

American Government
Political Science 540
University of Montana
Tuesday, 3:30-5:50, LA 344
Spring 2020

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Office: Liberal Arts 354
Office Hrs: Tu/Th. 11-12
& by appointment

Required Texts and Other Readings

We will read the following books:

- Nicholas Buccola, *The Fire is upon Us: James Baldwin, William F. Buckley Jr. and the Debate Over Race in America* (Princeton University Press, 2019).
- Andrea Louise Campbell, *Trapped in America's Safety Net* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).
- Yuval Levin, *A Time to Build* (Basic Books, 2020).
- Brink Lindsey and Steven M. Teles, *The Captured Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2017).
- David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (Yale University Press, 1975).
- Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Readings in scholarly journals can be accessed through the Mansfield Library's website. Other readings are available via the web links provided on this syllabus. And still other readings—designated with an asterisk (*)—will be posted on the course's Moodle website. The instructor reserves the right to add, eliminate, or alter course readings.

Requirements and Grading

Participation:	33.3%
Research Paper:	33.3%
Final Exam:	33.3%

Participation: Most of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings in a seminar setting. As such, class participation will be very important. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Daily attendance will be taken. *Students missing 3 or more of our scheduled class meetings will not pass the course.*

- Every other week, students will write a two-page response paper on a *central aspect* of that week's material, circulate it to the class via email by 8:00 AM on Tuesday (so others have time to read it prior to class), and present their response papers in class.
- Students will formally present their research papers in class at the end of the semester.

Research Paper: Students will write a paper of about 20 pages on a topic of their choosing that is related to the course and that is approved by the instructor. Papers will be due on April 28. Each student will meet with the instructor at least once during the semester to discuss his/her paper and its design.

Final Exam: All students will complete a take-home final exam at the end of the semester.

Field Exam: Graduate students in the Political Science M.A. program will also complete American Government field exam.

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A	93-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D+	67-69.9	F	below 60
A-	90-92.9	B	83-86.9	C	73-76.9	D	63-66.9		
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9	D-	60-62.9		

**** The Final Exam and the Research Paper must be completed in order to pass the course.****

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

Accessibility

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements must contact the instructor as soon as possible and must contact DSS in order to arrange for a letter of approval for accommodations to be provided to the instructor. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154; phone: (406) 243-2243.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: THINKING ABOUT THE STUDY OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Week 1, Jan. 14: Introduction to the Course

Week 2, Jan. 21: What is Political Science, and What Should it Aspire to?

Week 3, Jan. 28: Traditional Political Science

PART II: CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH TRADITIONS IN THEORY & PRACTICE

Week 4, Feb. 4: Behaviorism

Week 5, Feb. 11: Individual Research Paper Conferences

Week 6, Feb. 18: Rational Choice Theory

Week 7, Feb. 25: Historical Institutionalism and American Political Development

PART III: POLITICAL SCIENCE GOES TO WASHINGTON

Week 8, Mar. 3: Inequality and the Captured Economy

Week 9, Mar. 10: Reforming American Social Policy

Week 10, Mar. 17: Spring Break

Week 11, Mar. 24: Politics is Downstream of Culture

PART IV: DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME: SOCIAL SCIENCE SCANDAL!

Week 12, Mar. 31: Irregularities in LaCour

Week 13, Apr. 7: A Criminal Research Agenda?

PART V: CONCLUSION

Week 14, Apr. 14: The Role of Ideas

Week 15, April 21: Research Paper Presentations

Week 16, Apr. 28: Research Paper Presentations