POS 6045

Seminar in American Politics

Spring 2019

Instructor: Jonathan Knuckey

Course Overview

Welcome to the Seminar in American Politics!

This course is designed to meet the needs of graduate students who wish to acquire greater knowledge about American politics, teach American politics or who want in the near future to do original research, such as an MA thesis. Additionally, this course will provide a solid foundation for more specialized graduate seminars in political science that you might take in the future, as well as serving as an introduction and overview of the American politics literature for those who intend to go on at some point to enter a doctoral program.

An introductory course such as this generally aims to acquaint students with the breadth of work in the field and does so at the expense of depth. In many ways this course will be no different. But the breadth of work in American Politics is huge, and we will not be able to cover it all. However, I hope the selected topics and readings, will provide you with an introduction to a wide array of concerns, intellectual problems, controversies, theoretical approaches, research design, and methods of inquiry that relate to contemporary American politics

I look forward to the seminar and hope you find it enjoyable and informative. I look forward to learning a lot from you!

Contact Information

Office: Political Science department, Phillips Hall 302L

Office hours: Monday and Tuesday, 9.30am-11.00am; 12.30-2.00pm. Please feel free to also make an appointment with me during regular business hours outside of these days/times.

Email: Use email in Webcourses.

Skype: I am happy to talk via Skype. My Skype name is jonathan.knuckey70

Course Requirements & Expectations

Requirements for this course can be organized into the four primary areas. Specific details for each component can be found in the syllabus in Webcourses

(1) Weekly Reaction Papers.

(2) Weekly Questions.

(3) Seminar Participation.

(4) Data Analysis Paper.

Grades

Your overall grade will be weighted as follows:

Seminar participation**:** 25%

Weekly papers: 25%

Weekly discussion topic posts**:** 15%

Annotated bibliography for paper: 10%

Data analysis paper: 20%

Poster session presentation of research paper findings: 5%

Note: To receive a passing grade in the course students must complete ALL of the above course requirements, i.e., the end of semester poster session is mandatory.

Overall course grade boundaries are as follows:

A: 93%+

A-: 90-92.9%

B+: 88-89.9%

B: 83-87.9%

B-: 80-82.9%

C+: 78-79.9%

C: 73-77.9%

C-: 70-72.9%

D: 60-69.9%

F: Below 60%

Consider the substantive interpretation of grades as follows: A/A- is excellent work, B+/B/B- is good, C+/C/C- is average and D is a marginal pass.

Note: No graduate-level course with a grade of "D+" or lower can be used to complete a course requirement, but the grade is calculated into the overall GPA. Only a maximum total of six semester credit hours of “C” grades (including C+ and C-), or the “C” grade credits associated with at most two classes (whichever is greater) may counted toward a graduate program of study.

Other Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance in a graduate seminar is assumed. I also expect that everyone arrives for the seminar on time and stays for the duration. We will have a 10 minute break each work after about 1 hour. Repeated tardiness and/or constantly coming and going during the seminar - without explanation - will potentially result in a reduction in the participation grade.

If you do need to miss a seminar meeting because of **genuinely exceptional circumstances** please contact me ahead of time to let me know that you will not be able to attend and to make arrangements to complete an alternate assignment in lieu of attendance and class participation, usually this will entail a more extensive paper based on the readings for the seminar you miss.

Student Conduct

Please familiarize yourself with the UCF Golden Rule handbook, which outlines expectation concerning both academic and non-academic student conduct.

I expect seminarians to assist in maintaining an environment which is both respectful and conducive to learning. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from making offensive or disparaging remarks, reading newspapers, reading or doing work for other classes, sleeping or engaging in any other form of distraction.

Religious holidays

Any student missing a written assignment or class because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work, provided that this does not create an undue burden on the university of instructor. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first week of class of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess.

Submission of late papers

Submission of late papers really should not be an issue in graduate school. I do know, however, that life sometimes can throw the unexpected at us. So, if you think you might not be able to submit a paper by a deadline, please let me know ahead of time, and provide a convincing rationale for doing so. It usually will have to be some extenuating circumstance, other than failing to manage your time accordingly. If weekly papers are consistently submitted after the due date, then I reserve the right to reduce the grade on those papers.

This policy does not apply to the annotated bibliogrpahy nor the data analysis paper, which will be subject to a letter grade reduction for up to two days after the due date.

Incompletes

Incompletes are discouraged and are assigned only under extenuating circumstances. Since degrees will not be certified with an incomplete on the degree audit, "I" grades will be changed to "F" if not resolved by the stipulated deadlines. "I" grades are considered "unsatisfactory" grades until resolved for program of study purposes.

Note: Incomplete grades are not counted as completed courses or recognized as such by Financial Aid. Therefore, students on financial assistance must check with the Financial Aid office to see if the receipt of an incomplete grade will affect their financial award.

Special Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities.This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from me.

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to change, add or modify any part of the syllabus. Of course, advance notice will be given of any such changes.

Course Schedule, Topics and Readings

Books can be purchased from the UCF Bookstore. You might be able to find the books at a cheaper price than the UCF Bookstore.

Most, if not all, of the journal articles are available online through JSTOR, or the website of the respective journals, which the UCF library has electronic access to. If you are not on-campus you will need to log-in to the UCF library via a proxy server.

January 8th: Seminar Introduction

January 15th: Political Participation

Readings TBD

January 22nd: The 2016 Election & American Politics

- , *Identity Politics*

January 29th: Political Parties & the Presidential Nomination Process

No seminar meeting this week

- Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel and John Zaller . *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*

February 5th: Political Parties & the Presidential Nomination Process

- Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel and John Zaller . *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*

February 12th: The Mass Media & American Politics

Readings TBD

February 26th: Authoritarianism & Political Polarization in American Politics

- Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler, *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*

February 19th: Women & American Politics

Readings TBD

March 5th: The South & American Politics

- M.V. Hood, Quentin Kidd and Irwin Morris, *The Rational Southerner*

Spring Break

March 19th: Racial Minorities & American Politics

Readings TBD

March 26th: The Presidency & American Politics

- James David Barber, *Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (4th Edition)

No seminar meeting this week

April 2th: The Presidency & American Politics

- James David Barber, *Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (4th Edition)

April 9th: Religion & Politics

Readings TBD

April 16th: Anti-Immigrant Sentiment & American Politics

- Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan L. Hajnal. *White Backlash: Immigration, Race, and American Politics*

April 30th: Data Analysis Paper Poster Session (7.00-9.50pm)

You will present your data analysis paper findings during a poster session. Specific details on the format of the poster session will be provided during the semester.

Note: Based on mutual agreement we may move what is technically our "final exam" starting time back an hour so presentations can begin at 6.00pm.