

American Politics

POLS-2113-01

Fall 2021

DAH 210: 9:00am – 9:50am

DAH AUD: 11:40am – 12:30pm

Professor:

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Office Hours:

M / W: 10:00am – 11am

T / Th: 9:15am – 11:00am

T / Th: 1:00 – 2:30pm

Using email subject lines with
POLS-2113 or American Politics
will allow me to more promptly
respond.

I. OC Mission Statement

Oklahoma Christian University is a higher learning community that transforms lives for Christian faith, scholarship, and service.

II. Christian Worldview & Teaching Philosophy

Political science is the study of power. Yet, unlike chemistry, astrophysics, or other “hard” sciences, it is the study of power embedded in human community. As the famous political scientist E.E. Schattschneider once responded to being asked if he felt like an entomologist studying an ant hill: “No, like an ant studying an ant hill.” We will study the structures of power from the point of view of people inside power structures.

One important aspect of power in human community is our fundamental nature. Are we generally good as posited Rousseau? Are we basically evil as posited by Hobbes? Or are we somewhere between as posited by Locke? As a Christian it is impossible to ask these questions in a vacuum. They are tied up in the Christian worldview.

How then will we proceed in this class? We will follow the example of John Locke. At a state university we would begin with his Second Treatise of Government. His oft used Second Treatise seeks to “set down what I take to be political power.” Yet less attention is given to his First Treatise on government where he finds, on close examination of Biblical study, that kings cannot be sovereign by way of divine authority stemming from Adam or otherwise (the common view of his era).

Our class will follow Locke as a guide. We will be careful to not skip over that most basic of starting points in our examination of power in human community by following the threads of theology and philosophy inherent in the study of politics. Understanding power in community requires us to understand the nature of humans in community – which is a central task of the Christian Worldview.

III. Course Description

A Survey of the rules (the Constitution), institutions (the Presidency, Congress, the courts, and the bureaucracy), the participants (voters, parties, interest groups, and the media), and products social, economic, and foreign policy) of democratic politics in the United States.

See https://myocfiles.oc.edu/files/services/Registrar/201718_Undergraduate_Catalog.pdf for more.

IV. Course Objectives:

By the end of this course dutiful students will:

- Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the political history of the United States (Political Science Objectives 1 and 2) - measured by exams
- Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the political institutions, both formal and informal, of the United States (Political Science Objectives 1 and 2) - measured by exams
- Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the foundational texts of Political Science (Political Science 1, 2, and 3) - measured by written summaries and class participation
- Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of political science writing and presentation (Political Science Objective 3) - measured by written summaries and class participation

V. Course Requirements & Grading Standards:

A variety of examination methods will be employed.

Multiple Choice Examinations (50%)

There will be three exams in the class: a preliminary exam (10%), midterm (15%) and a final (25%). These will be standard multiple-choice, matching and short answer tests where you select the best answer given a single section tree. Textbook readings and lecture notes will constitute the base from which question will be drawn. Reading and accurate note taking will be central to good grades on these exams.

Weekly Quizzes (30%)

Students will complete weekly quizzes. These will be performed on a computer with the lockdown browser and respondus monitor and due every Friday.

Class Lab and Attendance (20%)

Our class is designed to be a lab. We will engage with a variety of material in class. This includes electronic video games, simulations, additional writing, and other projects. Participation in the lab means more than just attending, it means engaging. These projects are all pass / fail. Either students play the game or not. Full points are given for engaging and no points are given for not meeting the minimum requirements of engagement. Don't expect to hang out in the back row. We will be mixing it up!

I will also take attendance every day using the attendance feature on blackboard. Students will have a limited time to log in using their device (laptop or phone) at the beginning or end of each class period. To be present students must attend and they must use the tool when directed. I am asking that students use their own moral code to not attempt to cheat the system. Please do not help others sign in if they are not physically present in class and do not yourself attempt to circumvent the system.

VI. Materials Needed

- Required Texts:
 - *Readings in American Politics* by Ken Kollman (ISBN: 978-0-393-91282-1)
 - *The American Political System* by Ken Kollman (ISBN: 978-0-393-92696-5)
- Any additional readings will be provided through Blackboard.

VII. Required Educational Technology

Respondus LockDown Browser

LockDown Browser Monitor is a self-proctor program that will record students while taking an exam. There is a process to setting this up, so I will be checking the week prior to the first exam (see course schedule) to make sure the program has been downloaded and there are no issues. Linked below are instructions for you to download and install LockDown Browser Monitor. Please contact me if you have any questions or difficulty. [Respondus LockDown Browser Install and Download](#)

Google Drive

Some resources and assignments required access to Google Drive. You have an account connected to your OC email with unlimited storage. To access your OC Google Drive, go to www.drive.google.com and enter your OC credentials.

VIII. Course Policies:

Attendance and Class Etiquette

Students are expected to participate in class. Students who consistently fail to attend will lose participation points. They will also miss the opportunity to take part in our labs.

Fostering a learning environment means there are certain ground rules required of all students both towards each other and towards the professor. When discussing material students should be prepared to pay attention and participate. When talking with other students, respect must always be shown. There should be no shouting (or caps shouting online, do you want to look old?) or other types of intimidation or violence. I want to help you, but I will not be subject to abuse – verbal or physical – and I will not change grades on the basis of such behavior. Students who cannot abide the rules will be asked to leave or reported appropriately.

This includes wearing masks, social distancing, and other love your neighbor policies.

Cell Phones, Laptops and Etiquette

Imagine our classroom is a business meeting and I am your supervisor. I will need you in many cases to use technology, but there is an appropriate and an inappropriate way to do so. If you don't think you would do it in front of your supervisor, then you shouldn't do it in class. Device use during class should be targeted toward learning and advancing our collective conversation. If devices need to be used for personal purposes the student should excuse themselves outside the classroom so as not to disrupt class. Devices used for any purpose the instructor deems inappropriate will be asked to leave. Habitual offenders may also receive penalties affecting their final grade.

Email Policy

As a professor I will supply you with timely feedback to questions and inquiries. In order to facilitate that timeliness I require help from the student. Email subjects should contain the class name and time, e.g. American Federal Government 8am: Concerning Attendance. Emails should come from your school account if they deal with anything substantive concerning your grade, attendance, assignments, etc. in order to comply with federal laws concerning your privacy. Emails should be signed.

I am not available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (See me if you would like to purchase a package that includes a 24 hour hotline. I also have packages where I deliver coffee for you during class for an additional monthly fee.) I check emails twice a day in order to remain productive for all students. If a question is brief I can generally deal with it immediately. If your need is more complex it will take more time to respond.



I may also need to see you in person for some issues. I love having students in my office so please feel free to stop by with any question or issue (which is much more enjoyable for me than email. I hate email to be honest). Please allocate time appropriately so that I can adequately serve your needs best.

Example: emailing me questions Sunday night about our Monday class is generally too late for a response or a resolution. I want to help every student in every class achieve their potential. That means giving yourself and me time to deal with any issue that may arise.

Participation

As noted in the grading section students achieve participation points by engaging meaningfully in each class period.

Late Exam policies

Makeup exams will not be given unless extenuating circumstances prevent the student from taking the exam as scheduled. Determination of extenuating circumstances will be at the sole discretion of the instructor, and will be limited to incidents such as illness, court appearances, etc. that are documented in writing. There is no guarantee that a student will be allowed the opportunity for a makeup exam.

Final Examination

Our final will be held during the given final examination period. A student who has more than three exams on one day you may request that the exam be rescheduled. You must contact the CAO in order for this to occur. Final examinations will not be given early unless approved by the Deans' Council upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances. Examples of extraordinary circumstances are non-elective surgery or being called to active duty.

IX. OC Syllabus Addendum

Please click [here](#) to see important additional OC policies regarding academic honesty, copyright/fair use, proctoring, sources of help, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and sexual misconduct (Title IX).