

Political Science 101H—Introduction to American Politics

Fall 2009

Marek Steedman
Office: 413 Arts and Letters
Office Hours: TTH 2:30-4:30
When: TTH 11am-12:15pm
Where: IC 318

Office phone: 6-4941
E-mail: Marek.Steedman@usm.edu

Goals

This course explores the meaning of freedom in twenty-first century America. Before the Constitution was even a glint in Madison's eye, Americans fought over what it meant to be free, and how best to preserve that freedom. Americans mostly agreed that only republican government could do the trick—but what did that mean? In the first decade of this century two great debates have raged: is there a conflict between preserving freedom and maintaining external security? And is their conflict between individual freedom and a strong role for the state in providing for the welfare of the people? In this class we will take both of these questions seriously, evaluating the possible answers, as well as the ability of the Constitutional framework to give satisfactory answers.

Contacting Me Outside Class

You should feel very free to come to office hours to talk about the course. I will also be in my office a fair amount – you'll generally find my door open if I'm there. The office hours listed above are simply designated hours I will be in the office to answer questions related to this course – if they don't work for you, feel free to make an appointment. Email is a very good way to get in contact with me and ask questions.

Structure

Though I will lecture, I also see the classroom as a space for active learning – class discussion will be an important element of the course, therefore. For this to work, you must have read the assigned text before coming to class. I will provide background information and starting places for discussion, where necessary, but you should be prepared with your own thoughts and reactions (however provisional).

Books

The following books have been ordered and should be at the Bookstore.

Cal Jillson, *American Government: Political Development and Institutional Change* (5th edition)

Lance T. LeLoup and Steven Shull, *The President and Congress: Collaboration and Combat in National Policymaking* (2nd edition)

Richard Conley, ed., *Transforming the American Polity: The Presidency of George W. Bush and the War on Terrorism*

Supplementary readings are available online.

Requirements

Participation: Participation accounts for 10% of your total grade. Being an active participant involves asking questions and talking, but also listening and responding, in a respectful way, to others. It is

important to note, however, that you are not being graded on the frequency of your participation alone, but also the quality of your contribution to the class discussion.

Students are required to read online in at least *one* of the following news sources on a *daily* basis: [New York Times](#), [McClatchy](#), [Chicago Tribune](#), [Wall Street Journal](#). Other sources may be used with my approval: but they must be primarily daily news organizations, and must **not** be websites of television or cable outlets, or of magazines, or part of the liberal or conservative “blogosphere.” Each student must submit, during the course of the term, 10 articles printed from that news source, along with a *brief* typed paragraph stating why the article is relevant to the course.

Written Assignments:

(1) Exams. There will be two written exams—an in-class midterm, and a final.

(2) Short Paper. Hayek and Polanyi have very different ideas about freedom in an industrial society. Write a short response (3-4pp) in which you (a) briefly explain their views, and (b) suggest which you find most persuasive, and why.

(3) Paper. Each student will write a 6-7pp paper. The paper will be due in class, Thursday December 3rd. In this class we consider two potential threats to freedom: the garrison-police state, and the bureaucratic state. Choose one of these. Write a paper in which you evaluate the challenge posed to freedom in the United States. How real is the threat? To what extent does the Constitution protect against the threat? Could it be that what looks to some people like a threat to freedom is actually necessary to *protect* that freedom? Your paper should draw on concrete examples from the course material. The paper should be typed, double-spaced in a 12-point font, and carefully edited and proofread. The essay should be very attentive to the texts and problems you are asked to address. The use of secondary sources (those not on the syllabus) is neither necessary nor desirable, but if you do use them the following is a useful definition of plagiarism:

“plagiarism: submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.” (University of Michigan, LS&A Bulletin, Chapter IV, <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/lsa/cg/bulletin/chap4/conduct/>, accessed September 10, 2003).

Plagiarism or other cheating will result in an automatic failing grade. If you have *any* questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or about other aspects of academic integrity, please ask! A useful resource is the Student Handbook, pp.49-50:

<http://www.usm.edu/union/studenthandbook.pdf>). We will talk more about this.

Trip to Washington D.C.: Over the fall break we will take a trip to Washington D.C.. We will meet with representatives, visit Washington landmarks, and explore the political landscape of the city. The trip is a **mandatory part of the course**. When you register for the course you are committing yourself to taking this trip. Exceptions will **not** be made – please be sure to arrange your work and course schedule accordingly at the start of the term.

Grading Standards: All assignments, tests, and essays will be evaluated on the following basis:

- Clarity:** Is it written clearly? Do you use examples and illustrations?
Accuracy: Can you support your argument with quotes from the text?
Precision: Is your argument specific and detailed?
Relevance: Does your discussion relate to the questions asked? Do you draw on relevant class lectures and readings?
Depth: Do you deal with the complexity of the issue you are discussing?
Logic: Does the paper/essay make sense?

Grade scale:

12	high A
11	A
10	low A
9	high B
8	B
7	low B
6	high C
5	C
4	low C
3	high D
2	D
1	low D
0	F

All exams, papers, and quizzes will be returned with a number marked between 0 and 12. This is your grade for this assignment. In calculating your final grade I consider whether your work for the semester has been consistently in the low or high end of the letter grade range.

Grading

Participation	10%
Newspaper article (10)	5%
Short Paper	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Paper	20%
Final Exam	30%

Calendar

Week 1

Thurs. 8/20 Introduction

Week 2

Freedom in a Complex Society

Tues. 8/25 Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 1

Thurs. 8/27 Harold D. Lasswell, "Does the Garrison State Threaten Civil Rights?"

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1028198>

Week 3

Tues. 9/1 F.A. Hayek, "The Road to Serfdom"

<http://www.iea.org.uk/files/upld-book351pdf?.pdf>

Thurs. 9/3 Karl Polanyi, "Freedom in a Complex Society"

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/southernmiss/docDetail.action?docID=10014733&page=299&p00=karl%20polanyi>

Week 4

Freedom and the Constitution

Tues. 9/8 Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 2

Thurs. 9/10 "The Declaration of Independence," "The Articles of the Confederation," and "Constitution of the United States" in Jillson, *American Government*

Short Paper Due

Week 5

Tues. 9/15

Federalist 10 and 51 in Jillson, *American Government*

Thurs. 9/17

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 3

Week 6

Freedom and Institutional Conflict

Tues. 9/22

LeLoup and Shull, *The President and Congress*, chs. 1 and 2

Thurs. 9/24

LeLoup and Shull, *The President and Congress*, chs. 3 and 4

Week 7

Case Study in Freedom I: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Tues. 9/29

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 13

Thurs. 10/1

LeLoup and Shull, *The President and Congress*, ch. 6

Conley, *Transforming the American Polity*, chs. 1 and 6

Week 8

Tues. 10/6

Conley, *Transforming the American Polity*, chs. 7, 8, and 9

Thurs. 10/8

Fall Break—Trip to DC

Week 9

Tues. 10/13

Debriefing/Review Day

Thurs. 10/15

Midterm Exam

Week 10

Freedom and Democracy

Tues. 10/20

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 4

Thurs. 10/22

No Class

Week 11

Tues. 10/27

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 5

Thurs. 10/29

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 6

Week 12

Tues. 11/3

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 7

Thurs. 11/5

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 8

Week 13

Governing a Complex Society

Tues. 11/10

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 9

Thurs. 11/12

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 10

Week 14

Tues. 11/17

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 11

Thurs. 11/19

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 12

Week 15

Case Study in Freedom II: State and Economy

Tues. 11/24

Jillson, *American Government*, chapter 14

Thurs. 11/26

LeLoup and Shull, *The President and Congress*, ch. 7

Thanksgiving Break

Week 16

Tues. 12/1

LeLoup and Shull, *The President and Congress*, ch. 8

Thurs. 12/3

Conclusion/Review Day

Final Paper Due

12/8

FINAL EXAM 10:45am-1:15pm