

Political Science 100
Power and Politics in America
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Spring Semester 2017 | Sections 152, 156 & 158

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-12:00 (or by appointment)

Participation

Recitations are discussion-based meetings, designed to give you an opportunity to discuss, analyze, and obtain a deeper understanding of the material presented in the lectures. As a discussion-based class, participation is essential in order to receive full credit. Most of the recitation time will be spent in discussion and debate, although some time may be allotted in each session for questions and answers related to that week's lectures.

As noted in the main lecture syllabus, 150 of your 350 grade points in this semester will be earned in the recitation. Those 150 points will be assigned as follows:

Reaction papers	-	-	-	30 points
Class Discussion	-	-	-	30 points
Classroom Activities	-	-	-	15 points
Research paper	-	-	-	60 points
Attendance	-	-	-	15 points

Attendance

The recitations will involve a great deal of active participation on the part of students, so you are expected to attend all of the recitations. If you have to miss a recitation, your best option will be to attend one of the other recitations for that week. If you cannot attend a recitation, you should speak the teaching assistant for that recitation before missing class.

Class Expectations

Each week you will have separate recitation readings (see below) which are designed to provide you with real-world application of the things you will be learning about in lecture. These readings are what we will discuss in class, and they will also be what you write reaction papers about. You are expected to be prepared for each class period. Being prepared means being on time, having the material read, and having something to contribute to the discussion.

Class Discussions are a time where you will be expected to discuss the weekly readings. I do not expect you to have a complete mastery of the material; however, it should be evident that you are reading. We will often tie in what you read for lecture, so please make sure you are equally prepared to discuss those readings as well. You will receive daily participation points based on your contributions. This accounts for 30 points of your final grade.

The reaction papers are individual efforts. They are to be two full pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double spaced). You are to briefly summarize the week's readings in one paragraph. You are to then analyze the arguments presented – which ones do you find particularly strong and why? Which ones do you feel are weak and why? Simply saying “it makes sense” is not a reason. These papers are intended to help you think critically about the implications of each topic. There will be a total of 3 required reaction papers required. It is up to you which weeks you choose to turn in a reaction paper. It is highly suggested that you do them early and not wait until the last 3 substantive reading weeks. You cannot turn in reaction papers on weeks where we do not have a discussion scheduled. All reaction papers must be submitted on your recitation's Canvas page the **Thursday before lecture (9:30 am)**. Late submissions will result in a 50% grade deduction. Papers submitted more than 24 hours late will not be accepted, and a grade of 0 will be recorded.

The research paper will be 6-7 full pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins). For this assignment you will be asked to formulate a hypothesis and test it. You will be reporting the results of your own analysis of original data that will be provided to you. These data should be used to test your hypothesis. More information on this important project will be provided as the semester progresses. The paper is due by **Friday, December 1st at 5:00 PM**. You will submit your paper via SafeAssign on the Canvas recitation page.

Respect and Conduct

As this is a political science class, we will discuss politics. We understand that some students may possess deeply held beliefs. The course is not meant to change beliefs, but to create an open dialogue about differing opinions and viewpoints. Students are asked to keep an open mind, attempt to understand other perspectives, and maintain a professional level of courtesy to everyone who enters the classroom. **Personal attacks will not be tolerated.** Our objective is to understand why we may have political disagreements, not promote them.

Furthermore, cell phones are not permitted to be out in class out of respect to the instructor.

Disability Accommodations

Individual accommodations are available to students with disabilities. To receive accommodation services, students must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities office at 132 Cranfield Administration building. Please discuss your individual needs with your instructor so accommodations can be provided.

Class Schedule

Week	Proposed Reform	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Jan 12-13	none	Recitation introduction			
Jan 19-20	Abolish Checks & Balances	Pro	Con	Paper	Paper
Jan 26-27	Abolish the Senate	Paper	Paper	Pro	Con
Feb 2-3	none	Exam review			
Feb 9-10 (Exam 1)	Abolish the Electoral College	Con	Pro	Paper	Paper
Feb 16-17	Abolish Judicial Review	Paper	Paper	Con	Pro
Feb 23-24	Ban Ideologues	Pro	Con	Paper	Paper
Mar 2-3	Abolish Primaries	Paper	Paper	Pro	Con
Mar 9-10	none	Exam review			
Mar 16-17 (Exam 2)	Abolish Campaign Finance	Con	Pro	Paper	Paper
Mar 23-24	None	Spring Break			
Mar 30-31	Make Voting Mandatory	Paper	Paper	Con	Pro
Apr 6-7	Fake News	Pro	Con	Paper	Paper
Apr 13-14	Abolish First Amendment	Paper	Paper	Pro	Con
Apr 20-21	Pass the Balanced Budget Amendment	Pro	Pro	Con	Con
Apr 27-28	none	Exam review			

Recitation readings

- **Jan 19-20 Abolish Checks & Balances**

- Pro: Institutions Worthy of Our Parties: Should the U.S. Switch to a Parliamentary System? (<http://www.psmag.com/politics-and-law/united-states-united-kingdom-politics-parliament-54769>)
- Pro: The shutdown is the Constitution's fault (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/10/02/the-shutdown-is-the-constitutions-fault/>)
- Con: Gridlock is bad. The alternative is worse. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/02/25/gridlock-is-bad-the-alternative-is-worse/>)
- Con: James Madison and the Origins of Partisanship (<http://www.cato.org/policy-report/januaryfebruary-2011/james-madison-origins-partisanship>)

- **Jan 26-27 Abolish the Senate**

- Pro: Smaller States Find Ourselves Growing in Senate (http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/03/11/us/politics/democracy-tested.html?_r=3&#smallstate)
- Con: The Sense of the Senate (<https://www.nationalreview.com/nrd/articles/309346/sense-senate>)

- **Feb 9-10 Abolish the Electoral College**

- Pro: The Tarnish of the Electoral College (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/16/opinion/the-tarnish-of-the-electoral-college.html>)
- National Popular Vote: Prepared remarks from press conference (<http://archive.nationalpopularvote.com/pages/releases/20060223.php>)
- Con: In Defense of the Electoral College (<http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/defense-electoral-college>)
- Con: In Defense of the Electoral College (Yes, they have the same name.) (http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/view_from_chicago/2012/11/defending_the_electoral_college.html)

- **Feb 16-17 Abolish Judicial Review**

- Pro: Abolishing Judicial Review (<http://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/163457/8-Tushnet-273-AbolishingJudicialReview.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>)
- Con: Why Law Should Lead (<https://newrepublic.com/article/73812/why-law-should-lead>)

- **Feb 23-24 Ban Ideologues**
 - Pro: How Politics Makes Us Stupid
(<http://www.vox.com/2014/4/6/5556462/brain-dead-how-politics-makes-us-stupid>)
 - Con: Why Politicians Shouldn't Dismiss Ideology
(<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2014/08/why-politicians-should-stop-dismissing-importance-ideology>)
- **Mar 2-3 Abolish Primaries**
 - Pro: To Reduce Partisanship, Get Rid of Partisans
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/22/opinion/22keisling.html>)
 - Pro: The Case against Presidential Primaries
(http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2012/01/the_case_against_presidential_primaries.html)
 - Con: Reforming primary elections won't make government better
(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2013/10/18/reforming-primary-elections-wont-make-government-better/>)
- **Mar 16-17 Abolish Campaign Finance Reform**
 - Pro: In Defense of *Citizens United* (PDF on Blackboard)
 - Con: Government By The 1%
(<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/07/big-campaign-spending-government-by-the-1/259599/>)
- **Mar 30-31 Make Voting Mandatory**
 - Pro: Understanding Nonvoters
(<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/11/07/should-voting-in-the-us-be-mandatory-14/understanding-nonvoters>)
 - Pro: A case for compulsory voting
(https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ruth-marcus-a-case-for-compulsory-voting/2014/11/04/9b486afe-6463-11e4-836c-83bc4f26eb67_story.html)
 - Con: Is compulsory voting justified?
(<http://www.lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/researchHighlights/politics/isCompulsoryVotingJustified.aspx>)
 - Con: Mandatory Voting Would Be a Disaster
(<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/11/07/should-voting-in-the-us-be-mandatory-14/mandatory-voting-would-be-a-disaster>)

- **Apr 6-7 Ban Blatant Falsehoods from the Media**
 - Pro: Fake News and the miseducation of Dylann Roof.
(<http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/charleston/fake-news-and-the-miseducation-of-dylann-roof/Content?oid=6414760>)
 - Con: Facebook doesn't have to ban fake news to fight it.
(<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/nov/25/facebook-fake-news-fight-mark-zuckerberg>)
 - Who needs facts anyway? The pros and cons of fact checking presidential debates. (<http://lawreview.law.miami.edu/facts-anyway-pros-cons-fact-checking-presidential-debates-real-time/>)
 - Why Conservatives might be more likely to fall for fake news
(https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/12/07/why-conservatives-might-be-more-likely-to-fall-for-fake-news/?utm_term=.82bfaa1abf75)
- **Apr 13-14 Get Rid of the First Amendment**
 - Pro: ISIS Gives Us No Choice
(http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/view_from_chicago/2015/12/isis_s_online_radicalization_efforts_present_an_unprecedented_danger.single.html)
 - Pro: The First Amendment Allows Hate Speech
(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/05/07/no-theres-no-hate-speech-exception-to-the-first-amendment/>)
 - Con: Christopher Hitchens On Free Speech
(<https://howtoplayalone.wordpress.com/hitchens-on-free-speech/>)
- **Apr 20-21 Pass the Balanced Budget Amendment**
 - Pro: Constitutional Solutions To Our Escalating National Debt: Examining Balanced Budget Amendments (<http://mercatus.org/sites/default/files/Primo-budget-amendment-testimony.pdf>) PDF
 - Con: The Balanced Budget Amendment: What Would Hamilton Say?
(<http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/08/3652/>)