POLI 201 American National Government
Department of Political Science
University of South Carolina
Fall 2022
Carolina Core: GSS and VSR

Course Overview

Academic Bulletin Description
The formation and development of the national government, its organization and powers.

Course Description
This course is an introduction to the formation and development of U.S. national government, its politics, organization, powers, and citizenship practices. We will apply basic political science methodology as we survey and analyze many of the fundamental ideals, institutions, and outcomes of the American national government towards the end of assessing the health of American democracy and citizenship. We will examine elements of American politics including the founding era, federalism and separation of powers, civil rights and civil liberties, elections, voting, and political participation, various mediating groups (i.e. interest groups, political parties, the media), the main political institutions (Congress, the courts, the president) and public opinion. Students will be expected to learn various descriptive facts about American politics; to employ theoretical frameworks from political science and related disciplines such as economics and psychology to explain political phenomena; and to consider alternative interpretations of the ways politics works in practice as well as the influence of cultural diversity on contemporary political issues. Moreover, students will consider the source and relevance of values in decision making with respect to the resolution of political conflict and controversies.

Courses are dynamic arrangements and I reserve the right to change this syllabus at my discretion at any point during the semester.

COVID Protocols
The situation with the COVID pandemic is ongoing and evolving and will require both faculty and students to remain flexible throughout the semester. Class modality decisions were made by the University administration and are no longer the decision of each individual faculty member. We will be in person this semester, and attendance will be required. Further, the University has announced that any modality changes (going online, for example) will occur either as a response to a COVID positive cluster within a class (30%+ of students infected), resulting in a temporary shift, or as a result of a University move to shift all classes to online modalities. Expect to be in class and the course attendance policy will be enforced.

Classroom mask requirements will always reflect the University policy.

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course

Learning Goals
Official Goals
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Express an informed opinion about the health of the American democracy and citizenship based the upon the various social and political science theories and analytical methodologies we examine in class;
- Define and explain not only the broad principles, ideals, and ethical values, but also the debates and compromises that accompanied the founding of the American republic and that still often animate its politics, including the role of cultural diversity;
- Explain and analyze the logic of the American constitutional system, as envisioned by its framers, as well as the tensions and shortcomings of that system, and its relationship to social well-being and the resolution of conflict;
- Explain and analyze the internal dynamics and interplay of the three main branches of the U.S. government and the questions of separated authority, check-and-balance, and accountability that still exist;
- Demonstrate understanding of what shapes American citizenship and participation and the various processes, barriers, opportunities, institutions, and mediating groups that have helped or hindered equity and democratic responsiveness.

My Goal for the Course
- Learn to effectively participate in American politics by navigating our existing political institutions with the goal of effecting change and making your voice heard!

Course Materials
Readings
There is only one required textbook for this course:
   Theodore Lowi et al., American Government: Power and Purpose – Core edition
You can use either edition:
- 16th Edition
  - E-Text ISBN: 978-0-393-53893-9
  - Paperback ISBN: 978-0-393-53894-6
- 15th Edition
  - E-Text ISBN: 978-0-393-67503-0
  - Paper-Text ISBN: 978-0-393-67500-9
- 14th Edition
  - Paper-Text ISBN: 978-0-393-67500-9 978-0-393-28376-1

Note that an e-book version of Lowi et al. is available from the publisher for $40.00 (www.wwnorton.com).

In addition to the required textbook reading, there are additionally scholarly articles designed to engage you in active research within the discipline of political science. All of these readings can be found on Blackboard. Students should view lectures after having read the assigned readings for that section of the course. This approach will greatly help with understanding the material in class.

Materials- iClickers
This class will make use of iclickers throughout the semester. Students are expected to purchase and register an iclicker with the University and bring iclickers to each class. As attendance will be taking using iclicker responses, **it is considered a breach of Academic Integrity to bring and use fellow classmates' iclickers in class and will be reported as such.**

Software
Required access to online platform: Packback Questions: ISBN- 978-0-692-09460-0. Cost $25 (on website).

Packback Questions is an online discussion platform powered by artificial intelligence. This platform is specifically designed to encourage curiosity and increase critical thinking & writing skills. On Packback, students will be required to apply reading and lecture topics to pose and respond to questions related to current issues in American politics.

How to Register on Packback: An email invitation will be sent to your email on record from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don't receive an email (be sure to check your spam, or you use a different email), you may register by following the instructions below:
- Create an account by navigating to https://questions.packback.co/login and clicking "Sign up for an Account" Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can login with your credentials.
- Then enter our class community's lookup key into the "Join a Community" module in Packback.
  Community Lookup Key:
- Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.
Packback may require a paid subscription. Refer to www.packback.co/product/pricing for more information.

Office Hours
Office hours will be held from 11:30-1:30 on Tuesdays in my office. Additional appointments will be available digitally by request.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

Requirements

Midterm Exams (2 @ 20%)

The midterms will be assigned at the end of the first two modules and will cover lectures and readings from that module.

Midterm Dates:

       Midterm Exam - 1 – **Monday, September 26**

       Midterm Exam 2 – **Monday, October 31**

Final (25%):

The final will be scheduled in accordance with university policy and will act as the exam for the third and final module. Unlike the midterms, the final will be cumulative, covering material for the entire course.

Final Date and Time: **TBD**

Packback Participation (15%):

We will be making use of the online software Packback for discussions. Packback allows students to contribute questions and respond to the questions of other students. Students are responsible for posting 1 question per module and 6 responses per module. Responses are due by the midterm for that module or by **Friday, December 2** for the final module. Questions are due at intervals during the module, as noted in the schedule. Late posts will not be accepted.

Question Due Dates:

    First Packback Question Due – **September 2**

    Second Packback Question Due – **October 7**

    Third Packback Question Due – **November 11**

Weekly Quizzes (10%):

There will be a scheduled weekly quiz for each week during the semester. **Quizzes are due by midnight on the Friday of that week and can be taken on Blackboard.** You can retake the quiz as many times as you would like during the assigned week. However, the quizzes will be graded as completed only if all of the answers are correct. There is no partial credit for the quiz. **In other words, make sure you take each quiz until you get it all correct.**

Class Attendance (10%):

Class attendance is mandatory for this course. For full credit, students must attend all lectures. Students are afforded 5 unexcused absences across the entire semester. I will provide lecture slides and will provide lecture recordings at my discretion. Students are responsible for obtaining information on missed lectures either from their peers or by attending office hours. This policy applies to classes missed due to COVID related symptoms. However, if you are sick, I encourage you to stay home.

Packback Platform

Packback and Online Discussions
Students are responsible for posting 1 question per module and 6 responses per module. All responses are due by the module midterm.

To post a Packback Question
Find a current news article from the list of online news sources (listed below) **about a subject that is related to American National Politics**. The article has to have been posted within the last 15 days.

- First, write a brief summary of the article. What is it talking about?
- Then, post a question / discussion / counterpoint, that emerges from the article. It may be something that intrigued you, or something that sparked your curiosity by reading the article. It may be some personal reflection if the article is related close to you, your lifestyle, or your hometown, etc…. It may be a view that the article did not consider but you think it is relevant. Add something to the article!
- Finish the article by posting a question that could be addressed with material from the course. The question should relate directly to your discussion of the article!

The entire paragraph (summary and question) should be at least 100 words. In addition to the word count, the paragraph should include the URL of the article, the title of the article and the original author (if available).

To post a Packback Response
You need to respond to six of your fellow students' posts during the module. You should provide thoughtful and well-developed arguments that engage with the original question and the answers posted by your peers by incorporating arguments and material from the course. You can include references from other news sites to support your point of view / response.

Grading
Grading is based on the "curiosity" points students are awarded per Packback's AI scoring system. The required points for completion are 60 "curiosity points" for your question and 60 for your answers. The Packback system will help guide you to achieve this score.

Approved online news sources

BBC	Los Angeles Times	USA Today
Bloomberg	New York Times	NPR
Fox News	Wall Street Journal	The Guardian
Washington Post	The Hill	Politico
Reuters	Associated Press	

Reminder: If the article you want to access is behind a Paywall, use the Library to gain access.

Some advice for posting
- **Use the course material to help you engage with the news.**
- **Check your partisanship at the door.** We all have opinions on the policies. The goal is not to debate the policies but to understand the politics.
- **Get some perspective.** Think like a politician, your peers, a voting constituent. How would they react to what is being said.
- **Broaden your search.** Bring in an article from a different news sources that covers the same material. Compare the frames being used and understand the motivation for those frames
- **Add something personal.** How does this relate to you and your peers?

Class Schedule

Module 1: Elected National Institutions and Checks and Balances

Introducing Political Science – Aug. 22 - Aug. 26
- Lowi et al., Ch. 1
- The Declaration of Independence (Founding Documents Requirement)
- The United States Constitution (Founding Documents Requirement)

The Constitutional System – Checks and Balances – Aug. 29 - Sept. 2
- Lowi et al., Ch. 2
- Federalist #1, #9, #10 (Founding Documents Requirement)

First Packback Question Due – September 2

*Presidency – Sept. 5 - Sept. 9 (**No Class Monday Sept. 5**)*
- Lowi et al., Ch. 7
- Emancipation Proclamation (Founding Documents Requirement)
- Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000). Politicians don't pander: Political manipulation and the loss of democratic responsiveness. University of Chicago Press. - Ch. 2

Congress – Sept. 12 - Sept. 16
- Lowi et al., Ch. 6
- Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. Setting the agenda: Responsible party government in the US House of Representatives. Cambridge University Press, 2005. – Ch. 2

Polarization – Sept. 19 – Sept. 23

- Lee, F. E. (2016). Insecure majorities: Congress and the perpetual campaign. University of Chicago Press. – Ch. 2-3

Midterm 1 – Monday, September 26 (6 Packback Responses Due)

Module 2: Public Policy and Implementation

Civil Liberties – Sept. 26 – Sept. 30
- Lowi et al., Ch. 4
- Federalist #84
- Anti-Federalist #84

Civil Rights – Oct. 3 – Oct. 7
- Lowi et al. 5
- McAdam, D. (1999). Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970. The University of Chicago Press. –Ch. 3
- Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail (Founding Documents Requirement)

Second Packback Question Due – October 7

*Federalism and the States – Oct. 10 – Oct. 14 (**No Class Friday Oct. 14**)*
- Lowi et al., - Ch. 3
- Federalist #51 (Founding Documents Requirement)

Executive Office – Oct. 17 – Oct. 21
- Lowi et al., Ch. 8
- Carpenter, Daniel P. "Groups, the media, agency waiting costs, and FDA drug approval." American Journal of Political Science (2002): 490-505.

Courts – Oct. 24 – Oct. 28
- Lowi et al., Ch. 9
- McGuire, Kevin T., and James A. Stimson. "The least dangerous branch revisited: New evidence on Supreme Court responsiveness to public preferences." The Journal of Politics 66.4 (2004): 1018-1035.

Midterm 2 – Monday, October 31 (6 Packback Responses Due)

Module 3: Public Opinion Formation and Identity

Campaigns and Elections – Oct. 31 – Nov. 4
- Lowi et al., Ch. 11
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Fabian G. Neuner, and L. Matthew Vandenbroek. 2017. "The Changing Norms of Racial Political Rhetoric and the End of Racial Priming" Journal of Politics 80(3).

Public Opinion – Nov. 7 – Nov. 11
- Lowi et al., Ch. 10
- Zaller, John R.. (1992). That Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion. Cambridge University Press. – Chapter 4

Third Packback Question Due – November 11

Parties and Partisanship – Nov. 14 – Nov. 18
- Lowi et al., Ch. 12
- Aldrich, John H. Why parties?: The origin and transformation of political parties in America. University of Chicago Press, 1995. – Ch. 2

*The Media – Nov. 21 – Nov. 25 (**No Class Wednesday Nov. 3, Friday Nov. 25**)*
- Lowi et al., Ch. 14
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics. Oxford University Press. – Ch. 2

Interest Groups – Nov. 28 – Dec. 2
- Lowi et al., Ch.13

6 Packback Responses Due Friday, December 2

Final Exam –

Course Details
Course Format
The class structure will consist of learning modules ("Course Modules"). These modules will be divided into weekly sub-modules which will include:

- A summary of that week's material, a to-do list, due dates and other notes.
- The class notes / slides in PDF format.
- Packback response submission (through the Packback Questions link).
- A weekly quiz, posted on blackboard.

Assignments for each course module will include:
- A midterm exam at the end of the module. (The final exam will occur upon completion of the final module in lieu of a midterm and will be cumulative)

General Assignment Information
- All coursework (assignments, exams, etc.) is secured in Blackboard with a username and password.

- All online tests are secured in Blackboard with a password.

Feedback on assignments
Some of the assignments are automatically graded on Blackboard, and by the Packback platform. Other assignments will be graded as soon as possible. Specific feedback will be provided as necessary through Blackboard.

Course Communication
I will be communicating with you regarding grades and assignments. If you need to get in touch with me, the best method is via email. Generally, I will reply to emails within 24 hours during the work week and will provide feedback on assignments within 72 hours.

If you are having trouble with this course or its material, you should contact me via email to discuss the issues.

Announcements will be posted to this course whenever necessary. If there is any other information I think is important, I will send it to your email address you have in Blackboard. It is your responsibility to ensure that your email account works properly in order to receive email.

Below is how you check your email address in Blackboard:
- Access blackboard.sc.edu
- Click your name on the main Blackboard navigation panel on the left
- Review your email address. By default, Blackboard uses your university-issued email address
- Your email address in Blackboard coincides with your preferred university email. If you are unsure of your preferred email, check your account (myaccount.sc.edu). For more information on setting your preferred university email, please see the How To Change Your Primary University Email Address (https://scprod.service-now.com/sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0011464) Knowledge Base article.

Module Schedule
All course deadlines are listed in Eastern Time Zone. Blackboard will record all deadlines in this time zone. If you are in a different time zone, plan accordingly.
Each week will begin on a Monday and will end on Friday.

Technology Requirements
The PowerPoint lecture presentations, links to articles, assignments, quizzes, and rubrics are located on the Blackboard site for the course. To participate in learning activities and complete assignments, you will need:
- Access to a working computer that has a current operating system with updates installed, plus speakers or headphones to hear lecture presentations (transcripts provided);

- Reliable Internet access and a USC email account;
- A current Internet browser that is compatible with Blackboard (Google Chrome is the recommended browser for Blackboard);
- Microsoft Word as your word processing program; and
- Reliable data storage for your work, such as a USB drive or Office365 OneDrive cloud storage.

If your computer does not have Microsoft Word, Office 365 ProPlus package is available to you free of charge and allows you to install Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, and Access on up to 5 PCs or Macs and Office apps on other mobile devices including tablets. Office 365 also includes unlimited cloud storage on OneDrive. To download Office 365 ProPlus, log into your student (University) email through a web browser, choose Settings (top right corner), and select software. If you have further questions or need help with the software, please contact the Service Desk (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/support/servicedesk.php).

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Minimal technical skills are needed in this course. All work in this course must be completed and submitted online through Blackboard. Therefore, you must have consistent and reliable access to a computer and the Internet. The minimal technical skills you have include the ability to:
- Organize and save electronic files;
- Use USC email and attached files;
- Check email and Blackboard daily;
- Download and upload documents;
- Locate information with a browser; and
- Use Blackboard.

Technical Support

If you have problems with your computer, technology, IT-related questions, support, including Blackboard, please contact the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) Service Desk at (803) 777-1800 or submit an online request through the Self-Service Portal (https://scprod.service-now.com/sp) or visit the Carolina Tech Zone (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/support/ctz.php). The Service Desk is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Eastern Daylight Time). If you are located in the Columbia, SC area, the Thomas Cooper Library at USC has computers for you to use in case you encounter computer issues/problems. If you are not located in the Columbia, SC area, most regional campuses and public libraries have computers for public use.

How to Get Help for the Packback Questions platform:

If you have ANY questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions

Final Notes

Honor Code

Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code. Two important components of the Honor Code:

- Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.

Your enrollment in this class signifies your willingness to accept these responsibilities and uphold the Honor Code of the University of South Carolina. Any deviation from this expectation can result in a (insert academic penalty here) and a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. You can learn more about the University's policies on academic integrity at:
https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_conduct_and_academic_integrity/index.php

Student Disability Resources

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Student Disability Resource Center: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email sasds@mailbox.sc.edu, or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center.

Diversity and Inclusion

The university is committed to a campus environment that is inclusive, safe, and respectful for all persons, and one that fully embraces the Carolinian Creed. To that end, all course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are expected at all times to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat others with dignity and respect.