Political Science 510
Seminar in American Politics
Spring 2015

McGannon Hall, Room 122
Th 4:20-6:50

Instructor Information

Morgan L.W. Hazelton, J.D., Ph.D.
Email: hazeltonml@slu.edu
Office Phone: (314) 977-5169
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00 to 2:00; Thursday, 9:30 to 11:30; or, by appointment.

Course Description

Do political parties shape legislative outcomes? What factors influence individual vote choice? How do interactions among the branches shape policy? In this class, we endeavor to answer these questions, among others. Our investigation will focus on major theoretical concepts and empirical research pertaining to American government and politics. Furthermore, we will study theories and evidence from a variety of contexts, including institutions and behavior.
Course Objectives

This course is designed to help students broaden their knowledge, skills, and values so that they will be able to:

- understand how American political systems operate.
- critique and assess scholarly theories and evidence.
- discuss and defend ideas orally.
- engage in meaningful and productive dialogue with others.
- evaluate, critique, and synthesize competing theoretical explanations in American Politics and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature.
- construct and present arguments and evidence clearly in written work, including essay exam answers and original research.
- produce original research that investigates political processes pertaining to the United States in a methodologically-sound and persuasive manner and contribute to ongoing scholarly debates.
- analyze the values that inform political institutions, behavior, and policies pertain to the United States.
- present the results of their research in public forums.

Requirements and Evaluation

Class Participation

Class participation is an essential part of this class, and, thus, your attendance is very important. If you must miss class for a legitimate reason, such as illness, family emergency, or University-sponsored activity, you should contact me as soon as possible (which means before the missed class whenever possible). If you have more than one unexcused absences, your class participation grade, which is worth 20% of your final grade, will be lowered by 5% for each additional day. For example, if you have three total unexcused absences, your class participation grade will be no more than 10% (of the total 20%) and your overall grade in the class can be no more than 90%.

Classroom discussion is an essential part of the learning process during which we deepen our understanding of the material, draw conceptual connections, and apply theoretical and legal frameworks to new scenarios. You are expected to be prepared to discuss the assigned materials every class. Students will be graded on their participation based on well reasoned answers, taking part in conversations, thoughtfulness in comments, and active listening. Disagreement and debate is a part of healthy intellectual discourse, and is strongly encouraged.
Students must, however, remain civil with and respectful to all members of the class at all times.

Assignments

All assignments should be in 12 point font, double spaced with 1-inch margins. All assignments are due in hard copy form. Blue Book citation form should be used.

Students will be penalized 10% per day on late assignments. For an example, a brief that would normally receive a 91% would be recorded as 71% if the student turned it in two days late.

Discussion Points

In order to focus your reading of the material and enhance classroom discussion, for each class you will produce 6-8 discussion points. These discussion points are due 48 hours before class (Tuesday at 4:20) and should be submitted to me via email (hazeltonml@slu.edu). These items should include questions, comments, and challenges regarding the readings that you believe would be beneficial to discuss as a class. Please identify the reading that each item pertains to. I will select questions from those submitted to guide our discussions.

Paper

There is one major research assignment for this class which will culminate in a research paper. This project will be worth 35% of your overall grade. This is not a book review or a summary of a specific research topic, but a piece of original research. This is not something you will throw together at the last second. Your project should explore a topic in political science that interests you. The specific topic of the paper will be of your choosing.

To help you produce the highest quality work, various assignments pertaining to the project will be due throughout the semester, including the research question and annotated bibliography, literature review, research design, presentation, and final draft.

Research Question and Bibliography: You will prepare a single, well crafted research question, and a 5 page (double spaced) annotated bibliography containing a minimum of 10 articles or books you will use in your research. Students are encouraged to meet with me to discuss potential topics. Due Feb 5 – 5% of your final grade.

Literature Review: A 5 page (double spaced) review of literature that will be a review of previous scholarly work in your research area. Due Feb 19 – 5% of your final grade.

Research Design: A 5-7 page (double spaced) plan for your analysis that begins with an outline of your theory, hypotheses, and how you will test your hypotheses. Be sure to discuss the type of data you will need to conduct your analyses. Due March 19 – 5% of
your final grade.

Rough Draft You will turn in a rough draft of your paper for peer review. Each draft will be reviewed by me and another student in the course (assigned by me). Due April 16.

Final Draft A complete and polished research paper that includes an introduction, literature review, theory section, data and methods section, as well as analysis, and a conclusion. Due April 30 – 20% of your final grade.

Peer Review

You will receive a classmate’s rough draft to review on April 16. You will review the paper and provide a 2-6 page (double spaced) report with feedback for the author. The purpose of this feedback is to help the author improve his or her paper. It is important that you give well-thought out criticisms and suggestions. While these comments should include an assessment of the strengths of the paper, feedback is only helpful if it also includes criticisms and challenges to the project. Additionally, where possible, you should provide suggestions on how to address deficiencies in the paper. April 23 – 5% of your final grade.

Presentation

An 10-15 minute presentation with visual aids followed by a question and answer period. Apr. 30 – 5% of your final grade.

Examination

The final exam in this class will be a comprehensive exam style question that will ask the student to bring materials read in this course together to provide a cogent response to an important question regarding American Politics. May 7 – 25% of your final grade.

Course Evaluations

Students are required to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the course. Students will receive 1% of extra credit for filling out course evaluations at the end of the course.
Grading

Your grade for this course will consist of the following components and relative weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>Discussion Points</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Question/Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Grades will be assigned by the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Pts</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 93</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 90</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 87</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 83</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 80</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>≥ 77</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 73</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 70</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 67</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>&lt; 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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The above scale represents the highest requirements for a particular letter grade. That is, I may, at my discretion, alter the grading scale to require fewer percentage points to obtain a particular letter grade. If you are taking the course on a pass/fail basis, please see me to discuss the requirements for a passing grade. Students auditing the course are expected to attend class and participate in our discussions. I will only agree to requests for extensions after extensive consultation with a student and only in the most exceptional of circumstances.
Important Matters

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: [http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml](http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml)

Students with Special Needs-Disability Services

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.
Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

**Writing Center**

I encourage you to take advantage of the writing services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with any kind of writing project, multimedia project, and/or oral presentation. They offer one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-3484 or visit [http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml](http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml).
Course Schedule

What follows is a tentative outline of the topics to covered and when we will cover them. I may modify this schedule as necessary based on the dynamics of this particular class. If the schedule is modified, I will provide you with appropriate notice.

Jan. 15  Introduction

Jan. 22  Political Attitudes


Jan. 29  The Media and Public Opinion


Feb. 5  Political Participation


Feb. 12  **Voting and Elections**


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Feb. 19  **Representation**


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Feb. 26  **Interest Groups**


Mar. 5  **Legislative Branch**


Mar. 12 **Spring Break**

Mar. 19 **Political Parties**


Apr. 2 **Easter Thursday**
Apr. 9  Executive Branch


Apr. 16  Atlas Week

TBA

Apr. 23  Separation of Powers


Apr. 30  Presentations

Research Presentations

May 7  Finals

Final Exam, 4:00 - 5:50