

**Politics 220: Introduction to American Politics**

**Paul Frymer**

**Fall 2011**

**Office Hours:** TBA. 243 Corwin Hall

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**Preceptors:**

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**Requirements:**

A short paper (roughly 3-5 pages) is worth 20 percent of the grade; the prompt will be announced on October 5<sup>th</sup> in class and is due at the beginning of class on **October 12**. An in-class midterm on **October 26** is worth 20 percent. A comprehensive in-class final exam is worth 40 percent. Participation in precepts is worth a final 20 percent. Determination of what satisfies the precept grade will be determined by the individual preceptors and may include quizzes, short-papers, and presentations, and will certainly include attendance and participation.

The only required book is Theodore Lowi et al., *American Government* (Brief Eleventh Edition, W.W. Norton Press, 2011). The rest of the readings are available on Blackboard. Lowi's textbook chapters are signified by "Lowi" in the schedule below.

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**Readings and Schedule:**

**Part A: Foundations**

**1. Power (September 21-26)**

John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, chapter 1.

Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Cooperation, Collective Action, and Public Goods."

Martin Luther King, "Letter From a Birmingham Jail."

Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will not be Tweeted."

## **2. Ideology (September 28-October 3)**

Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, selection.

Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, selection.

Sarah Palin, *America By Heart*, selection.

Anand Giridharadas, “Some of Sarah Palin’s Ideas Cross the Political Divide.”

Jason Puskar, “Risking Ellison.”

## **3. Being and Becoming an American (October 5-10)**

Sarah Song, “What Does it Mean to be an American?”

Steven M. Warshawsky, “What Does it Mean to be an American?”

Jack Citrin, Amy Lerman, Michael Murakami, and Kathryn Pearson, “Testing Huntington: Is Hispanic Immigration a Threat to American Identity?”

Jay Caspian Kang, “Immigrant Misappropriations: The Importance of Ichiro.”

## **Part B: The Constitution and its Primary Actors**

### **4. The Constitution (October 12-17)**

Lowi, chapters 2-3, as well as A7-A36 (which includes the Constitution and *Federalist* 10 and 51).

Keith Whittington, “Constitutions.”

### **5. Courts (October 19-24)**

Lowi, chapter 8.

*Marbury v. Madison* (1803)

Gerald Rosenberg, “Same Sex Marriage.”

Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk*.

Keith E. Whittington, “Interpose Your Friendly Hand”: Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court.”

**Midterm: October 26**

**6. The President and the Executive Branch (November 7-9)**

Lowi, chapters 6-7.

Brandice Canes-Wrone, *Who Leads Whom?* chapter 1.

Charles M. Cameron, *Veto Bargaining*, chapter 1.

Stephen Skowronek, *Politics Presidents Make*, chapter 3.

Paul E. Peterson, "The President's Dominance in Foreign Policy Making."

**7. Congress (November 14-16)**

Lowi, chapter 5.

David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, selection.

R. Douglas Arnold, "The Politics of Reforming Social Security."

David Canon, "A Legal Primer on Race and Redistricting."

Nicholas Carnes, "Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter? Evidence from Roll Call Voting in the House of Representatives."

**Part C: Non-Constitutional Actors**

**8. Parties and Elections (November 21-23)**

Lowi, chapters 10-11.

V.O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections."

Louis Menand, "The Unpolitical Animal: How Political Science Understands Voters."

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, "Musical Chairs: Pocketbook Voting and the Limits of Democratic Accountability."

Tali Mendelberg, "Deliberation, Incivility, and Race."

John B. Judis, "Obama and the Psychology of the Color Barrier."

Paul Frymer, "Obama and the Representation of Captured Groups."

## **9. Media (November 28-30)**

Lowi, chapter 9.

Anthony Downs, “Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue-Attention Cycle.”

Martin Gilens, *Why American Hate Welfare*, chapter 5.

Markus Prior, “News v. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout.”

## **10. Interests and Movements (December 5-7)**

E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, selection.

Jonathan Rauch, “The Hyperpluralism Trap.”

Terry M. Moe, “The Rise of Teachers Unions.”

Ben McGrath, “The Movement: The Rise of the Tea Party Activism.”

## **Part D: Issues of Today**

### **11. Polarization, Budgets, Inequality (December 12-14)**

Nolan McCarty, et al., *Polarized America*, chapters 1 and 5.

Jonathan Rauch, “Bipolar Disorder.”

Nolan McCarty, et al., “Political Fortunes: On Finance and its Regulation.”

Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*, chapter 1.

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, “Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States.”

Vesla Weaver and Amy Lerman, “Political Consequences of the Carceral State.”