POLS 200: Intermediate National Politics of the US
Thursday 4-5:15 PM, Math & Science Center E208
Department of Political Science
Emory University

Professor: Zachary Peskowitz  
Office: 332 Tarbutton Hall  
zachary.f.peskowitz@emory.edu  
Office Hours: 9-10 am on Wednesdays

POLS 200 is the second course in American Government. The course moves analysis of American politics from the examination of individual institutions and mass political behavior to the analysis of how the public, elected officials, and political institutions interact to govern and make public policy. In this course, we will examine a series of political groups and institutions that are important for "making the system work" and study how we evaluate performance of our democratic system.

The first half of the course is focused on specific groups and institutions, namely political parties, interest groups, media, and bureaucracy. The second half of the course takes up the interaction among actors, institutions and the mass public and then considers evaluation of governance and policy-making. The course relies on material covered in POLS 100 and that course is a prerequisite. After taking this course, students will be well-prepared for advanced courses in American politics.

Assignments and Grading

Midterm Exam: There will be an in-class midterm exam during class on March 3. The midterm exam will constitute 30% of your final grade.

Final Exam: There will be a final exam during the University-scheduled exam time on May 3. This exam will constitute 40% of your final grade.

Participation: Attendance and active participation are critical to the success of the course. Students are expected to have completed all of the readings before class and to arrive in class prepared to discuss them. Participation will constitute 10% of your final grade.

Short Papers: Students will write two 1500 word papers (due in-class on Feb. 18 and April 19) during the semester. Paper assignments will be distributed approximately two weeks before the due dates. Each paper will constitute 10% of your final grade for a total of 20%. Late papers will receive a one-letter grade penalty for each 24-hour period they are late.

Honor Code

The honor code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the teacher is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations,
without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Emory University is committed under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to providing appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the professor with an accommodation notification letter from Access, Disabilities Services and Resources office. Students are expected to give notice of the need for accommodations by January 21. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with the professor as soon as your accommodations have been finalized.

**Availability of Readings**

The readings for this class include articles on e-reserve as well as books I have ordered for purchase. Electronic copies of the journal articles are available on Blackboard. I have also placed on reserve at the library copies of the books ordered for purchase.

The following books have been ordered for purchase at the Emory Bookstore.

University of Chicago Press.
ISBN: 9780226012742

Princeton University Press.
ISBN: 9780691136639

University of Michigan Press.
ISBN: 0472069683

Basic Books.
ISBN: 0465007856
Class Schedule and Readings

Jan. 12: Overview and Logistics

Part I: Institutions
Political Parties
Jan. 14: Review of origins, organization, campaign functions
  • John Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chapter 2

Jan. 19: Distributive functions
Role of political parties in distributive politics

Jan. 21: Coattails and elections
Tools for managing parties in elections
  • John Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chapter 6

Jan. 26: Legislative functions, discipline and coherence
Tools for managing parties, leadership, legislation
  • John Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chapter 7

Interest Groups
Jan. 28: The collective action problem
Overview of problem, role of interest groups in society

Feb. 2: Campaign Contributions and Lobbying

Feb. 4:
Interest Groups and their Effect on Policy
Media

Feb. 9: Media Slant
Measuring the political slant of media outlets and understanding the causes of slant

Feb. 11: Media Choice and Polarization

Feb. 16: Accountability
Role of media in oversight, popular control of government

Bureaucracy

Feb. 18: Functions and Organization

Paper 1 Due

Feb. 23: Delegation

Feb. 25: Information

March 1: Midterm Review

March 3: Midterm

Part II: Interactions
Separation of Powers
March 15: Normative issues in SOP and executive appointments
- Federalist Papers #27, 40, 51, 69.
March 17: Gridlock

Federalism:
March 22: Division of powers between states and federal government and laboratories of democracy
- Federalist Paper #17

March 24: Interstate relations
Cooperation and conflict among states, race to the bottom, federal "tournaments"
- Andrew Karch. Democratic Laboratories: Policy Diffusion Among the American States. Chapters 4-5.

March 29: Competing Perspectives on Policy Diffusion

March 31: Federalism and Elections

Part III: Representation

April 5: Districting and Descriptive vs. Substantive Representation

April 7: No class due to conference

April 12: Evaluation of representation
- Larry Bartels. Unequal Democracy. Chapter 1-4
April 14: Evaluation of representation
- Larry Bartels. Unequal Democracy. Chapter 5-7

Policy Studies
April 19: Paper 2 Due

Education Policy: Vouchers and Accountability Systems

April 21: Education Policy: Teachers, Unions, and Labor Policies

Tuesday, May 3 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m: Final Exam