

**Power and Politics in America**  
**Politics V53.0300**  
**Fall 2007**  
Professor Sanford Clark Gordon

**I. Introduction**

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This course has two aims. First, it is a survey of political institutions and behavior in the United States focusing primarily at the national level, which aims to demonstrate the connection between the guiding principles of the American Constitution and the role of politics and government in contemporary American life. Second, it introduces students to a variety of analytical concepts and approaches to the study of domestic politics.

**II. Contact and Meeting Information**

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Professor

Sanford Clark Gordon

19 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 311

Office Hours: Thursday 2-4pm, or by appointment

Phone: (212) 998-3708

E-mail: sanford.gordon@nyu.edu

Web: <http://politics.as.nyu.edu/object/sanfordgordon.html>

Class Meetings

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am-12:15pm, Cantor 200

**III. Required Readings**

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The following books are available for purchase at the University bookstore:

- Samuel Kernell and Gary C. Jacobson, *The Logic of American Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, eds., *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*
- Morris P. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Additional Readings can be found on Blackboard under the “Course Documents” heading.

**IV. Student Responsibilities and Course Grading**

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Formal Course Requirements

*Recitation participation:* 15%

Recitations will cover topics discussed in class and in the readings. Typically, discussion will focus on an important topic covered in the Kernell and Smith reader or a reading on Blackboard. You are expected to have completed *all* of the assigned readings up to and including those assigned for a particular recitation, and to attend *all* recitations.

**First examination** 20%

The first examination will be held in class on Tuesday, October 9, and will cover the first five weeks of class.

**Second examination** 20%

The second examination will be held in class on Thursday, November 15, and will cover weeks 6-10.

**Brief research paper:** 15%

A brief (4-5) page research paper is due in class on Thursday, November 29. The topic will be distributed in class.

**Final examination** 30%

Unless otherwise noted in class, the final examination will be held on Tuesday, December 18, from 12:00-1:50pm. Roughly two-thirds of the exam will cover material not covered by the first two exams. The remaining third will review those earlier topics. *Please be sure to note the date of the final exam when making your travel arrangements for the holiday break.*

Policy on missed exams and late papers

*Exams:* Exceptions in emergency situations are inevitable, but in general, students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. If you must miss an exam, please contact your teaching assistant *before* the scheduled test time, and if the excuse is justified (such as in cases of illness or family/personal emergencies), we will schedule a make-up.

*Paper:* In general, students will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) per day late. If you know your paper will be late, it is in your best interest to contact your teaching assistant prior to the deadline, since the penalty may be relaxed in extenuating circumstances.

Policy on grading-related grievances

Students who feel that an error has been made in the grading of one of their assignments should first consult their teaching assistants. If the issue is not resolved, a student may submit a brief, one paragraph description of the grievance to the professor. Please keep in mind that any formal re-grading will be conducted *de novo* (i.e. without reference to the original grade), and could potentially result in a loss of points.

**V. Academic Integrity**


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All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. *Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism* (using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution) *will be tolerated*. All ideas not your own must be properly cited. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. For more information on university policy, see <http://www.nyu.edu/cas/Academic/bulletin0608.pdf>, pp. 370-371.

**VI. Weekly Schedule****Part A. Foundations for the Analysis of American Politics****Week 1. Introduction**

Tuesday, September 4

*Introduction and Orientation: Power and Politics in America*

Thursday, September 6

*Foundations for an Analytical Study of American Politics*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 1

Recitations, 9/4-9/7

There will be no recitations in the first week of class

**Week 2. Constitutionalism**

Tuesday, September 11

*Origins of American Constitutionalism: The Principal Debates*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 2
- The Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the original U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the Constitution), in the Appendix of *Logic*
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 2-1 John P. Roche, "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action"

Thursday, September 13

No Lecture: Rosh Hashanah

Recitations, 9/11-9/14\*

*Models in Political Science*

**Week 3. Federalism and the Separation of Powers**

Tuesday, September 18

*Federalism: Rationales for a Compound Republic*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 3
- *The Federalist*, Nos. 17 and 39
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (excerpts), on Blackboard
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 3-2 Donald F. Kettl, "Federalism: Battles on the Front Lines of Public Policy"

Thursday, September 20

*The Separation of Powers: Separate Institutions Sharing Power?*

- *The Federalist*, Nos. 47, 48, 49, and 51 (read #51 twice!)

Recitations, 9/18-9/21

*From Where Do Threats to Liberty Come?*

- Brutus (Robert Yates?), "To the Citizens of the State of New-York," on Blackboard
- *The Federalist*, Nos. 10, 15, and 23 (read #10 twice!)
- Address and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of Pennsylvania to their Constituents, on Blackboard

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\* Students who cannot make recitation because of the Jewish holiday will not be penalized for their absence; they are *very strongly* encouraged, however, to attend another Week 2 recitation. Please inform one of us if you cannot make any session.

## Part B. Political Behavior

### Week 4. The Mischief of Faction I: Political Parties

Tuesday, September 25

*The Spatial Model of Party Competition*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 12

Thursday, September 27

*The Evolution of Party Competition in American Politics*

- *Principles and Practice*
  - 12-1 John H. Aldrich, from *Why Parties?*

Recitations, 9/25-9/28

*Should Parties be Strong? What does that mean?*

- Committee on Political Parties, American Political Science Association, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System" (1950), selections, on Blackboard
- George Washington Plunkitt, *Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics* (1905), selections, on Blackboard
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 12-3 Rick Valelly, "Who Needs Political Parties?"

### Week 5. The Mischief of Faction II: Interest Groups; American Political Culture

Tuesday, October 2

*Interest Groups: The Ecology of Associational Life*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 13
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 1-1 Mancur Olson, Jr., from *The Logic of Collective Action*

Thursday, October 4

*Political and Civic Culture*

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, selections, on Blackboard
- Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, selections, on Blackboard

Recitations, 10/2-10/5

*How and in What Manner Do Interest Groups Influence Politics?*

- *Principles and Practice*
  - 13-1 E. E. Schattschneider, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System"
  - 13-3 Bara Vaida and Lisa Caruso, "Blunt's K Street Team"

### Week 6. Public Opinion

Tuesday, October 9

*First examination, in class*

Thursday, October 11

*Public Opinion in American Politics*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 10
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 10-1 Herbert Asher, “Analyzing and Interpreting Polls”

Recitations, 10/9-10/12\*

*How Polarized is the American Citizenry?*

- *Culture War*, Chs. 2-3

**Week 7. The Mass Media; Campaigns and Elections I**

Tuesday, October 16

*The Media in American Politics*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 14
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 14-1 James T. Hamilton, “The Market and the Media”

Thursday, October 18

*The Logic of Elections and Electoral Competition*

- James D. Fearon, “Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance,” selections, on Blackboard
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 11-2 Gary C. Jacobson, “Party Polarization in National Politics: The Electoral Connection”

Recitations, 10/16-10/19

*Is Media Consolidation Undemocratic?*

- C. Edwin Baker, *Media Concentration and Democracy*, selections, on Blackboard

**Week 8. Campaigns and Elections II**

Tuesday, October 23

*Campaigns and Elections from the Voter’s Perspective*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 11, pp. 420-435
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 11-1 Samuel L. Popkin, from *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*
  - 12-2 Larry M. Bartels, “Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996.”

Thursday, October 25

*Movie, Part I: Street Fight*

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\* Understandably, those of you with Tuesday recitations are not going to prioritize a discussion reading the day of an exam. Please do your best at least to skim it.

Recitations, 10/23-10/26

*Dynamics of U.S. Elections*

- *Culture War*, Chs. 7-8.

**Week 9. Campaigns and Elections Concluded; Representation**

Tuesday, October 30

*Movie, Part II; Campaigns and Elections from the Candidate's Perspective*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 11, pp. 435-455
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 11-3 Darrell M. West, from *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns, 1952-2004*.

**Part C. The Institutions of Governance**

Thursday, November 1

*Ambiguities of Representation*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 6, pp. 204-224, 244-256
- *The Federalist*, nos. 62 and 63

Recitations, 10/30-11/2

*Political Science versus Politics: Dissecting Street Fight*

**Week 10. The First Branch?**

Tuesday, November 6

*Congress and its Members*

- Morris Fiorina, from *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*, on Blackboard
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 6-2 David R. Mayhew, from *Congress: The Electoral Connection*

Thursday, November 8

*The Internal Organization of Congress*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 6, 224-243
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 6-1 Richard F. Fenno, "The Senate in Bicameral Perspective"

Recitations, 11/6-11/9

*Spatial Models of Legislative Behavior*

**Week 11. The Presidency I**

Tuesday, November 13

*Growth of the Modern Presidency*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 7

Thursday, November 15

*Second examination, in class*

Recitations, November 13-16\*

*An Imperial Presidency?*

- Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Imperial Presidency Redux,” on Blackboard
- Noemie Emery, “Too Much History,” on Blackboard
- John Isaacs, “Congress Goes AWOL,” on Blackboard

**Week 12. The Presidency II**

Tuesday, November 20

*The Sources of Presidential Power*

- *Principles and Practice*
  - 7-1 Richard E. Neustadt, from *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*
  - 7-2 Samuel Kernell, from *Going Public*

Thursday, November 22

*Thanksgiving (no class)*

Recitations, 11/20-11/23

*No recitation*

**Week 13. The Unelected**

Tuesday, November 27

*The Least Dangerous Branch? The Role of the Courts in American Politics*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 9
- *The Federalist*, no. 78
- *Marbury v. Madison*, on Blackboard
- Howard Gillman, “Judicial Independence through the Lens of *Bush v. Gore*: Four Lessons from Political Science” 64 *Ohio State Law Journal* 249, on Blackboard

Thursday, November 29

*Short Papers Due*

*The Bureaucratic State*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 8
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 8-1 James Q. Wilson, from *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*
  - 8-2 Terry M. Moe, “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure”
  - 8-3 Paul Singer, “By the Horns”

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\* Understandably, those of you with Thursday recitations are not going to prioritize a discussion reading the day of an exam. Please do your best at least to skim it.

Recitations, 11/27-11/30

*Do Courts Subvert Democracy?*

- *Principles and Practice*
  - 9-1 Antonin Scalia, from *A Matter of Interpretation*
  - 9-2 Stephen Breyer, from *Active Liberty*
  - 9-5 Robert A. Carp, Kenneth L. Manning, and Ronald Stidham, “The Voting Behavior of George W. Bush’s Judges: How Sharp a Turn to the Right?”

**Week 14. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**

Tuesday, December 4

*Civil Liberties*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 5
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 5-3 *Miranda v. Arizona*
  - 5-4 *Roe v. Wade*
  - 5-5 *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*

Thursday, December 6

*Civil Rights*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 4
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963,” on Blackboard
- *Principles and Practice*
  - 4-1 Taeku Lee, “Immigration and the Future of Identity Politics in the United States”
  - 4-2 Nathan Glazer, “American Diversity and the 2000 Census”

Recitations, 12/4-12/7

*What Limits Does the War on Terror Place on Civil Liberties?*

- *Principles and Practice*
  - 5-2 Lee Epstein et. al., “The Effect of War on the Supreme Court”
- American Civil Liberties Union et. al., “Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief,” pp. 1-16, on Blackboard.
- United States Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, “The NSA Program to Detect and Prevent Terrorist Attacks: Myth v. Reality.” on Blackboard

**Week 15. Wrapping Up**

Tuesday, December 11

*Conclusion: Institutional Change and the Future of American Democracy*

- *Logic of American Politics*, Ch. 15

**Final Exam**

Tuesday, December 18, 12:00-1:50pm