*Please note that this syllabus should be regarded only as a general guide to the course and is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

**POLI 1061: Introduction to American Politics (3 Credits)**
**Boston College Summer Session 2016**
**Summer 2, June 27 – August 5**
**Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:00 PM – 9:15 PM**

**Instructor Name:** Brendan Bucy  
**BC E-mail:** bucyb@bc.edu  
**Phone Number:** 541-602-2312  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**

**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**  
Introduction to American Politics is, as the name suggests, an introductory course in American government. The overarching aim of the course is to acquaint students with the fundamental features of the American political system. We will focus our attention on both the foundational ideas and the key institutions that constitute our regime, and our inquiry will be conducted with eyes to the past, present, and future of American politics. Students will be asked to explore questions like: What kind of political order did the Founders create? How has the system of government they fashioned served our nation over time? To what extent do the values and principles at the heart of our political system continue to illuminate our present-day politics? How well are our governing institutions functioning?
Textbooks & Readings (Required)


All other readings will be made available as handouts, sent via email, or posted on canvas.

Canvas

Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, go to: [http://www.bc.edu/offices/cte/tools/canvas.html](http://www.bc.edu/offices/cte/tools/canvas.html)

Course Objectives

1. The student will learn fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories about American politics as demonstrated by an ability to describe, evaluate, and apply key concepts introduced in the readings and lectures.
2. The student will develop skills in both oral and written expression, as demonstrated by the capacity to participate actively and productively in class discussions and write clear analyses of key political ideas.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in American politics, as demonstrated by a willingness to discuss and write about the ways in which culture, gender, age, and other factors shape our beliefs about the fundamental concepts that organize our political institutions.
4. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to American politics, as demonstrated by an ability to understand and evaluate competing conceptions of justice, equality, liberty, and other core course themes in both class discussion and written work.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Every Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Every Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Every Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Take-home, due Monday, July 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>In-class, Wednesday, August 3</td>
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Reading Quizzes: At the beginning of every Wednesday class we will have a reading quiz on the material that you have read for that week (i.e. for that Monday and Wednesday). These quizzes are designed to ensure that you keep up with the reading and that you do it with some care. They will be short (1-3 questions) and they will require very brief answers (1-2 sentences). Quizzes should take no more than 10 minutes of class time.

Reflection Papers: At the beginning of every Monday class you will hand in a 1-page (250 word) reflection paper discussing how our readings and discussion have illuminated a matter of contemporary American political import and briefly develop your thoughts on it. You should be following the news and
drawing connections between our class and current events for this assignment. Please refrain from giving summaries of the readings and from bringing up issues that have already been raised in class. The idea is to come to class with something new that can serve as a springboard for further discussion. I will ask you to share in class the questions or ideas that you discuss in these responses. While these writings are relatively informal, please do not turn in anything that you have not proofread with a view to correct grammar and style, and I will still expect you to properly cite the texts that you use.

**Participation:** You are, of course, expected to attend every class. Our goal will be to have an extended dialogue about American politics, past and present. I will offer my commentary, draw attention to important concepts, and summarize things that we have read throughout the course in prepared but informal lectures. However, you are also expected to comment on the readings and pose questions to the class that can facilitate discussion. Since our goal is foster dialogue, **laptops will not be permitted in class.** Please also silence and stow your cell phones and other electronic devices before coming to class. I also ask that you **bring the relevant reading to class on each day**, so that you can refer to the text and follow the references of others. Your completion of and participation in any in-class assignments will also be reflected in your participation grade.

**Midterm:** The midterm will be a take-home exam that you will be expected to complete on your own, without collaborating with your peers. We will discuss this further as the middle of the term approaches.

**Final:** We will discuss the format of the final as we near the end of the course. The final will be comprehensive.

The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:

- A (4.00), A- (3.67)
- B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
- C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
- D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
- F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services (http://www.bc.edu/transcripts).

**Deadlines and Late Work**
No late work will be accepted and extensions will only be granted in the most extreme circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness). Quizzes and reading responses missed due to unexcused absences will receive “0”s. Quizzes missed due to excused absences will not be factored into your final grade. Reading responses missed due to excused absences should be handed in or sent to me electronically **before the beginning of the missed class.**

**Written Work**
Summer Session students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed and submitted in hardcopy at the beginning of the class on the day it is due. Strive for a thorough yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the Connors Family Learning Center (http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html).
Attendance
Attending class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. When circumstances prevent a student from attending class, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor before the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. There will be no make-up quizzes for quizzes missed due to absences.

Consistent with BC’s commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of 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 their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

Accommodation and Accessibility
Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

- The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD (http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html).
- The Disabilities Services Office (DSO) coordinates services for all other disabilities (http://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/subsidiary_offices/disabilityservices.html).

Find out more about BC’s commitment to accessibility at www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility.

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
Students in Summer Session courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material 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. Please see the Boston College policy on academic integrity for more information (https://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html).

Course Assignments
Since this is a 6-week, intensive semester, you will be expected to spend much more time per week on assignments outside of class than would be expected in a course during the standard spring or fall semesters. Our class meets for 6.5 hours per week, which means that you should spend a minimum of 13 hours per week on out-of-class assignments. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time.
Course Schedule

Part I: Founding Principles
Mon,June 27: - Declaration of Independence
              - Articles of Confederation
              - The Federalist #1

Wed, June 29: - The Federalist #9, #10, #39, #47-51
                - Speech of Melancton Smith, 21 June 1788
                - Centinel 1
                - Tocqueville, selections
                - Textbook Ch. 3, “Federalism” (p. 50-78)

Mon, July 4:  FOURTH OF JULY, NO CLASS

Part II: The Legislative Branch
Wed, July 6:  - Article I of the Constitution
              - The Federalist #51, #52, #57, #63
              - Lincoln, Lyceum address
              - Textbook: Ch. 9, “Congress” (p. 260-298)
              - Anthony King, “Running Scared”

Mon, July 11: - Richard Fenno, Jr., Home Style: House Members in Their Districts, Ch. 5
               - David Mayhew, “The Electoral Incentive”
               - Barbara Sinclair, “Spoiling the Sausages? How a Polarized Congress Deliberates and Legislates”
               - Jack Goldsmith, Power and Constraint, Introduction and Ch. 1

Part III: The Executive Branch
Wed, July 13: - Article II of the Constitution
              - The Federalist #70, #71, #72
              - Textbook: Ch. 10, “The Presidency” (p. 299-334)
              - Goldsmith, Power and Constraint, Ch. 2-3

Mon, July 18*: - The Pacificus-Helvidius Debate
               - Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John C. Breckenridge
               - Goldsmith, Power and Constraint, Ch. 4-7 and Afterword

*MIDTERM DUE*

Part IV: The Judicial Branch
Wed, July 20: - Article III of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (First 10 Amendments)
              - The Federalist #78, #84
              - Brutus XV
              - Textbook: Ch. 12, “The Judiciary” (p. 362-393)

Mon, July 25: - Textbook: Ch. 4, “Civil Liberties”; and Ch. 5, “Civil Rights” (p. 79-140)
               - William Brennan, Jr., “The Living Constitution”
Part V: Parties and the Bureaucracy

Wed, July 27: - Textbook: Ch. 7, “Political Parties and Interest Groups” (p. 173-218)
- Alan Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center*, Ch. 1 and 3
- Morris Fiorina, “Missing Moderates” and *Culture War?,* selections

Mon, Aug 1: - Textbook: Ch. 11, “The Bureaucracy”; and Ch. 13, “Domestic Policy” (p. 335-361; 394-420)
- James Q. Wilson, “The Bureaucracy Problem”

Wed, Aug 3*: *FINAL EXAM*