Politics 220: Introduction to American Politics
Paul Frymer
Fall 2011
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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 5th 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.


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Readings and Schedule:

Part A: Foundations

1. Power (September 21-26)

John Gaventa, Power and Powerlessness, chapter 1.


Martin Luther King, “Letter From a Birmingham Jail.”

2. Ideology (September 28-October 3)


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?”


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.


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


Paul E. Peterson, “The President’s Dominance in Foreign Policy Making.”

7. Congress (November 14-16)

Lowi, chapter 5.


David Canon, “A Legal Primer on Race and Redistricting.”


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.”


Tali Mendelberg, “Deliberation, Incivility, and Race.”


Paul Frymer, “Obama and the Representation of Captured Groups.”
9. Media (November 28-30)

Lowi, chapter 9.


10. Interests and Movements (December 5-7)


Jonathan Rauch, “The Hyperpluralism Trap.”

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


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.”


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.”