

PSCI 110-001: American Government

Winter 2019 – Face-to-face Edition
Drexel University

Monday and Wednesday, 6:00-7:50 PM
Academic Building, Room 215

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Appointments: <https://jacksantucci.acuityscheduling.com>

1 Overview & goals

This course gives a standard introduction to the scientific analysis of American politics. We will use the best available textbook, which argues that American politics can be understood as a series of “collective dilemmas.” I will add to that argument: American politics is mostly a conflict between two elite-led coalitions. When this course is over, you will:

- Know more facts about American political institutions, politicians’ behavior, and the beliefs and actions of everyday people in politics;
- See how those beliefs and behaviors amount to a whole, which we might call a “political system”;
- Be able to analyze current events the way a political scientist would;
- Be ready for more specialized courses in American and/or comparative politics;
- Have gotten practice improving your writing.

2 Things to buy

Please purchase the following, available from the Drexel bookstore and elsewhere. Norton sells access (\$45) to an eBook version: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/aps3>.

- Kollman, Ken. 2017. *The American Political System (Core 3rd Edition)*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company.

3 Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following components.

1. Attendance (10%) – Come to class daily. Exams will test knowledge of readings *and* lectures. Reading the textbook will give you just part of the story.

2. Discussion questions (10%) – On Blackboard, post two good statements or questions that react to the reading for a given class session. Do this ten times in the quarter. It must be clear from your post that you read the material. Posts are due at noon on the date of the respective class. I use these posts to improve my lectures (i.e., learn what confuses or interests you) and create opportunities for participation beyond just talking in class.
3. Midterm exam (40%) – A combination of short-answer and essay-length prompts. This will be closed-book and written in class. You must write legibly and in complete sentences. For guidelines on how I grade essay-length prompts, see “How to get an ‘A’” on this page: <https://bit.ly/2s7wTPS>.
4. Final exam (40%) – Details forthcoming, based on our progress as a group. It will be cumulative. It may combine short-answer and essay-length prompts. It may be in-person or take-home. For guidelines on how I grade essay-length prompts, see “How to get an ‘A’” on this page: <https://bit.ly/2s7wTPS>.

4 Other policies

You agree to:

1. Treat guest speakers and classmates with respect.
2. Check Drexel email daily through the date of the final exam.
3. Attend class and meet course deadlines *except in documented cases of bereavement, severe illness, or medical emergency*. You must provide a doctor’s note or funeral announcement if you cannot meet a deadline and/or attend a class meeting. Out-of-class written work loses five points for each 24-hour period past the time and date it is due.
4. Use Internet search or a dictionary to look up words you do not understand.
5. Abide by all other Drexel policies, found at the following websites. Note: I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software.
 - Academic integrity: http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic_dishonesty.asp
 - Disability accommodation: <http://drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/students/>
 - Add/Drop: <http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-add-drop>
 - Course withdrawal: <http://drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-withdrawal>

I agree to:

1. Abide by any grading guidelines in this syllabus and related instructions for assignments. Grading is on the 0-100 scale: 97 and up (A+), 93-96 (A), 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-87 (B), 80-82 (B-), and so on, down to 50 (F).
2. Answer student e-mail within 48 business hours. Business hours are 9 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, non-holiday.

3. Except for the required books, post links to readings on Blackboard, if not the readings themselves.
4. Grade written work within 10 business days of submission.
5. Notify you of changes to this syllabus at least one week in advance of affected due dates.
6. Give office hours on a by-appointment basis. (See link above.) Students who are not in Philadelphia can book these times for phone conversations.

5 Schedule of work

5.1 Basic rules of the game

January 7 This syllabus.

January 9 “Introduction” in Kollman.

January 14 “The Constitution” in Kollman.

January 16 “Federalism” in Kollman.

5.2 Who plays the game?

January 23 “Interest Groups and Social Movements” in Kollman.

January 28 “Political Parties” in Kollman.

January 30 Midterm exam.

5.3 How the players alter the game

February 4 “Congress” in Kollman.

February 6 “The Presidency” in Kollman.

February 11 “The Bureaucracy” in Kollman.

February 13 “The Judiciary” in Kollman.

5.4 The role of everyday people

February 18 “Political Participation” in Kollman.

February 20 “Public Opinion” in Kollman.

February 25 “Mass Media and the Press” in Kollman.

February 27 “Elections and Campaigns” in Kollman.

5.5 Policy outcomes

March 4 “Economic Policy” in Kollman.

March 6 “Social Policy” in Kollman.

March 11 Topic of current interest, to be determined.

March 13 Review in class for final exam.