

Professor Sarah Cate
Saint Louis University
Department of Political Science

POLS 1150
American Political Systems

Spring 2020

Tuesday and Thursday at 11:00am – 12:15pm
McGannon Hall 262

This class is an introductory survey course of the American Politics subfield in political science. By the end of this course, students should have a familiarity with some of the fundamental debates and works within American political science research. The course is organized around three areas of focus: political institutions, political behavior, and public policy. Throughout all these sections of the course, students will examine major themes such as federalism, democracy, representation and political power by exploring political science literature and using relevant policy issues to highlight the tensions that arise in American politics and governance. We will also critically evaluate how research on American politics is conducted and explore ideas for how it could be improved. The course will develop analytical skills necessary to address important questions about equality and democracy in the U.S. context.

E-mail: sarah.cate@slu.edu

Office: 124 McGannon Hall

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00pm – 4:00pm, or available by appointment.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on institutions, political behavior and public policy in the United States.
2. Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.

Course Requirements:

Readings and Lectures: Students are expected to read the assigned readings for the week prior to class on Monday. Lecture attendance is mandatory—and necessary—for success in the course. Information about tests, changes in reading assignments, etc. may be made during class periods. You are responsible for knowing this information, whether you have attended class or not. A sign-in sheet will be circulated in lecture (or in-class activities and quizzes will be used for attendance).

Current Events: Students are expected to be familiar with current events by reading *The New York Times* or other major outlets like *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, or *BBC News* each day.

Participation: Active participation is a key part of the course, as is weekly attendance. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class, bring hard copies of readings to class, and come prepared to discuss the main themes of the readings. Be sure that you can summarize each assigned reading, describe the central questions and provide some critical assessment of the work.

Quizzes/In-class writing: There will be short quizzes or short writing assignments in class once a week. This is a way to help you process the material and be better prepared for the major exams. The quizzes and writing topics will cover material from the readings and/or previous lectures.

Paper: In the paper for this class, you will review and critique a debate in American political science research. More details about the paper will be given during the term.

Midterm exam: The midterm exam will be on Thursday, March 5th, 11:00am – 12:15pm. It will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions and short essay questions. More details about the format and content of the exam will be given out as the test date approaches.

Final exam: The final exam will be on Tuesday May 12th, 12:00pm – 1:50pm. The exam will be comprehensive, covering all material presented throughout the semester. It will consist of a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. More details about the format of the exam will be given out as the test date approaches.

You must complete ALL assignments to pass the course

Your grade in the course is broken down as follows:

Participation and attendance: 15%

Quizzes: 15%

Paper: 20%

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 30%

Grading Scale:

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

Classroom requirements: Any use of cell phones is strictly prohibited while class is in session. Turn your cell phone off while in class. Videotaping or tape-recording lectures is not allowed without first getting permission from the professor.

Use of laptops is not permitted because they are distracting to your classmates and the professor.

E-mail: If you have a pressing administrative question about the course, contact the professor via e-mail (sarah.cate@usm.edu). If you have substantive questions or comments about the content of the course or American politics more generally, come see the professor during office hours.

Course Materials:

The following book is required reading and is available for purchase at the SLU Bookstore.

Kollman, Ken. 2017. *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*. New York, NY. W.W. Norton Company. ISBN: 978-0393283686

Additional readings available on Blackboard.

Before outlining the schedule of reading and assignments, the following sections detail important policies and resources provided by the University. Please take the time to carefully read through these paragraphs so you are aware of your rights and resources and so you can notify me of any questions or concerns you might have.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: www.slu.edu/here4you and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

Disability Services

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Student Success Center

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. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/> to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

University Writing Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/> or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.

Library Resources

The Librarian for Political Science is Rebecca Hyde. Her office is room 202H of Pius Library. Rebecca provides research assistance with library and other information resources, developing search strategies, finding the right sources for your research project and more. Her can contact her via email (rebecca.hyde@slu.edu) and/or set up an appointment online.

Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.

Week 1 (Jan. 14 and 16): *Introduction and the Constitution*

Reading:

Robertson, David Brian. *The Original Compromise*. (Blackboard).

Week 2 (Jan. 21 and 23): *The Constitution and Federalism*

Reading:

Kollman 2.3: Dahl, Robert. "How Democratic is the American Constitution?" (pp. 70-74)

Peterson, Doug (2016, Feb. 23). "Colorado's Marijuana Regime Is an Affront to Federalism and the Rule of Law." *National Review*. (Bb).

Gurman, Sadie and Natalie Andrews. (2018, June 10). "Jeff Sessions Struggles to Get Planned Marijuana Crackdown Going." *The Wall Street Journal*. (Bb).

Week 3 (Jan. 28 and 30): *Congress*

Kollman 5.1: Mayhew, David. "The Electoral Connection" (pp. 157-169)

Kollman 12.1: Aldrich, John. "Why Parties? A Second Look" (pp. 525-540)

Jan. 30 – Handout Paper Assignment

Week 4 (Feb. 4 and 6): *The Presidency*

Kollman 6.1: Neustadt, Richard. "Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan." (pp. 215-223)

Skowronek, Stephen. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time." (Bb).

Week 5 (Feb. 11 and 13): *The Courts*

Kollman 8.1: Rosenberg, Gerald. "The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change." (pp. 349-355)

Keith Whittington, Benjamin Ginsberg, and Martin Shefter, "Resolved, the Presidential Impeachment Process is Basically Sound," in Richard J. Ellis and Michael Nelson, eds., *Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2006), pp. 45-59. (Bb).

Week 6 (Feb. 18 and 20): *Civil Rights*

Jones, W.P. (2013). "The Forgotten Radical History of the March on Washington." *Dissent Magazine*. (Bb).

Feb. 20 – Paper due by 11:00am

Week 7 (Feb. 25 and 27): *Public Opinion*

Key, V.O. "The Voice of the People: An Echo" from *The Responsible Electorate*. (Bb).

Lippmann, Walter. 1925. "The Phantom Public" Excerpt. (Bb).

Kollman 9.2: Zaller, John. "The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion." (pp. 430-434).

Week 8 (March 3 and 5): *Review and Midterm*

SPRING BREAK – March 9-13

Week 9 (March 17 and 19): *Elections*

Kollman, 13.1, Koza, John, et. al. "Every Vote Equal: A State-Based Plan for Electing the President by National Popular Vote." (pp. 561-566)

Kollman 12.4: Kollman, Ken. "Who Drives the Party Bus?" (pp. 558-560)

Week 10 (March 24 and 26): *The Media and American Foreign Policy*

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. "News that Matters." Chapters 2 – 3. 1987. (Bb).

Pious, R.M. (2011). "Prerogative Power in the Obama Administration: Continuity and Change in the War on Terrorism," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41.2 (June): 263-290. (Bb).
ONLY READ pgs. 263-281.

Week 11 (March 31 and April 2): *Interest Groups and Campaign Finance*

Bartels, Larry. "Economic Inequality and Political Representation." Chapter 9 in *Unequal Democracy* 2016. (Bb).

Lafer, Gordon. *The One Percent Solution*. Chapter 1, pp. 1-43. (Bb).

Week 12 (April 7): *Political Economy & Social Policy*

Kollman 15.2: Mettler, Suzanne. "The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy." (pp. 645-658).

Leopold, L. "Runaway Inequality." *Labor Institute*, pgs. 9-15. (Bb).

NO CLASS - April 9

Week 13 (April 14 and 16): *Social Policy I: Education*

Lafer, Gordon. *The One Percent Solution*. Chapter 4, pp. 127-155. (Bb).

Bill Moyers interview with Diane Ravitch. "Public Schools for Sale?" (Available on Bb, either read transcript or watch the interview).

Week 14 (April 21 and 23): *Social Policy II: Health Care*

Watch: *Sick Around the World*. PBS Documentary. Link on Blackboard.

Week 15 (April 28 and 30): *Social Policy III: Mass Incarceration & Recap*

Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Introduction (pp. 1-19). (Bb).

Gottschalk, M. (2015). "It's Not Just the Drug War." *Jacobin Magazine*. (Bb).

Week 16 (May 5): *Review*

Final Exam: Tuesday May 12th, 12:00pm – 1:50pm.