

# Introduction to American Government

Government 30

Spring Term 2006

Daniel Carpenter

Department of Government

Harvard University

## Office Hours & All Student Meetings:

CGIS Café (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), Thursdays, 1pm to 5pm

**e-mail:** [dcarpenter@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:dcarpenter@gov.harvard.edu)

Course Description: An introduction to national institutions and political processes of American Government. Topics to be covered include American constitutionalism, American political culture, civil rights and civil liberties, bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups, the media, and the policy process.

This course surveys the general institutions and cultural underpinnings of American government. These structures of American government shape our policy and our political experience. Throughout the semester we will attempt to answer several core questions concerning American government. What are the critical institutions of American government and how do they shape our political life? What is the nature of American political culture and how does it affect our politics? How did we get the rights, institutions and culture we have today - restraint of governmental power, the two party system, congressional seniority, affirmative action, interest groups, the welfare state, the regulatory state? How can we account for political change? And how can attention to the history and causal processes of American government help us to understand the dilemmas now facing the American political system?

## Format:

The course is divided into five modules, as follows.

1. Constitutionalism, American Political Traditions, and the Logic of Political Life
2. American Politics: Opinions, Interests, and Organizations
3. American Government: National Institutions
4. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in America

## 5. American Politics, Government, and Public Policy

Requirements: *Students should read all scheduled materials and be prepared to discuss them in class or in the section session.* For all writing requirements, all students should be familiar with *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White. This small book will function as the standard for proper grammar and style for writing assignments in this course. Flawless grammar and correct spelling are minimum requirements for acceptable papers.

(1) Participation and Discussion Papers: Students are expected to maintain pace with class readings (one or two book chapters or articles per lecture, or about 80-100 pages per week) and to participate actively in class and GSI discussion. Four times during the semester students will submit a paper before a discussion section (2-3 pages). In these papers you may either (1) assess the class readings critically, or (2) ask how contemporary American politics has been influenced by the developments studied. Participation and the papers will account for 70 percent of your grade.

IMPORTANT: Punctuality in the completion and submission of discussion papers is essential. One-third of a grade is subtracted for every day late. That is, if a paper is one day late, the highest grade it can receive is an A-. If two days late, a B+, and so on.

(2) Midterm Examination: Covering the first two modules in the course, this examination will count for 10 percent of your grade

(3) Final Examination or Final Paper: Covering the entire class, this examination will account for 20 percent of your grade.

### Readings:

The course is designed so that you will read two (sometimes three) book chapters or article for each class lecture. The following books will comprise the principal texts used during the quarter. There is no coursepack and no reserve list, unless your TFs and I decide to supplement the syllabus with a few readings. Those marked with an asterisk ("\*") are available at the Coop.

\* Al, John and Jim. *The Federalist Papers* (Rossiter Edition).

\* Kernell, Samuel and Steven Smith, editors. *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Washington, D.C. CQ Press). [“**K&S**”]

\* Kernell, Samuel and Gary C. Jacobson. [“**K&J**”] *The Logic of American Politics* (Washington, D.C. CQ Press).

\* Shafritz, Jay M., and Lee S. Weinberg. [“**S&W**”] *Classics in American Government*, Second Edition (New York; Harcourt Brace, 2000)

\* Riker, William. *The Art of Political Manipulation*

\* Kingdon, John. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*.

\* McCullough, David. *John Adams*.

Optional: Waldman, Steven. *The Bill; How Legislation Really Becomes Law: A Case Study of the National Service Bill*, (New York; Penguin USA Books). David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, editors. [“**CCM**”] *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics* (New York: Norton).

Course Schedule: ("#" denotes a required reading. "R" denotes reserve reading. "K" denotes packet reading.)

## I. CONSTITUTIONALISM AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION

**Lecture 1 (Wednesday, February 1): Introductory lecture and information about the class.**

**Lecture 2 (Monday, February 6): Introduction to American Constitutionalism.**

# The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution (K&J, or the Web).

# *The Federalist*; Rossiter's Introduction and Nos. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 14-16, 51.

# John P. Roche, "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action," K&S, pp. 47-70.

# James MacGregor Burns, "Showdown: The Election of 1800," K&S, pp. 85-92.

James Madison Explains the Constitution to Thomas Jefferson, Chapter 2-1 (pp. 60-71) in K&S.

Background: K&J, Chapter 2.

**Lecture 3 (Wednesday, February 8): The Federalists versus the Anti-Federalists.**

Background: The un-amended U.S. Constitution, re-read (K&J, pp. 500-505).

# *The Federalist*; re-read Nos. 1, 6, 10, 51; read nos. 23, 35, 37, 39, 45, 47, 48, 55, 57, 62, 63, 68, 70, 84, 85.

# Robert Yates, *Letters of Brutus*, On the Web (one place to look is the [Constitution Society's collected letters of Brutus](#)). Read letters [1](#) and [2](#).

# Charles A. Beard, "An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution," S&W, pp. 56-67.

# Thurgood Marshall, "An African American's Perspective on the Constitution," S&W, pp. 39-44.

Optional: William Riker, Trading Votes at the Constitutional Convention, Chapter 2-2 (pp. 72-83) in K&S

**Lectures 4 & 5 (Monday, February 13 and Wednesday, February 15): Why a Constitution? Why Politics? Some Concepts for the Study of Politics and Constitutions**

Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, selections.

Riker, *The Art of Political Manipulation*, selections.

# Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, p. 2 ff. in K&S.

# Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," Chapter 1-2 (pp. 12-25) in K&S.

# Douglas Jehl, "Arkansas Rice Farmers Run Dry, and U.S. Remedy Sets Off Debate," Chapter 1-3 (pp. 25-28) in K&S.

# Robert D. Putnam, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life," Chapter 1-4 (pp. 29-38) in K&S.

# *The Federalist*, review Nos. 1, 10, 51; **read Nos. 4, 25, 30. NEW!**

Optional: Kenneth A. Shepsle and Mark S. Boncheck, *Analyzing Politics*.

Background: K&J, Chapter 1

**\*\*\* (Thursday, February 16) Topics for First Discussion Papers distributed. Papers (2-3 pages) are due Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 9AM, by e-mail to your TF.**

**Monday, February 20: University Holiday (President's Day)**

**Lectures 6 & 7 (Wednesday, February 22 and part of Monday, February 27): Federalism: Protector or Enemy of Liberty?**

Background: K&J, Chapter 3

**Theme for Lecture 6: The Political and Constitutional Logic of Federalism**

# *The Federalist*, re-read Nos. 1, 9, 10, 14, 16, 23, 37, 39, 45; read Nos. 17, 31, 36, 40, 43, 44, 59, 80, 82.

# James M. Buchanan, "Federalism as an Ideal Political Order and an Objective for Constitutional Reform," Chapter 3-1, K&S

# James Bryce, "Dual Federalism," S&W.

# Morton Grodzins, "Marble-Cake Federalism," S&W.

Optional: Paul Peterson, excerpt from *The Price of Federalism*, CCM, 73-82. Samuel Beer, "The Rediscovery of American Federalism."

**Theme for Lecture 7: The Historical Development and Contemporary Operation of Federalism**

# Thomas Jefferson, *Kentucky Resolve*, on the Web at the [Constitution Society](#).

# *McCulloch v Maryland*, S&W, pp. 49-55.

# Daniel Webster, *Reply to Hayne*, on the Web at [Dartmouth's Webster site](#).

# Theodore Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism*, on the Web at the [USIA site](#) or at [Texas A&M's Presidential Rhetoric site](#).

# Ronald Reagan, *Inaugural Address* (1981), on the Web at [Yale's Avalon Project site](#).

# Donald F. Kettl, "Federalism: Battles on the Front Lines of Public Policy," Chapter 3-2, K&S.

# Matthew L. Wald, "Clean-Air Battlefield," Chapter 3-3, K&S.

## Lecture 8 (Monday, February 27): American Political Culture.

# Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," S&W.

# Murray Edelman, "Political Symbols," S&W.

# Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." See also "*I Have a Dream*" Speech, on the Web at [Northwestern's DOUGLASS site](#).

# Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*, on the Web at [University of Indiana's site](#).

# Rogers Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* [E].

Louis Hartz, "The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution," CCM, 3-9.

Gordon Wood, excerpts from *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, CCM, 9-17.

Optional: DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Author's Introduction, and Book One, Chapters 3-5, 10, 14 & 15 (pp. 26-38, 55-61, 95-100, 128-42 in Penguin edition)

## II. AMERICAN POLITICS: OPINIONS, INTERESTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

### Lecture 9 & 10 (Wednesday, March 1 & Monday, March 6): Public Opinion and Political Participation. Has America been going left, right, center, or nowhere? Race and gender as forces in American politics.

# Herbert Asher, "Analyzing and Interpreting Polls," Chapter 10-1 in K&S.

# Stimson, MacKuen and Erikson, "Dynamic Representation," Chapter 10-2 in K&S.

# John R. Hibbing, "The People's Craving for Unselfish Government," Chapter 10-3, K&S.

Optional DeTocqueville on associationalism in *Democracy in America*; re-read Book One, Chapter 10 ("Political Associations in the United States"); read Book Two, Chapters 27-31 (pp. 192-208). Richard Morin (*Washington Post*), "Choice Words: If You Can't Understand Our Poll Questions, Then How can We Understand Your Answers?" CCM, 301-306.

# V.O. Key, Jr., "Leaders Mold and Influence Public Opinion," S&W, pp. 156-160.

Background, K&J, Chapter 10.

### Lectures 11 & 12 (Wednesday, March 8 & Monday, March 13): Political Parties: Why do they exist? Are they dead or dying? How, if at all, have they mattered?

# *The Federalist*, No 10; read Nos. 26, 49, 81, 85.

# John Aldrich, selection from *Why Parties?* Chapter 12-1 in K&S.

# Larry M. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996," Chapter 12-2 in K&S. Background, K&J, Chapter 12.

# William L. Riordan [George Washington Plunkitt], *Holding Your District*, S&W, pp. 215-218.

# Harold Gosnell, "Urban Political Machines," S&W, pp. 174-180.

# Maurice Duverger, "The Electoral Basis of the Two-Party System," S&W, pp. 197-202.

Optional: DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Book One, Chapter 8 (pp. 87-91 in Penguin/Mentor edition).

**\*\*\* (Wednesday, March 8) Topics for Second Discussion Papers (2-3 pages) distributed. Papers are due Friday, March 17, 5PM, at a location to be determined by your GSI.**

**Lectures 12 & 13 (Wednesday, March 15 & Monday, March 20): Political Campaigns and Elections.**

Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, selections.

Riker, *The Art of Political Manipulation*, selections.

# Samuel L. Popkin, selection from *The Reasoning Voter*, Chapter 11-1 in K&S.

# Gary C. Jacobson, "Party Polarization in National Politics: The Electoral Connection," Chapter 11-3 in K&S.

# Walter Dean Burnham, "Critical Realignment Elections," S&W, pp. 223-226.

# Kevin Phillips, "The Emerging Republican Majority," S&W, pp. 206-211.

**Themes: the Election of 1912, the Election of 1992, and the Elections of 2000 and 2004.**

Background: K&J, Chapter 11. Optional: Waldman, *The Bill*, Chapter 1, "The Anatomy of a Campaign Promise."

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION: (Wednesday, March 22).**

**III. AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Lectures 14 & 15: (Monday, April 3 & Wednesday, April 5): Congress.**

# *The Federalist*, re-read Nos. 23, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51, 55, 59, 62, 63, 65, 66, 69, 81; read Nos. 24, 26, 29-34, 41, 46, 49, 50, 52-54, 57, 58, 60, 61, 64.

# Richard F. Fenno, Jr, "The Senate in Bicameral Perspective," Chapter 6-1 in K&S

# David R. Mayhew, selection from *Congress: The Electoral Connection* Chapter 6-2 in K&S.

# Steven Smith, "Congressional Trends," Chapter 6-3 in K&S.

Background: K&J, Chapter 6.

Optional: Waldman, *The Bill*, rest of book.

Questions to be addressed:

- Why does Congress operate by committee? In fact, why does Congress organize itself in the way that it does? Stanford's [Keith Krehbiel](#) has done some of the best thinking on this problem.
- How do members of Congress vote? Is it all ideology, as Princeton's Howard Rosenthal and Houston's [Keith Poole](#) think? they've developed a set of methods called **NOMINATE** that tries to numerically estimate legislators' ideology using their recorded roll-call votes.
- Why might participation in Congress matter as much as voting? U-M's [Rick Hall](#) might help us here.
- Do committees alter policy, and how?
- Do congressional parties control all the relevant outcomes?
- How important is it to be in the congressional majority if you want to be heard, or if you want to change policy or law?
- Who controls Congress, or does anyone for that matter?

**\*\*\* (Monday, April 10): Topics for Third Discussion Papers distributed, due Friday, April 21, at a location to be determined by your TF.**

**Lectures 16 & 17 (Monday, April 10 & Wednesday, April 12): The Presidency.**

# *The Federalist*, re-read Nos. 64, 68-71, 76; read Nos 38, 67, 72-75.

Background: K&J, Chapter 7.

# Richard E. Neustadt, selection from *Presidential Power*, Chapter 7-1 in K&S.

# Samuel Kernell, selection from *Going Public*, Chapter 7-2 in K&S

# Elizabeth Bumiller, David E. Sanger, and Richard W. Stevenson, "How 3 Weeks of War in Iraq Looked from the Oval Office," Chapter 7-3 in K&S.

# Aaron Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies," S&W, pp. 329-343.

# Abraham Lincoln, "The Prereogative Theory of the Presidency," S&W, pp. 318-320.

# Theodore Roosevelt, "The Stewardship Theory of the Presidency," S&W, pp. 320-322.

# William Howard Taft, "The Literalist Theory of the Presidency," S&W, pp. 322-325.

**Lecture 18 (Monday, April 17) and Lecture 19 (Wednesday, April 19): The Bureaucracy, and presidential-congressional and bureaucratic-congressional relations. Who controls whom?**

# James Q. Wilson, selection from *Bureaucracy*, chapter 8-1 in K&S

# Terry M. Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure," Chapter 8-2 in K&S.

# Max Weber, "The Nature of Bureaucracy," S&W, pp. 388-91.

# Michael Lipsky, "Street-Level Bureaucrats," S&W, pp. 401-412.

# Ivo Daalder et al, "Assessing the Department of Homeland Security," Chapter 8-3 in K&S.

# Daniel Carpenter, "The Political Economy of FDA Drug Approval

Background: K&J, Chapter 8.

Optional: Waldman, *The Bill*, Chapters 6-11.

**Lecture 20 (Monday, April 24): Interest Groups: Have the "mischiefs of faction" been cured, or have they worsened?**

# *The Federalist*, re-read No. 10.

# E. E. Schattschneider, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System," Chapter 13-1 in K&S.

# David Truman, "Defending Pluralist Politics," S&W, pp. 254-59.

# John R. Wright, "The Evolution of Interest Groups," Chapter 13-2 in K&S.

# R. Kenneth Godwin and Barry J. Seldon, "What Corporations Really Want from Government," Chapter 13-3 in K&S.

Background: K&J, Chapter 13.

**Lecture 24 (Wednesday, April 26): The Media: Cynicism, Bias, Agendas.**

Daniel J. Boorstin, "Pseudo-Events," S&W, pp. 277-283.

Michael Schudson, "Is Journalism Hopelessly Cynical?" Chapter 14-1 in K&S

Thomas B. Edsall, "The People and the Press: Whose Views Shape the News?" Chapter 14-2 in K&S.

Scott L. Althaus, "American News Consumption during Times of National Crisis," Chapter 14-3 in K&S.

Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, selections.

Background: K&J, Chapter 14.

Optional: Jonathan Last, "The Not-so-Swift Mainstream Media," CCM, 306-311. Robert J. Bresler, "Media Bias and the Culture Wars," CCM, 312-14. Howard A. Myrick, "The Search for Objectivity in Journalism," CCM, 314-320. Brent Cunningham, "Rethinking Objective Journalism," CCM, 320 ff.

Waldman, *The Bill*, Chapters 2-5.

Questions that we'll address:

- Does the media really affect public opinion, and if so, does it do so in a way that affects electoral outcomes, or even law and policy?
- How might [Reverend Bayes](#) (with some help from [Larry Bartels](#)) help us understand this?
- Is the media liberal? Is the media conservative? Might the media be “both”? What sort of evidence might we use to address this question?

**Lectures 22 & 23 (Monday, May 1 and Wednesday, May 3): The Judiciary: Should courts find or make law? Or is there something in between that constitutes “jurisprudence”?**

# *The Federalist*, re-read Nos. 52, 78, 80-82; read Nos. 79, 83

# Lee Epstein and Jack Knight, selection from *The Choices Justices Make*, chapter 9-1 in K&S

# Simon Lazarus, “The Most Dangerous Branch?” Chapter 9-2 in K&S.

# Deborah Sontag, “the Power of the Fourth,” Chapter 9-4 in K&S.

# Eugene Rostow, “The Democratic Character of Judicial Review,” S&W, pp. 374-378.

# Marbury v. Madison, S&W, pp. 366-372.

# Gibbons v. Ogden, S&W, pp. 55-60.

Optional: DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Book One, chapter 6, “Judicial Power in the United States,” pp. 72-77 of the Penguin edition.

Background: K&J, Chapter 9.

**\*\*\* Wednesday, May 3: Fourth Discussion Paper Topics distributed. Due Friday, May 12, at a location to be determined by your GSI.**

ALTERNATIVE MODULE:

CIVIL RIGHTS, CIVIL LIBERTIES AND POLICY IN AMERICA

**Lecture 1: Civil Liberties: Just how free ought a free society to be?**

# *The Federalist*, re-read Nos. 1, 26, 37, 52.

Background: K&J, Chapter 5.

# Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty, [available on the Web at the USIA's site](#).

# Elizabeth Cady Stanton, The Seneca Falls Declaration, [on the Web at Kansas University's site](#).

# [Schenck v. U.S.](#), [WV State Board of Education v. Barnette](#), [Engel v. Vitale](#), all on the Web.

# [Gitlow v. New York](#), [Gideon v. Wainwright](#), [Roe v. Wade](#), [Miranda v. Arizona](#), [Webster v. Reproductive Health Services](#); [Mapp v. Ohio](#); [Griswold v. Connecticut](#); all in S&W.

## **Lecture 2: Civil Rights: Whose rights ought to be protected, when, how?**

Background: K&J, Chapter 4.

# Martin Luther King, Jr. *"I Have A Dream" Speech*, re-read.

# Standing Bear, *The Land Was Owned by Our Tribe*, Young, pp. 96 ff.

# The Civil Rights Act of 1964, see the [summary on the Web at Congress Link](#).

# The Americans with Disabilities Act, see the [summary on the Web at West Virginia University's site](#).

# [Plessy v. Ferguson](#), [Brown v. Board of Education](#), [Baker v. Carr](#), all in S&W.

[Regents v. Bakke](#), available on the Web at [tourolaw](#). Also, [Gratz v. Bollinger](#) and recent Michigan affirmative action cases.

[Bowers v. Hardwick](#), available on the Web at [Bowdoin's Supreme Court decisions site](#)

## **Lecture 3: Concluding Lecture: Regulation and Welfare. Why does government step in to the fray? And what happens when it does?**