POLS 493: Seminar in American Political Development  
Spring 2013  
Meeting Time: M-W 2:10-3:25  
Meeting Place: McGannon 122  

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Office Hours: M-W 10-11:30, or by appointment

Course overview:

This course is an upper-division seminar designed to introduce students to the study of American Political Development (APD), one of the most exciting research areas in contemporary political science. Stated simply, APD is American political history from a political science perspective. Its goal is to generate ideas and theories to explain how American politics changes across time.

This course will be divided into three sections. In each of these sections, we will examine an enduring theme in America’s political development. During the first five weeks of the course, we will consider the legacy of the American Founding, in particular whether and how the Founders created a regime with a particular developmental logic to it. We will focus on the question of federalism, the relationship between the federal government and the states. Some scholars argue that, through the Constitution, the Founders created a political system with an internal logic of nationalization, meaning a growth in the power of the federal government over time. Other scholars claim that the Founders desired to limit the federal government’s power, but that subsequent generations of Americans have distorted or undermined their plans for the country. Still others contend that the Founders desired to rein in the states, not the federal government, but that over time states have overcome the barriers that the Founders installed. Through a careful examination of important core texts, as well as newer scholarly works, we will consider these competing claims.

In the second five weeks of the course, we will examine the cyclical dynamics of American politics. Starting in the late 1950s, many scholars looking at American political history began to notice that party politics in the U.S. seems to run in cycles. In this section of this course, we will examine various cyclical theories of American politics, at both the electoral level and the elite level. In doing so, we will consider the strengths of these theories as well as their weaknesses. We will also attempt to figure out why these cycles occur (assuming you are convinced that they exist!).

In the last five weeks of the course, we will consider how American politics has been shaped by its most distinctive region, the South. In more ways than most Americans appreciate, the trajectory of the United States has been determined by its relationship with the states of the
former Confederacy. Reading some cutting-edge works in APD, we will learn about how key outcomes in American political history were influenced by the Southern states, and how the South continues to influence American politics to this day.

Course Objectives:

Over the course of this semester, you should:

- Learn how to think about American politics from a developmental perspective. In other words, you will be able to place current issues in American politics in a historical context and think about how the contemporary landscape of American politics has been shaped by events that happened long ago.
- Add to your knowledge of important eras in American political history, in particular the Founding, Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, the New Deal, and the Civil Rights Era.
- Improve your ability to marshal evidence from many different sources into an analytical essay in which you persuasively advance an argument.
- Develop your public speaking skills and, in particular, your ability to lead a group discussion.

In-Class Activities:

This class is designed as a seminar. That means that the onus is on students as much as it is on the instructor to make the class lively and interesting. Students must come to class each and every day prepared to talk about the readings.

Course Materials:

Almost all of our readings for this course will come from book chapters or articles that will be placed on eReserves. You should print these readings out and bring them to class. I also highly recommend that you place them in a binder, for your future reference.


Assignments and Grading:

Response Papers: At the end of each of the three sections of the course, you will be required to write an analytical paper concerning the topic we have finished covering. For each paper, you will choose from among 3-4 prompts, which I will provide. The first two of these papers should be 6-8 pages; the last one should be 8-10 pages. You will have two weeks to complete these papers. In each paper, you will develop an argument and defend it using the course readings. I will provide detailed instructions about how to write the papers and what I expect from them.
The first paper (due Monday, March 3) will be worth 15% of your final grade, the second (due Monday, April 7) will be worth 20%, and the third (due Wednesday, May 7) will be worth 25%.

Class participation: Lots of it! A good seminar requires that students come to class having read the assigned material and ready to participate in discussions about it. Regular attendance is necessary and being absent from class more than a few times will harm your participation grade. That said, attendance is by no means sufficient for maximum credit in this area. To participate fully, you will need to come to class and demonstrate you have read, understood, and thought critically about the day’s readings. Participation will count for 35% of your final grade.

Discussion Leadership: Students will be required to lead a discussion about a particular reading or set of readings in the course twice during the semester. We will sign up for these roles in the first week of class. I will help students prepare each time they are responsible for leading a discussion. Discussion leadership will count for 5% of your final grade.

Grades: Grades will be calculated as follows:

Response Paper 1: 15%
Response Paper 2: 20%
Response Paper 3: 25%
Participation: 35%
Discussion Leadership: 5%

The final grading scale will be as follows:

A: 93-100  B: 83-86  C: 73-76  F: Below 60
A-: 90-92   B-: 80-82  C-: 70-72
B+: 87-89   C+: 77-79  D: 60-69

Additional information:

- I will rely on Blackboard considerably to send e-mails, post grades, etc. Please make sure that you can access the Blackboard site for the class easily, and check whatever e-mail address is associated with your Blackboard account frequently.
- Laptops and cellphones may not be used in class. Please take notes using pen and paper instead.
- Students are required to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the course.
- I encourage you to visit me at any point in the semester if you have any questions or concerns about the course. If you can’t come to my office hours, please e-mail me and we can find a time to meet. You’re also welcome to stop by my office without scheduling an appointment, though I can’t guarantee that I’ll be there or that I’ll be able to talk to you extensively.
• I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center’s services. The Writing Center provides feedback that benefits writers at all skill levels. 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 977-2930 or visit www.slu.edu/x13305.xml

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

(I reserve the right to change the readings and reading schedule as I see fit. Any such changes will be announced. You are responsible for reading the following material by the date listed, unless I indicate otherwise)

**Week 1:** Intro/Begin Part 1: The Founding and the Growth of National Power

- January 13. Introduction (No readings)
- January 15. The Lead-Up to the Constitutional Convention
  - Articles of the Confederation ([http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp))
  - Rakove, Jack. *Original Meanings*, Chapter 2

**Week 2:**

- **January 20. No class – MLK Day**
- January 22. The federalism debate in the Constitutional Convention
  - The U.S. Constitution, all ([http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html))

**Week 3:**

- January 27. The Convention continued
  - Robertson, David Brian. “Madison’s Opponents and Constitutional Design.”
- January 29. The Federalists: Defending a strong national government
  - *Federalist Papers* 10, 17, 23, 27, 32 ([http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp))

**Week 4:**

- February 3. The Federalists continued
  - *Federalist Papers* 34, 39, 45, 46
- February 5. The Anti-Federalists: Warning about a strong national government
  - Brutus (sections to read TBD): ([http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus00.htm](http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus00.htm))
Week 5:

February 10. Perspective #1: The founders anticipated that the national government would become more powerful over time.

- Tulis, Jeffrey and Nicole Mellow, “The Art of Rhetorical Appropriation: How The Federalist Enabled Anti-Federalists to Transform Losing into Success.”

February 12. Perspective #2: The founders established a limited national government, but their design has been subverted over time.


Week 6:

February 17. Perspective #3: Maybe the states have won out, after all.

- Prompts for Response Paper #1 distributed


- Key, V.O. “A Theory of Critical Elections.”
- Key, V.O. “Secular Realignment and the Party System.”

Week 7:

February 24. Critical Realignment Theory


- Sundquist, James L. Dynamics of the Party System. Chapters 1-2, 7.

Week 8:

March 3. Realignment Theory’s Critics

- Response Paper #1 Due

March 5. New Approaches/Defenders

Week 10:

March 17. Political Cycles in Congress
  • Brady, David W. *Critical Elections and Congressional Policymaking*, Chapters 1, 3.
March 19. Political Cycles and the Presidency

Week 11:

March 24. Political Cycles: A Systemic Approach
  • **Prompts for Response Paper #2 distributed**
March 26. Begin Part III: The South and APD
  • Valelly, Richard. *The Two Reconstructions*, Chapters 1-3

Week 12:

March 31. The failure of the first reconstruction
  • Valelly, Richard. *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement*. Chapters 4-6

April 2: **No class – Instructor Out**

Week 13:

April 7, 9. The New Deal and the “Jim Crow Congress”
  • Katznelson, Ira. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*. Chapters 4-6, 10
  • **Response Paper #2 Due on April 7**

Week 14:

April 14, 16. The second reconstruction – Civil rights in the 60s
  • Valelly, Richard. *The Two Reconstructions*. Chapters 7-10
Week 15:

April 21. No class - Easter
April 23. Partisan Change in the South, 1960s-1990s
  - Prompts for Response Paper #3 distributed

Week 16:

April 28. The Consequences of Partisan Change in the south.
  - Theriault, Sean. “Party Polarization in Congress: Member Replacement or Member Adaptation.” Party Politics.
April 30. (Short) Readings TBD

Week 17:

May 5. Last day of class – No readings
May 7. Response Paper #3 Due

Academic 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
Disabilities:

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.

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.