“Democracy is the art and science of running the circus from the monkey cage.”

“Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.”

“Under democracy one party always devotes its chief energies to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule – and both commonly succeed, and are right...”

– H. L. Mencken

Overview: This course provides an introduction to the key institutions of government, politics, and policy in U.S., covering their history, contemporary forms, and internal dynamics. In the course, students should learn to analyze how ideas and power are contested in the processes of social change and political conflict. The course introduces students not only to the various scales and branches of government but also institutions that exercise power and influence in public decision making and social action, such as corporations, unions, media, social movements, and civil society. The course examines topics such as institutional behavior, the logic of collective action, issue advocacy, and the ideas, practices, and limits of democracy.
Course Website:

- https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/19W-PUBAFF20-1

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00pm – 2:00pm Bunche 4262, or by appointment.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how different contexts, institutions, and environments influence individual and public life and can create, exacerbate, or reduce inequality and injustice
- Demonstrate familiarity with economic, political, and civil society responses to social problems and public issues
- Learn to locate, use, and think critically about quantitative and qualitative evidence for understanding societal problems and their solutions
- Formulate clear and convincing written and oral arguments for varied audiences
- Apply theoretical knowledge and analytical methods to an experiential learning capstone
- Use communication skills effectively with collaborators, policymakers, and the public

Textbooks:

- Other required readings will be posted on the course website.

Attendance Policy:

- Attendance is mandatory. I will not take attendance in lecture every day, but I will take attendance occasionally. TAs will take attendance in section. Prescheduled excused absences, such as athletic obligations, should be brought to your TA’s attention by the second week. All other absences will be excused only for documented medical and family emergencies at my discretion.
- Section attendance factors into, but does not solely determine, your section participation grade. You are expected to attend section having completed the weeks readings and contribute to the class discussions of those topics.

Grading Policy: Participation (10%), Assignments (15%), Exam 1 (25%), Exam 2 (25%), Paper (25%).

Important Due Dates:

- Midterm #1 .........................February 6, 2019
- Midterm #2 .........................March 13, 2019
- Final Paper .....................by March 17, 2019 @11:59:59pm
- Paper Proposal .....................Week 3 Section
- Outline .................................Week 6 Section
- Introduction .........................Week 10 Section
Final Project: Strategy Memo

- For the final project, each student is to find a current public policy issue and write an 8–10 page strategy memo advising an interest group, political party, or political candidate as to the best course of action for bringing that policy into fruition. This project will require researching the particular issue, presenting evidence in support of your proposed solution, acknowledging the limitations and costs of that approach, and detailing an advocacy strategy that leverages the political forces to overcome institutional limitations discussed in class. You will be evaluated on (a) the persuasiveness of your evidence and argument; (b) the political plausibility and creativity of your strategy; (c) and the professionalism of your presentation. Sections will be used to build-up components of this final product.

Academic Honesty:

- Any issues with academic dishonesty will be sent directly to the Dean of Students.
- All work you do for this course is expected to be your own. I encourage you to discuss matters relating to this course with other classmates, friends, family members, and students, but your papers and exam answers must be your own ideas and your own words. If you are having trouble completing an assignment, contact me or the UCLA Undergraduate Writing Center for help before you resort to the use of someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution. If you are unfamiliar with the University’s policy on academic dishonesty and associated penalties, see www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu. You are responsible for understanding these standards – not knowing that your actions constitute a violation of these policies is not an excuse.

Classroom Policies:

- Cell phone usage is not allowed in class. Please make sure that they are off or on silent BEFORE coming to class.
- I strongly discourage using laptops to take notes. There is a growing body of research which shows that laptops hinder your ability to learn and taking notes by hand is more effective. I reserve the right to amend course policy to prohibit laptops if they become a distraction.
- Note, some readings may require you to follow the link in this syllabus to materials that require a UCLA internet connection to access. See here for how to access these resources off campus.

Course Outline & Assigned Readings:

Part I: Logic & Structure

Overview – Power, Politics, and Policy ................................................................. Jan. 7, 2019

- The Syllabus – You are responsible for ALL information in the syllabus!!
- Logic – Chapter 1 (The Logic of American Politics)

- *The U.S. Constitution*
- *The Federalist* No. 10
- *The Federalist* No. 51
- *Logic* Chapter 2 (The Constitution)

Division and Scope – American Federalism ................................. Jan. 14, 2019

- Plunkett. “Honest and Dishonest Graft.”
- *Logic* Chapter 3 (Federalism)

Guardrails – Rights, Liberties, & Norms in Democracy ....................... Jan. 16, 2019

- Nyhan. “Norms Matter.”
- *Logic* Chapter 4 (Civil Rights)
- *Logic* Chapter 5 (Civil Liberties)

**Part II: Institutions**

President’s Day – NO CLASS ............................................. Jan. 21, 2019

- Make sure you watch these documentaries before the exam, but you can pace them out.
  
  * The American President: Wilson to FDR – Fast forward to the end, you only need FDR – Bush.
  * The American President: Truman to Ford
  * The American President: Carter to Bush

Article 1 – The Legislature ............................................... Jan. 23, 2019

- *Logic* Chapter 6 (Congress)
Article 2 – The Executive Branch ............................................. Jan. 28, 2019
  • *Logic* Chapter 7 (The President)
  • *Logic* Chapter 8 (The Bureaucracy)

Article 3 – The Judiciary ...................................................... Jan. 30, 2019
  • *Logic* Chapter 9 (The Judiciary)

The Danger of Faction – Political Parties ................................ Feb. 4, 2019
  • *Logic* Chapter 12 (Political Parties)

EXAM #1 – Bring a Blue Book! ............................................. Feb. 6, 2019

Part III: The Players
Voters & Public Opinion .................................................... Feb. 11, 2019
  • *Logic* Chapter 10 (Public Opinion)
  • Sides *Campaigns and Elections*. Chapter 13 (Voters)

Campaigns & Elections ..................................................... Feb. 13, 2019
  • *Logic* Chapter 11 (Voting, Campaigns, and Elections)
  • Vavreck. *The Message Matters* Chapter 3 (Campaign Typology)
  • Sides, Tesler, Vavreck. *Identity Crisis*. Chapter 8 (What Happened?)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – NO CLASS ............................. Feb. 18, 2019
  • King. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Interest Groups ............................................................... Feb. 20, 2019
  • *Logic* Chapter 13 (Interest Groups)
Part IV: Applications

Racial Inequality ........................................... Feb. 25, 2019

- Keiser, Mueser, and Choi. “Race, bureaucratic discretion, and the implementation of welfare reform.”

Economic Inequality ........................................... Feb. 27, 2019

- Bartels. *Unequal Democracy* Chapter 6 (Homer Gets a Tax Cut) and Chapter 9 (Economic Inequality and Political Representation)
- Soroka and Wlezien. “On the Limits to Inequality in Representation.”

Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Rights ..................................... Mar. 4, 2019

- D’Emilo. *The World Turned*. Chapter 6 (Organizational Tales: Interpreting the NGLTF Story.)

The Politics of Healthcare ............................................. Mar. 6, 2019

- Jacobs and Skocpol. *Health Care Reform and American Politics*. Chapter 2 (The Year of Pitched Battles), Chapter 3 (The Scott Brown Upset), and Chapter 4 (What Did They Deliver?)

Polarization, Representation, and Nationalization .................................. Mar. 11, 2019


Exam #2 – Bring a Blue Book! ........................................... Mar. 13, 2019

Final Paper – Must be uploaded to TurnItIn by .............................. Mar. 17, 2019 @ 11:59:59pm
**Section Assignment Schedule**
The following assignments are due in your section meeting for that week. You must bring a printed hard copy to section that day or you do not receive credit for the assignment. Your TA’s will describe the assignments in greater detail in section and I will overview them in lecture. Late assignments will not be accepted.

- Week 3 – Paper Proposal
- Week 6 – Outline
- Week 9 – Introduction

**Student Resources**

- UCLA Consoling and Psychological Services
  - 24/7 Crisis Counseling: (310) 825-0768
  - UCLA CAPS Services

- UCLA Undergraduate Writing Center
  - Appointment Scheduling: (310) 206-1320
  - UCLA Writing Center