes from a classmate when you must miss a class.
- I also encourage you to pay attention to a quality daily newspaper (recommended papers include but are not limited to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Hill*, and *The Wall Street Journal*). Or, good podcasts!

### IV. Class Structure and Expectations

This term, most classes will consist of the following structure, but we will be flexible if particular events or topics need more attention. If schedules work out, we will also have some guest speakers occasionally join us throughout the term. However, you are expected to attend all classes and exams and participate in all quizzes and discussions.

- Reading Quiz and Feedback (approx. ten minutes)
- Current Events Discussion (approx. ten minutes)
- Lecture (25-30 minutes)
- Class Discussion (20-25 minutes)

You can also expect me to arrive to class on time, to return assignments in a timely manner, and to be accessible during my office hours. I will strive to make this course understandable and accessible for all students. If you have any questions about the content or structure of the course or about specific assignments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always happy to help if you come to me before assignments or exams are due. Please do not wait to ask for help until after the due date – come talk to me before if you are struggling.

## V. Course Requirements and Grading

The requirements for this course involve both the completion of assignments on your own and your active and informed contributions to our class discussions. Some of your assignments will be submitted electronically via Moodle. It is your responsibility to make sure the file is not corrupted (you can download and view the file after you upload it to Moodle). If you use .pages, rather than Word (.doc or .docx) please convert to .pdf before submitting. Corrupted files will be treated as though they are late until they are correctly uploaded. Your grade will be based on the following requirements:

**READING QUIZZES: (5%)** To ensure you have mastered the building block concepts, short reading quizzes covering the materials in your reading will be conducted at the beginning of each lecture that begins a new chapter/topic. The quizzes will be self-graded in class (feedback will be presented immediately after the quiz) and then turned in to help you effectively encode the basic terms and ideas. Bring a different colored pen to class. The lowest score will be dropped.

**TV/MOVIE REFLECTION PAPER PART I: (10%)** After viewing your choice of a political TV show or movie, you will write a brief reflection paper at the beginning of the term about your expectations for how well (or poorly) the show or movie represents American politics. More information will be provided in class.

**TV/MOVIE REFLECTION PAPER PART II: (10%)** Toward the end of the term, you will write a brief reflection paper based on your Part I paper. You will discuss how your expectations differed from course material, as they apply to the TV show or movie watched for Part I. More information will be provided in class.

**RESEARCH PAPER: (25%)** Your paper should draw on course material, be thoughtful, logical, and concise. You should have a clear thesis that you then support in the paper. Final papers should be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced, using Times New Roman 12-point font, and the margins should be 1-inch. You are encouraged to draw on other readings or web-based resources, but you must cite any ideas or materials that are not your own. You must clearly cite your sources using the American Political Science Association citation style. For more information see: <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>

The research paper will be broken into four components, due throughout the term: 1) research paper topic; 2) annotated bibliography; 3) introduction draft and paper outline; and 4) final paper. Breaking the paper up in this way should take the pressure off of writing the full paper toward the end of the term. More information on each component will be provided in class. You will also be required to meet with our Writing Assistant for this term.

TWO EXAMS: (20% EACH; 40% TOTAL) Students will take a midterm and a final exam. The exams will assess your knowledge of material contained within the assigned readings, from lecture, and from our course discussions. All of the exams will combine multiple-choice questions, identifications, and short essays. The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the course. The final exam is cumulative, so information from the beginning of the semester will be helpful as we discuss information from the latter portion of the class.

PARTICIPATION: (10%) The final portion of your grade is based on your ability and willingness to contribute to our class. What does this require of you? Please prepare for, attend, and participate meaningfully in class weekly. “Meaningful” participation comes in a number of forms: asking questions to clarify course topics, answering questions that I pose in class, drawing connections between course topics and current events, and participating respectfully in class discussions. In other words, good participation is simply being a good member of our class community. Everyone’s experience in this course is enhanced by regular attendance and active participation; conversely, everyone’s experience suffers if individuals do not participate. Remember that a sincere question often adds as much (if not more) to our understanding of the course material as an explanation of the week’s readings. So, don’t be afraid to speak up!

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 Below 60

ADDITIONAL GRADING POLICIES:

1. I will not consider grade complaints if more than one week has passed after the assignment has been returned to you. Before I review your grade, you must first:

- Wait 24 hours.
- Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
- Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”
- The second grade, higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.

2. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless official documentation is provided. Your grade will be lowered 10 percentage points for each day it is late. For example, if the assignment is due on Monday at 9:50 a.m. and you turn it in sometime between 9:50 a.m. and Tuesday 9:50 a.m., the highest grade you can achieve is 90.

- The only acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are family emergencies or illnesses. However, in these cases, I will arrange to give you extra time only if you communicate with me before the assignment is due and you provide documentation of the circumstance.

## VI. Notes

You are expected to read the entire syllabus at the beginning of the term. While you are encouraged to print out a hardcopy to read and reference through the term, you will also want to have an electronic version to easily access all external websites and resources. Depending on the dynamics of the class or campus emergency, the information on this syllabus may be modified by the instructor. Students will be notified promptly of any changes.

## 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://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>.

## VIII. Electronics in Class

You are responsible for taking notes in class, whether by computer or by pen and paper. Occasionally, we may use laptops (or mobile devices) in class to access the Internet for in-class activities. However, I expect you to be responsible in your use of electronic equipment if you do use a laptop in class: please avoid visiting social networking sites, or otherwise browsing the internet on sites unrelated to the course. This can become distracting to your colleagues around you. I would also recommend you read through the discussion (including comments), "The Distracted Classroom" article from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* posted on Moodle, to think about the possible pros and cons of using computers in a classroom setting. Individuals who abuse this privilege will find their participation grade reduced and/or will be asked to move to the last row in the classroom. Please turn off all cell phones during class.

## IX. Course Schedule

Below, you'll find a list of all class meetings and the topics we'll discuss. You should bring any questions that you have with you to our class meetings. In the event that deviations from this schedule are necessary, they will be announced in class.

Readings should be completed BEFORE the lecture. Reading are listed in *italics*.

### WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION AND THE FOUNDING

- 01/05      Introductions and Syllabus Review
- 01/07      Logic of American Politics and Collective Action Problems  
*Chapter 1 Power and Purpose*

### WEEK 2 – THE FOUNDING, CONTINUED

- 01/10      Constructing a Government: The Founding  
*Chapter 2 Power and Purpose*
- 01/12      Constructing a Government: The Constitution  
*The Articles of Confederation* (in *Power and Purpose* pp. A7-A12)  
*Federalist Papers* (in *Power and Purpose* pp. A34-A42)  
*Antifederalist Papers* (on Moodle)  
DUE: IN-CLASS DEBATE OF FEDERALISTS/ANTI-FEDERALISTS
- 01/14      Federalism  
*Chapter 3 Power and Purpose*  
*The Constitution* (in *Power and Purpose* pp. A13-A23)

### WEEK 3 – CIVIL LIBERTIES VS. CIVIL RIGHTS

- 01/17      Separation of Powers  
*Chapter 3 Power and Purpose*  
DUE: REFLECTION PAPER, PART I
- 01/19      Civil Liberties  
*Chapter 4 Power and Purpose*
- 01/21      Civil Liberties and Civil Rights  
*Chapter 5 Power and Purpose*

WEEK 4 – LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

- 01/24      Civil Rights  
*Bill of Rights (Power and Purpose pp. A24-A25)*  
DUE: RESEARCH QUESTIONS & PAPER TOPIC
- 01/26      Congress, Part I  
*Chapter 6 Power and Purpose*  
*David R. Mayhew. Congress: The Electoral Connection. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1974. (Moodle)*
- 01/28      Congress, Part II and Midterm Review

WEEK 5 – EXECUTIVE BRANCH

- 01/31      MIDTERM EXAM
- 02/02      Presidency, Part I  
*Chapter 7 Power and Purpose*
- 02/04      Presidency, Part II  
*Chapter 8 Power and Purpose*

WEEK 6 – JUDICIAL BRANCH

- 02/07      NO CLASS – MIDTERM BREAK
- 02/09      Presidency, Part III  
*Chapter 8 Power and Purpose*  
DUE: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 02/11      Judiciary, Part I  
*Chapter 9 Power and Purpose*

WEEK 7 – PEOPLE, PUBLIC OPINION, AND PARTICIPATION

(REMINDER OF GENERAL ADVISING DAYS 10/28-11/05 & 11/01 S/CR/NC DEADLINE)

- 02/14      Judiciary, Part II
- 02/16      Public Opinion, Part I  
*Chapter 10 Power and Purpose*
- 02/18      Public Opinion, Part II



WEEK 8 – ELECTIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND IDEOLOGY

- 02/21      Public Opinion, Part III  
DUE: DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER
- 02/23      Elections, Part I  
*Chapter 11 Power and Purpose*
- 02/25      Elections, Part II  
*Gelman, Andrew. 2016. "19 Lessons for Political Scientists from the 2016 Election." Slate (Moodle)*

WEEK 9 – GROUPS, INTERESTS, LOBBYING, AND POLICYMAKING

- 02/28      Political Parties, Part I  
*Chapter 12 Power and Purpose*
- 03/02      Political Parties, Part II  
DUE: REFLECTION PAPER PART II
- 03/04      Groups and Interests, Part I  
*Chapter 13 Power and Purpose*  
*E. E. Schattschneider. The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America. Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1975. (Moodle)*

WEEK 10 – GROUPS, INTERESTS AND THE MEDIA

- 03/07      The Media, Part I  
*Chapter 14 Power and Purpose*
- 03/09      Wrap-Up and Final Review
- 03/11      FINAL EXAM
- 03/12-13    READING DAYS

WEEK 11 – FINALS WEEK

- 03/16      FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5:00P.M.

## X. Additional Carleton Policies and Student Support

### COURSE MATERIALS ASSISTANCE

I recognize the potential financial burden of additional course fees, supply requirements, and travel costs. If you are in need of assistance to cover course expenses, please speak with me by the end of the second week of classes.

### INCLUSION

I strive to create an inclusive and respectful classroom that values diversity. Our individual differences enrich and enhance our understanding of one another and of the world around us. This class welcomes the perspectives of all ethnicities, genders, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities.

### 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 here automatically opens a support ticket) or contact the Web Help Desk: <https://helpdesk.carleton.edu/>.

### QUANTITATIVE SKILLS & REASONING

The [Quantitative Resource Center](#) (QRC) offers remote and in-person help for students working with numbers in their non-Math/Stats classes. Chat, drop in, or make an appointment with a trained peer tutor for help with: graphs, charts, and writing with numbers; Excel, R, and statistical analysis; and math up through Pre-Calculus.

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) 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, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact [OAR@carleton.edu](mailto:OAR@carleton.edu) or call Sam Thayer

(10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

#### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES: 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. Library staff can help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. [You can make an appointment with a librarian](#), get help via chat 24/7 from any page on the library's website, [email, or call](#). The Library building has lots of great study spaces, and we'd love for you to visit! For more information and our hours, visit the Gould Library website at [carleton.edu/library](http://carleton.edu/library).

#### WRITING SUPPORT

The Writing Center a space with 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 by using their [online appointment system](#).

#### TERM-LONG PROGRAM FOR MULTILINGUAL WRITERS

If English is not your first language and you believe you might benefit from working regularly with a writing consultant this term, email Melanie Cashin, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), at [mcashin@carleton.edu](mailto:mcashin@carleton.edu). She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

## STUDENT WELL-BEING

Your health and well-being should always be your first priority. At Carleton, we have a wide-array of health and wellness resources to support students. 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. For more information, check out [Student Health and Counseling](#) (SHAC) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

## TITLE IX

Carleton is committed to fostering an environment free of sexual misconduct. Please be aware all Carleton faculty and staff members, with the exception of Chaplains and SHAC staff, are “responsible employees.” Responsible employees are required to share any information they have regarding incidents of sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator. Carleton’s goal is to ensure campus community members are aware of all the options available and have access to the resources they need. If you have questions, please contact Laura Riehle-Merrill, Carleton’s Title IX Coordinator, or visit the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website: <https://www.carleton.edu/sexual-misconduct/>.