ADPO1041.01  Fundamental Concepts of American Politics
Credits: 4
Fall, 2015

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Office: St. Mary’s Hall South, Ground Floor
Office Hours: Prior to & after class
Telephone: 781 239-1065 (please, not after 9:30 p.m.)
Schedule: Wednesdays, 6:15 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.
Room: Stokes Hall 209S

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description
Fundamental concepts of understanding political life are introduced by studying American government and politics. The focus is on constitutional arrangements, political ideas, political institutions and processes, and public policies.

Course Objectives
1. The student will have an understanding of the workings of the U. S. governmental and political systems.
2. The student will be able to discuss the above in a coherent, knowledgeable manner.
3. The student will be able to apply material from the course to contemporary events.
4. The student will demonstrate knowledge, skill and competency as appropriate to an introductory course on American politics.
5. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge as appropriate to the field of American politics and government.
**Grading**

Class Attendance and Participation (appropriate participation!): 10 points
Midterm Exam: 40 points
Final Exam: 50 points

**WCAS Grading System**

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

**Text(s)/Readings (Required)**

Klein, Joe. Politics Lost
Natoli, Marie D. *Understanding American Government*, 7th ed. (cited as “Text"
Riordan, Edward, ed. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*

**Recommended Reading:**
DeTocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*

**Important Policies**
[http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html)

**Written Work**

Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing
skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

**Scholarship and Academic Integrity**
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work.

**Request for Accommodations**
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

**Attendance**
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student's obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the
responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

**Deadlines**
Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly. NO late exams will be permitted; NO grades of “Incomplete” will be assigned.
Course Assignments (readings, exercises and/or experiences)

This semester, this course will run in a hybrid format. This means that approximately half of the course will be in in-class (face-to-face) meetings and the other half will be online. Both parts are equally important, but the format gives us the opportunity to do different things, as you will see.

We will meet face-to-face for the several weeks of the course. There are many reasons for this: to allow registration to “settle down,” to allow you to get the flow of the materials, and most importantly, so that we can get to know each other.

Regardless of whether a session is in-class or online, the expectation is that all assignments will be completed as scheduled. With the online sessions submission of materials are during a definitive time frame and it won’t be possible to go into that module after the stated deadline. This means that the points allotted for that module will be forfeited.

Students are expected to complete the ALL out of class course assignments, whether for in-class or online sessions. Please note that the “opening” and “closing” dates for online modules/topics are demarcated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Exercises/Experiences</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>WEEK 1: TOPIC I (in-class)</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<td>.S. Values, Political Culture</td>
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<td>Economic vs. Political Systems</td>
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<td>The Constitution and Constitutionalism</td>
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<td>9/9</td>
<td>WEEK 2: TOPIC II (in-class)</td>
<td>Political Culture, Political Socialization, and Political Opinion</td>
<td>9/9</td>
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<td>Text. Chs. 1, 2</td>
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OPENING of Module/Topic III  9/9
CLOSING of Module/Topic III  9/16

NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work for the next class.
9/16 WEEK 3: **TOPIC III (online)**

- The U. S. Constitutional System
- Checks and Balances
- Separation of Powers
- Federalism

**See Canvas**  
Text, Ch. 4 AND other assignments on Canvas  
9/16

9/23 WEEK 4: **TOPIC IV (in-class)**

- Political Parties, Media and Campaigns

**Text, Ch. 5 (pp. 155-175)**  
Riordan, in its entirety  
9/23

OPENING of Module/Topic V  
9/23
CLOSING of Module/Topic III  
9/30

NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work for the next class.

9/30 WEEK 5: **TOPIC V (online)**

- Discussion of Klein

**See Canvas**  
Klein. Politics Lost  
(in its entirety)  
(and other assignments on Canvas)  
9/30

10/7 WEEK 6: **MIDTERM EXAM (in-class)** — first half of class

- TOPIC VI, Congress, Part 1 — second half of class

**Text, Ch. 8**

OPENING of Module/Topic VI, Part 2, 10/7
CLOSING of Module/Topic VI  
10/14

NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work for the next class.

10/14 WEEK 7: **TOPIC VI, part 2 (online)**

- Congress, Part 2

**See Canvas**  
Text, Chs. 13, 14  
(and other assignments on Canvas)  
10/14

10/21 WEEK 8 **TOPIC VII (in-class)**

- The Presidency, Vice Presidency, and the Executive Branch, Part 1

**Text, Chs. 9, 10**  
10/21

OPENING of Module VII, Part 2  
10/21
CLOSING of Module VII, Part 2, 10/28

NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work for the next class.
10/28  WEEK 9:  TOPIC VII, Part 2 (online)  See Canvas  10/28
The Presidency, Vice Presidency,  Text, Chs. 15, 16  (and other assignments on Canvas)
And the Executive Branch, part 2

11/4  WEEK 10: TOPIC VIII, Part 1 (in-class)  Text, Ch. 5  11/4
External Influencers: Interest Groups,  Resources, the Powerful and Powerless

OPENING OF MODULE VIII, Part 2, 11/4
CLOSING OF MODULE VIII, Part 2 11/11 (Even though 11/11 is a holiday, your
have an online assignment due no later than 11/11)
NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work
for the next class.

Veteran’s Day Holiday, but online assignment is due
External Influencers: Corporations

11/18 WEEK 12: TOPIC IX (in-class)  Text, Chs. 11, 12  11/18
The Courts  
Judicial Review  
Rights and Liberties

11/25 WEEK 13: Thanksgiving Holiday – no classes

12/2 WEEK 14: TOPIC X, Part 1 (in-class)  12/2
The Individual and Society: Civil Disobedience
Elements of “Civil Disobedience”

Excerpts from Thoreau's Essay “Civil Disobedience”
biggsrbr.weebly.com/uploads/8/7/4/4/.../civil_disobedience_excerpts.doc
Martin Luther King, Jr.
“Letter from a Birmingham Jail” pdf
See Canvas)
OPENING OF MODULE X, Part 2  12/2  
CLOSING OF MODULE X, Part 2, 12/9  
NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work for the next class.

12/9  WEEK 15:  TOPIC X, Part 2 (online)  See Canvas  12/9  

OPENING OF MODULE XI, Part 2  12/2  
CLOSING OF MODULE XI, Part 2, 12/9  

12/16 “Final Paper” is due online.

GRADING COMPOSITION:

Online components:  60 points (a total of 10 for each of the modules)  
Class participation and  
Attendance:  10 points  
Midterm Exam:  20 points  
Final Paper:  10 points

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1) NO laptops, cell phones, taping devices, etc. will be permitted in class. If you use any of these you will forfeit 5 points of your total grade for each offense.
2) Class attendance is imperative if you are to be able to follow the materials. Everything builds on what came before it.
3) Although we all occasionally get delayed, the expectation is that class will begin promptly at 6:15 p.m.
4) There will be absolutely, positively NO make-ups for any of the work and NO INCOMPLETES for the course.
5) All of the work you do for the course must be your own; plagiarism is a serious offence and will result in a failing grade for the entire course.