

**Fall 2014**

**Time:** Fridays, 11:00 am - 1:45pm

**Location:** SSB 2175

**Instructor:** Emily Matthews Luxon

**E-mail:** eoluxon@umich.edu

**Office Hrs:** W & F 10-10:45am, SSB 2194

## **POL 101: Introduction to American Government**

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

How can we understand politics in the United States, and through it, how can we understand politics in general? While we are bombarded with stories about politics in the news, we don't always get clear analysis of why things happen the way they do. Why don't third parties seem viable in the United States? Does the President have the authority to intervene militarily in other countries around the world? Should the government tax? Why does Congress so often look like a petty squabbling mess? If we all complain about "special interests" dominating policy, why can't we get rid of them? And, if we don't like the status quo, how can we change it and what are the tradeoffs inherent in changing the way things work?

To answer these questions, students in this course will build a framework for understanding what they see in the news and in the real world, by working through the societal and personal tradeoffs inherent in political decisions. This framework will provide a series of conceptual lenses through which to understand why different actors in society — like politicians, voters, or interest groups — behave the way they do, and how American institutions — like Congress or the Executive Branch — play a role in that behavior. Using the United States as a single case study, students will also consider how to extend the framework to understand politics and political behaviors in general.

### **Student Learning Objectives and Course Goals:**

The associated program learning goals of the political science discipline can be found at {<http://www.casl.umd.umich.edu/politicalsciences/>}

### **Student Responsibilities:**

In order to achieve the course objectives, you will need to read, watch, and digest the course texts, think through and complete the assignments, and participate fully in course activities and discussions. These are all necessary for the completion of the various assignments (incl. papers, exams) which will give you the opportunity to apply the knowledge, understanding, and skills you will gain in the course. Any changes to the syllabus (incl. exam/due dates or required readings) will be posted to the Canvas page for this course, which you should check regularly.

While it would be preferable that you do all of these through sheer joy and self-motivation, rules and regulations will give you the extra incentives to get it done (as you will learn when we discuss political institutions). Thus, you will be graded on your course participation and on your quizzes, paper, and exams. And your grade on these will reflect your completion of the required readings.

### **Professor Contact Information**

Professor Emily Matthews Luxon can be reached at {[eoluxon@umich.edu](mailto:eoluxon@umich.edu)}. Her office is SSB 2194, and **her office hours this semester are Wednesdays and Fridays, 10am-10:45am**. She is also available to meet with you by appointment. She is happy to respond to e-mail, but if you have very complex and lengthy questions, she may suggest that an in-person meeting would work better!

**Required Texts:**

Some of the course materials are available on course reserves at Mardigian Library. You can access these materials at: {[http://library.umd.umich.edu/Services/course\\_reserves.php](http://library.umd.umich.edu/Services/course_reserves.php)}. Other course materials are available on the course Canvas page, and will be posted throughout the semester. The main course text is available for purchase in the bookstore. The main course text is: Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. 2014. *The Logic of American Politics*, 6th Edition. CQ Press and Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

**Student Assessment:**

To earn a grade in this course, you must complete:

1. Quizzes: 15%
2. Participation and In-Class Activities: 15%
3. Three short papers: 5% each (15% total)
4. Three in-class exams: 15% and 20% and 20% (55% total)

Exams will be based on lectures, presentations, readings, and films; exams will require writing. You will need to acquire blue books for the exams. Quizzes will be based on the readings. Quizzes will be given in-class during the first few minutes of class; there are no make-ups for missed quizzes. The short papers will require you to apply what you learn in the course to contemporary political events or issues. You must be in class to receive any credit for participation and in-class activities. All assignments and exams will be evaluated out of 100, and then weighted according to their percentage of the total grade for the course. Late papers or assignments will be penalized. Extensions, incompletes, or make-up exams will be given only in pressing and properly documented cases and in accordance with UM-D policy; petitions for these must be timely.

**Attendance Policy:**

Participation in class-time activities is an important part of this course. If you are not in class, you cannot participate; thus, you will not receive credit for those activities. Quizzes will be given in class, during the first few minutes of class; if you are late to class, you may miss a quiz. There are no make-ups for in-class activities or quizzes.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations are encouraged to notify, as soon as possible, Disability Resource Services {[http://www.umd.umich.edu/cs\\_disability/](http://www.umd.umich.edu/cs_disability/)} in order to work out the particulars. The University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students need to register with Disability Resource Services (DRS) every semester they are enrolled for classes. DRS is located in Counseling & Support Services, 2157 UC. To be assured of having services available when they are needed, students should register no later than the end of the add/drop deadline of each term. Note: DRS should be notified *in advance* of any course deadlines or due dates to ensure appropriate support.

**Academic Integrity:**

Your instructor takes academic dishonesty very seriously. Any student violating Student Conduct policies will be penalized, including earning an 'E' in the course, and will be reported to the University for investigation. The University of Michigan-Dearborn values academic honesty and integrity. Each student has a responsibility to understand, accept, and comply with the University's standards of academic conduct as set forth by the Code of Academic Conduct, as well as policies established by the schools and colleges. Cheating, collusion, misconduct, fabrication,

and plagiarism are considered serious offenses. Violations will not be tolerated and may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. For more information, please see: the Tutorial on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism {<http://webapps.umd.umich.edu/aim/>}.

### **Improving Your Writing:**

The Writing Center provides support for all UM-Dearborn students wishing to improve their writing. Students needing regular one-on-one help in developing basic writing skills, as well as more advanced students wishing to improve their writing, will find the center useful. The center is located in 3035 CB (Mon-Thurs 8:30am-7:00pm and Fri 8:30am-1:00pm) with smaller satellites on the first floor of Mardigian Library (Mon-Thurs 10:00am-1:00pm) and Fairlane Center North 138 (Mon-Thurs 2:00pm-8:00pm). The center tries to accommodate walk-ins but prefers students make appointments online at {[http://casl.umd.umich.edu/writ\\_center/](http://casl.umd.umich.edu/writ_center/)}.

### **\*Tentative\* Course Calendar:**

Additional material may also be required reading, listening, or viewing; these will be posted, with advance notice, to Canvas. If adjustments need to be made to the calendar and assignments, notice will be given in class and on Canvas. Note: *Logic* refers to the course text by Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, and Vavreck, *The Logic of American Politics*.

## **I. WHAT IS POLITICS? HOW CAN WE BUILD A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND IT?**

### **Week 1 - What is politics? What are the difficulties inherent in solving political problems?**

*Logic* Preface (pp. xxix-xxxiii) [5p]  
*Logic* A Note to Students (pp. xxxvii-xxxviii) [2p]  
 Edwards 2008: How to Read a Book [10p]

### **Week 2 - What are some of the tools available for solving political problems?**

*Logic* Chapter 1 - The Logic of American Politics [39p]

## **II. POLITICS IN THE CREATION OF THE UNITED STATES**

### **Week 3 - What were the politics of the founding documents?**

*Logic* Chapter 2 - The Constitution [44p]  
*Logic* Appendix 2 - Declaration of Independence [3p]  
*Logic* Appendix 1 - Articles of Confederation [5p]  
*Logic* Appendix 4 - Federalist No. 10 [4p]  
*Logic* Appendix 5 - Federalist No. 51 [3p]  
*Logic* Appendix 3 - Constitution of the United States [12p]

### **\*\*FIRST SHORT PAPER: Friday, Sep. 26\*\***

### **Week 4 - How does politics play out between the states and the federal government?**

*Logic* Chapter 3 - Federalism [41p]

### **\*\*FIRST EXAM: Friday, Oct. 3\*\***

### III. POLITICS IN THE FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

**Week 5 - How does politics play out in Congress?**

*Logic* Chapter 6 - Congress [66p]

**Week 6 - How does politics play out in the Presidency?**

*Logic* Chapter 7 - The Presidency [46p]

**Week 7 - How does politics play out in the Bureaucracy and the Judiciary?**

*Logic* Chapter 8 - The Bureaucracy [45p]

*Logic* Chapter 9 - The Judiciary [40p]

**\*\*SECOND EXAM: Friday, Oct. 24\*\***

### IV. POLITICS IN SOCIETY AND THE INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS

**Week 8 - How does politics shape the way parties behave?**

*Logic* Chapter 12 - Political Parties [50p]

**Week 9 - How does politics shape the way you vote and the way elections are run? How does public opinion shape politics and is it “accurate”?**

*Logic* Chapter 11 - Voting, Campaigns, and Elections [43p]

*Logic* Chapter 10 - Public Opinion [45p]

**\*\*SECOND SHORT PAPER: Friday, Nov. 7\*\***

**Week 10 - Why do “special interests” seem to have so much influence? And is the News Media playing a constructive role in politics?**

*Logic* Chapter 13 - Interest Groups [38p]

*Logic* Chapter 14 - The News Media [46p]

### V. THE POLITICS OF CHANGE

**Week 11 - What does it take to change politics in the United States?**

*Logic* Chapter 4 - Civil Rights [53p]

*Logic* Chapter 5 - Civil Liberties [46p]

**Week 12 - What does it take to change political institutions in the United States?**

*Logic*: Chapter 15 - The Prospects for Institutional Reform [29p]

***Week 13 - NO CLASS on Friday Nov. 28 for Thanksgiving Holiday***

## **VI. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER: A FRAMEWORK.**

### *Week 14 - Synthesis of American Politics*

**\*\*THIRD SHORT PAPER: Friday, Nov. 5\*\***

**\*\*THIRD EXAM: WEDNESDAY, Dec. 17, @ 8am, Location TBA\*\***

### **Just-in-Case Contact Information:**

Name:

E-mail:

Phone:

Name:

E-mail:

Phone:

### **Emergency Preparedness Statement:**

Please program 911 into your cell phones. You should also program Public Safety's phone number (313) 593-5333 into your cell phone. In case of emergency you should first dial 911. If the situation allows also call UM-Dearborn Public Safety to ensure the quickest response time possible.

I also strongly encourage you to register for the campus Emergency Alert System. This system will be used to communicate with the campus community during an emergency incident. More information on the system and how it works, along with a link to enroll in the system can be found at: <http://umemergencyalert.umd.umich.edu/> Please note that the system will only communicate through an individual's UM-Dearborn email account so if you primarily use a non-university account you should forward your UM-Dearborn email to your primary account.

Take a moment to identify a "buddy" in the class. The "buddy" system is designed to facilitate mutual assistance and to provide rapid and effective assistance to people in case of an emergency. Emergency responders as well as individuals evacuating an area or building use the "buddy" system. So please, identify a buddy.

Also, be sure to identify two ways out of the building as well as the building's designated assembly area where students are expected to go in the event of an evacuation: [http://www.umd.umich.edu/fileadmin/env-health-safety/public/files/Site Assm Areas 2011.pdf](http://www.umd.umich.edu/fileadmin/env-health-safety/public/files/Site_Assm_Areas_2011.pdf). For those students requiring assistance in an evacuation, please visit the following site to identify the nearest "Area of Rescue Assistance": [http://www.umd.umich.edu/fileadmin/env-health-safety/public/files/Handicap Accessible Locations.pdf](http://www.umd.umich.edu/fileadmin/env-health-safety/public/files/Handicap_Accessible_Locations.pdf)

Please also familiarize yourself with the locations in this building identified as shelter areas in the event of severe weather. Specific shelter locations for severe weather incidents can be located at: <http://www.umd.umich.edu/691921/>

In the case of an active shooter we will shelter in place. If this becomes a necessity please do the following:

- Contact 911 immediately to report an emergency.
- Find a safe area such as small rooms, under furniture, or other safe areas.
- Lock or block doors in rooms where you and others are located.
- For building interior rooms, close blinds, shut off lights. Rooms facing the outside should have blinds open!
- Get down—preferably under tables, furniture or equipment. Stay away from the door.
- Remain silent (silence all personal communication devices) and stay in place.
- If you are grouped in an area with other people, select a leader while maintaining a quiet atmosphere.
- The leader should contact 911 to report critical information such as the number of people and your location.
- Attempt to maintain a calm quiet atmosphere.
- Stay sheltered until you receive an "all clear" message from law enforcement.
- Follow law enforcement direction.

Additional information regarding shelter-in-place procedures can be obtained by viewing the follow video: <http://www.casl.umd.umich.edu/classroomsafety>.