POLITICAL SCIENCE 1120: AMERICAN POLITICS
Syllabus, Spring 2021

Instructor: Michael S. Rocca, Associate Professor
Office: Virtual (via Zoom)
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00am-10:30am, via Zoom.
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SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This course is designed to introduce students to the institutions of American national government and the processes of American political life. We will analyze the logic of American politics, paying particular attention to causes and consequences institutional design in the American political system. To fulfill these objectives, we will examine the constitutional basis of American government and the institutional structure of the Presidency, Congress, and Supreme Court which was built on that political foundation. Complementing this institutional focus will be an exploration of how U.S. citizens translate their political aspirations into governmental action. For example, what is the role of interest groups and political parties in representing the views of the citizenry? How do elections and shifts in public opinion affect governmental decision-making?

REQUIRED READINGS

Textbook

➢ Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, Lynn Vavreck. 2019. *The Logic of American Politics, 9th Edition.* Interactive eBook. CQ Press: Thousand Oaks, CA

This book is available through UNM's "inclusive access" program which provides an electronic version of the book. This program is convenient for you, because you only need to log into Blackboard Learn to access your material - no need to stand in line or send away for anything. Your textbook will be charged to your Bursar Account after the add/drop deadline. It is also a lot cheaper than buying the textbook.

If you would prefer a hard copy of the book, you can opt out. You should have already received an email from the UNM Bookstore explaining how to opt out. If you would like to learn more about Inclusive Access, or need help, please visit the Bookstore's webpage: https://bookstore.unm.edu/t-1unm_inclusiveaccess.aspx If you do opt out, you should be able to find the textbook online (e.g. Amazon).

COURSE WEBSITE

This course will be conducted entirely online through UNM Learn. The course has been designed to be completed asynchronously; that is, to be completed remotely at your own pace. To access the course's Learn page go to learn.unm.edu and login using your UNM NetID and password. A link to our POL 1120 course should appear (if it does not, see me immediately – you may not be registered in the class).

I will keep the course material at least *two weeks* ahead of the class schedule. This will allow me to make adjustments during the semester if necessary, while also allowing you to move ahead if you would like.

Our class website contains everything you will need to complete the course. The course requirements can be found under the heading, "Chapter Requirements." It includes:

1) <u>Textbook Readings</u>. This where you will find our textbook in an interactive e-book format.

2) <u>Chapter Lessons</u>. This where you will find your weekly lessons, which require you to "watch," "read," and/or "do." These include:

   a. Short "micro-lectures" where I review important topics from the readings
   b. Brief online videos or clips that illustrate course concepts
   c. Additional readings that illustrate course concepts
   d. Online activities that illustrate course concepts

   ✓ Each task under "Chapter Lessons" is designed to be completed in the order in which they appear on the page. But you can skip around if you prefer.

3) <u>Chapter Assignments</u>. This is where you will find your graded assignments. They include:
   a. Weekly data assignments
   b. Weekly reflection paper

4) <u>Chapter Checklists</u>. These checklists are designed to help you stay organized during the semester. They are *not* graded and *not* required.

   ➢ These tasks are designed to be completed in *chronological order* each week. That is, each week read the textbook chapter first, then move to the chapter lessons, then do the assignments, and complete the checklists.

OFFICE HOURS

I will be holding virtual office hours via Zoom every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00am to 10:30am. You may sign up for an appointment through our Learn website, accessed through the "*Schedule an Appointment*" link. Sign your name into the appropriate time slot on the Excel worksheet. When it is time to attend the appointment, select the "*Attend Office Hours*." I recommend selecting the link a few minutes <u>before</u> the time slot. You should land in my Zoon waiting room first; if you do not, or if there is any other problem, please email me.

✓ If you would like to join with classmate, be sure to sign both names into the time slot.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION PERIOD

This is a fascinating time in American politics. Unfortunately, an online, asynchronous class is not ideal when there is so much to talk about. In addition to my weekly office hours, I will offer a short optional discussion period each week for those interested in discussing politics with classmates and friends. We will use that period to discuss current events and relevant course material. This is entirely optional; it is simply an opportunity to engage with your classmates and material in a more deliberative environment.

The discussion period will be held from 9:30-10:00am every Wednesday morning (except for spring break). No need to sign up; just show up. You can join the Zoom session by following the link on our Learn page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Data Assignments (15 assignments, 3 points per week, 45 total points)

Analyzing data is becoming increasingly important in political science. Examining the determinants and consequences of public opinion polls, election outcomes, presidential approval ratings, party affiliation, campaign spending, media viewership, etc. is central to understanding American politics. In fact, the ability to analyze data is becoming important is *every* profession.

Each week you will required to complete a very short data assignment, available in the "chapter assignments" heading on Learn. Each assignment will require you to carefully examine a table or figure and answer <u>three</u> multiple choice questions. Each question is worth 1 point, for a total of 45 points for the semester.

✓ All data assignments are by May 9th at 11:59pm. I will not accept late data assignments.

Weekly Reflection Papers (5 papers, 20 points each, 100 points total)

You are required to complete **five** reflection papers by the end of the semester. Each paper is worth 20 points for a total of 100 points. If you do more than 5 papers, only your **highest** five scores will count towards your grade. The paper will be a minimum of 400 words (about 1.5 pages) in length using double-spaced pages and 12-point Times New Roman font. My advice is to aim for about 500 words (2 pages). Keep it concise and thoughtful. Your grade will be based on the formatting, organization, grammar, and content/development of your paper. You can access and review the grading rubric under each assignment.

The reflection papers can be found under each chapter in the "Chapter Assignments" heading in Learn. You will be asked to respond to the same question each week:

> *Reflect on something you learned related to this week's lessons. Write a short paper on that topic and answer this question: "What do you think?" This prompt is purposely open-ended; I want you to feel free to write about whatever inspired you from the chapter's lesson(s).*
>
> *Be sure your paper is analytical, thoughtful, and developed. It should also have strong mechanics; it should be well organized and formatted with sound grammar. The paper should be a minimum of 400 words (about 1.5 pages) in length using double-spaced pages and 12-point Times New Roman font. My advice is to aim for about 500 words (2 pages). You can either write your reflection paper in the space provided below or upload an attached document (e.g. a Word document). It is worth 20 points (see grading rubric for scoring guidance).*

If you prefer a answering a more specific question, I also provide an idea for reflection at the end of each prompt inspired by that week's lessons. A rubric will be used to evaluate the papers and can be found in under each assignment as well.

✓ All assignments are due by the dates and times below. Late papers will be penalized 5 points for every day that it is late. The first "day" begins at midnight (12:00am). There are no exceptions to this rule.

  ✓ **Chapter 1**: January 31st, 11:59pm
  ✓ **Chapter 2:** February 7th, 11:59pm
  ✓ **Chapter 3:** February 14th, 11:59pm
  ✓ **Chapter 4:** February 21st, 11:59pm
  ✓ **Chapter 5:** February 28th, 11:59pm
  ✓ **Chapter 6:** March 7th, 11:59pm
  ✓ **Chapter 7:** March 14th, 11:59pm

✓ **Chapter 8:** March 28th, 11:59pm
✓ **Chapter 9:** April 4th, 11:59pm
✓ **Chapter 10:** April 11th, 11:59pm
✓ **Chapter 11:** April 18th, 11:59pm
✓ **Chapter 12:** April 25th, 11:59pm
✓ **Chapter 13:** May 2nd, 11:59pm
✓ **Chapter 14:** May 9th, 11:59pm

Chapter Exams (3 exams, 100 points each, 300 points total)

There will be three chapter exams, each worth 100 points (200 points total). The exams will be administered through our course website and will consist of multiple-choice questions and a short essay question. You will have 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete the exam from the time that you begin the exam. You will not have the option to pause, and then restart, the clock. Your clock will start once you begin the exam and will continue until the 1 hour and 15 minutes is up, just as if you were in a normal classroom setting. The exams are open book and open notes. That said, I would not rely too heavily on the textbook and your notes; they will likely slow you down. If you are prepared, you should be able to complete the exams well before the time limit. In fact, assuming you are prepared, the exams are designed to be completed within *one* hour.

If you disagree with a grade, you have one week from the exam's due date to request a re-grade. The grade may go up, down or stay the same. You may set up an office hours appointment anytime if you wish to discuss your grade.

✓ Each exam will be available under the "Chapter Exams" heading on Learn during the specific time windows below. You may take the exams anytime during the respective windows, but the exam must be completed within 1 hour and 15 minutes from when you begin the exam. And they *must be completed by the due dates*. Late exams will be penalized 5 points for every day that it is late. The first "day" begins at midnight (12:00am). The only exception to this rule is Exam #3. Since it falls during finals week, I will not accept late exams.

   o **Exam #1, Chapters 1-5**:
      o Test will be made available at 11:59pm on February 21st
      o It is due by February 28th, 11:59pm

   o **Exam #2, Chapters 6-9:**
      o Test will be made available at 11:59pm on March 28th
      o It is due by April 4th, 11:59pm
      ➢ ***1/18 UPDATE: This exam window has been corrected from the syllabus discussed in the syllabus review video. The window for Exam #2 is **3/28 to 4/4**, *not* 3/21 to 3/28 as noted in the video.

   o **Exam #3, Chapters 10-14**:
      o Test will be made available at 11:59pm on May 9th
      o It is due by May 12th, 11:59pm (late exam will not be accepted)

Final Grade

Your final grade will consist of the scores from your 5 highest response paper scores (100 points), 3 exam scores (300 points), and 15 data assignment scores (45 points). So your grade will be determined from a maximum of 445 points. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Point Breakdown	Percentage Breakdown
425 – 445 = A+	97% – 100% =A+
412 – 424 = A	93% – 96% = A
399 – 411 = A-	90% – 92% = A-
381 – 398 = B+	87% – 89% = B+
368 – 380 = B	83% – 86% = B
354 – 367 = B-	80% – 82% = B-
341 – 353 = C+	77% – 79% = C+
323 – 340 = C	73% – 76% = C
310 – 322 = C-	70% – 72% = C-
296 – 309 = D+	67% – 69% = D+
279 – 295 = D	63% – 66% = D
265 – 278 = D-	60% – 62% = D-
Less than 265 = F	Less than 60% = F

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.
- The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.
- The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.
- The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.
- The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.
- The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.
- The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen.

CLASS POLICIES

- If you have a serious problem, you should contact me IMMEDIATELY. I can do more to help you if you let me know what is happening before you miss deadlines.

- Re-grading Policy: If you have a question about a grade, you must provide me with a written explanation of your concerns. I re-grade the entire assignment/test. You will receive the new grade – higher or lower. You will have 7 days from the day the grade is delivered to submit a request for a re-grade. I will not accept requests more than 7 days after they are returned.

- All withdraws (W) from the course must be initiated by *the student* through LoboWeb or the Registrar's Office during the semester.

- Questions are ALWAYS appropriate.

- I encourage students to challenge the ideas discussed in this class. In all discussion, everyone must provide his or her fellow students with full respect and courtesy.

- Cheating and plagiarism will be punished to the fullest extent possible.

- All lectures, handouts, assignments and exams are the property of the professor and may not be published on the web or in any other manner without permission.

RESPECTFUL CAMPUS STATEMENT

Our classroom and our university should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Should you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access the resources available to you on campus, especially the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center and the support services listed on its website (http://loborespect.unm.edu/). Please note that, because UNM faculty, TAs, and GAs are considered "responsible employees" by the Department of Education, any disclosure of gender discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence) made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported by that faculty member, TA, or GA to the university's Title IX coordinator. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, please see: https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html.

ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she are not legally permitted to inquire. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow. Contact Accessibility Resource Center at 277-3506 for additional information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

TITLE IX STATEMENT

A Note About Sexual Violence and Sexual Misconduct: As a UNM faculty member, I am required to inform the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Equal Opportunity (oeo.unm.edu) of any report I receive of gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and/or sexual violence. You can read the full campus policy regarding sexual misconduct at https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html. If you have experienced sexual violence or sexual misconduct, please ask a faculty or staff member for help or contact the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center.

COURSE OUTLINE, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK ONE (1/18):   INTRODUCTION, GETTING USED TO LEARN

WEEK TWO (1/25):   THE LOGIC OF AMERICAN POLITICS
Required Reading: Chapter 1 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 1 lessons and assignments

WEEK THREE (2/1):   THE CONSTITUTION
Required Reading: Chapter 2 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 2 lessons and assignments

WEEK FOUR (2/8):   FEDERALISM
Required Reading: Chapter 3 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 3 lessons and assignments

WEEK FIVE (2/15):   CIVIL RIGHTS
Required Reading: Chapter 4 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 4 lessons and assignments

WEEK SIX (2/22):   CIVIL LIBERTIES
Required Reading: Chapter 5 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 5 lessons and assignments

➢ **First exam on chapters 1 – 5**.
Test will be made available at 11:59pm on 2/21 and is due by 11:59pm on 2/28.

WEEK SEVEN (3/1)   CONGRESS
Required Reading: Chapter 6 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 6 lessons and assignments

WEEK EIGHT (3/8):   THE PRESIDENCY
Required Reading: Chapter 7 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 7 lessons and assignments

WEEK NINE (3/15):   *SPRING BREAK*

WEEK TEN (3/22):   THE BUREAUCRACY
Required Reading: Chapter 8 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 8 lessons and assignments

WEEK ELEVEN (3/29)   THE JUDICIARY
Required Reading: Chapter 9 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 9 lessons and assignments

➢ **Second exam on chapters 6 – 9**.
Test will be made available at 11:59pm on 3/28 and is due by 11:59pm on 4/4.

WEEK TWELVE (4/5):   PUBLIC OPINION
Required Reading: Chapter 10 in the textbook
Also Required: Chapter 10 lessons and assignments

WEEK THIRTEEN (4/12):   VOTING, CAMPAIGNS, AND ELECTIONS
Required Reading: Chapter 11 in the textbook

Also Required:	Chapter 11 lessons and assignments
WEEK FOURTEEN (4/19):	POLITICAL PARTIES
Required Reading:	Chapter 12 in the textbook
Also Required:	Chapter 12 lessons and assignments
WEEK FIFTEEN (4/26):	INTEREST GROUPS
Required Reading:	Chapter 13 in the textbook
Also Required:	Chapter 13 lessons and assignments
WEEK SIXTEEN (5/3):	MASS MEDIA
Required Reading:	Chapter 14 in the textbook
Also Required:	Chapter 14 lessons and assignments
FINALS WEEK (5/10):	CATCH UP/REVIEW

➢ **Third exam on chapters 10 – 14**.
   Test will be made available at 11:59pm on 5/9 and is due by 11:59pm on 5/12.

A FINAL THOUGHT

Remote teaching is still a new experience for me, so I expect there to be some hiccups along the way. If you notice something amiss on your end, please email me as soon as possible and I will address it as soon as I can. I may also make a few adjustments to our chapter lessons and website as I gain more experience. I will keep you informed if I do.

I am really excited about all of the possibilities remote teaching affords us. We'll have the chance to watch entertaining and informative videos, engage with data and online exercises, and read articles from some of the most important political analysts around. I am going to do my best to provide an engaging, informative, and organized class for you. On your end, please remain patient, communicative, and, most important, *engaged*.

This is a GREAT time to study politics!