Domestic Politics and Policies
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Office: 2114 Hamburg Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00 PM or by appointment. Please feel free to email me to request an appointment
TAs: Kevin Leary (Kpleary@gmail.com) and Karen Christianson (klchrist@andrew.cmu.edu)

Objectives
Knowledge
The purpose of this course is to study the structure of the American government, the main actors in the policy process, as well as critical policy issues. The emphasis will be on the study of the central political institutions: The Presidency and Congress, as well as critical decisions of the Supreme Court and their societal impact. The course will also emphasize the analysis of critical socio-economic policies including social and educational policies, among others. We will also analyze Supreme Court decisions regarding minorities’ rights, gender issues and voting rights among others. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to analyze and discuss the evolution of key political and policy issues. We will place special emphasis on the interactions between government and society and the role of social and interest groups in the process.

Skills:
The course emphasize the development of analytical skills. Students will develop these analytical skills in three different forms and through four different processes:

a) Class discussions which will allow the students to develop the ability to analyze and discuss different policy positions in an academic environment

b) Writing policy memos: It is critical for all of us to be able to summarize a problem, present possible solutions, and recommend policies/solutions to others. The policy memos allow the students to develop these very important skills. Typically, students are expected to assume the role of a policy maker and provide specific policies to the President, or one of his advisors. The policy memos emphasize the use of relevant data, the analysis of the problem, and the policy design.

c) Group presentations: Group presentations are geared to allow the student to develop the ability to work in a project with two or three other students, learn about a specific topic in depth, and prepare a class presentation either using power point, or class handouts. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the presentation the instructor meets with the student about a week before the presentation to set the specific topics and parameters of the presentation. A draft of the handout or slides needs to be submitted to the instructor at least 48 hours before the presentation. The slides or handouts will be reviewed by the instructor in order to verify the effectiveness of the presentation and comments will be sent to the group. The group is encouraged to debate alternative policy positions.
Conclusion
At the end of the course the student is expected to have learned about the specific institutions and policies included in the syllabus and the principles and actors that inform those policies. Students will also develop a set of analytical, presentation, and writing skills that will be used in a professional setting.

Required readings
Students will have to read the following five books during the term.
Please note that some of these books are available in Kindle version. Feel free to use either a paper or an electronic version if available. If you are using a kindle version, please make sure to keep track of locations for citations.
You don’t need to buy Martin Giles, Affluence and Influence because we are only going to use part of the book and I’ll make it available to the class via email.


Michael Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, CQ Press, 2012, Paperback


Martin Giles, Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America, Princeton University Press, 2012


Additional articles are available on blackboard

Requirements and Grading
Students are required to attend class, to have done the reading assignments, and to participate in the class discussions. The classes will be run as a combination of lectures, discussions and class presentations/debates.

Students will have:
  a) To write three policy papers or memos,
  b) To do a class presentation
  c) To attend class
d) To participate in the class discussions
**Students are expected to fulfill the class requirements on the assigned dates.** Make-up dates for papers will be granted only for medical reasons, or unique personal reasons. Students should present a note from the attending physician if there is a medical reason for not fulfilling the class requirements.

**Class Attendance: Students are required to attend class**
**Students who do not attend class will have their grade substantially reduced.** Grade reduction will proceed as follows:
- 4-5 unexcused absences = one point reduction i.e. from A to B
- 6-7 unexcused absences = two points reduction i.e. from A to C
- Over 8 unexcused absences = student will fail the class
If you have a medical or personal reason for missing class please make sure to email the instructor before class.

**Grading:**
Presentation/debate: 25%
Three policy memos = 75% (25% each)

**Policy Memos:** Students will have to write three policy memos.
Guidelines and topics will be distributed about 10-12 days before the memo is due
**All memos should be submitted via email to** sb6n@andrew.cmu.edu

**Policy memos Due dates**
- **Feb 14:** First policy memo due before 10:00 PM
- **March 26:** Second policy memo due before 10:00 PM
- **April 28:** Third policy memo due before 10:00 PM

**Memo Grading Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Impact on the grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar and spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor problems</td>
<td>minus half grade point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major problems</td>
<td>minus one point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing sections:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Abstract and/ or conclusions:</td>
<td>minus half point each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Missing one of the content sections:</td>
<td>minus one point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


c) Failing to analyze the problem: minus one point

**Recommendations:**
No recommendations minus one point
Recommendation idea, no development or implementation: minus half point per recommendation

**Citations:**
Depending on the seriousness of the problem: minus one point to failing grade

**Presentation Guidelines: Please read these guidelines carefully**
Students will be asked to select topics for class presentation/debate during the second week of classes. The instructor will form groups of 2-4 students based on the students’ preferences.

**Presentation guidelines:**

a) The presentation can be structured either a debate, or a presentation depending on the nature of the topic. Students will be encouraged to debate the issues and present opposing viewpoints on the issues such support or opposition to health reform, support or opposition to No Child Left Behind, etc.
b) The topic for the presentation/debate will be chosen by the students during the second week of classes.
c) Topics and dates for the presentation will be distributed during the third week of classes.
d) The debaters/presenters will have to meet with the instructor at least a week before the presentation to determine the specific issues and the format.
e) The debaters/presenters are expected to do an in-depth analysis of the policy/problem.
f) The debate/presentation should last no more than 20 min.
g) The debaters/presenters have to prepare either a power point or a handout to distribute to the class summarizing the issues. The use of Power Point is optional.
h) The presenters/debaters have to email the instructor a draft copy of the presentation no later than 48 hours before the presentation. The final copy should be emailed to the instructor and the TA no later than 24 hours before the presentation.
i) The debaters/presenters have to provide a couple of discussion questions at the end of their presentation.

**Presentation grading guidelines**
The presentation will be graded according to the following guidelines:
Content: are the critical issues been addressed?
Presentation Style: are the presenters addressing the audience in a clear and convincing manner?
Slides or handout: quality of the slides or handout
Each of these factors will account for 1/3 of the grade

**Cheating and Plagiarism.**

In case of cheating or plagiarism the instructor:

a) Will make full use of University and the Heinz College policies and regulations.

b) A full report of the incident will be send to the Program Director and the Associate Dean.

c) Students who plagiarize (represent someone else work as yours) will fail the exam/paper (get 0 points in the assignment) and as a result will fail the course. There will be no exemptions made to this rule.

d) Please remember that the internet makes it very easy to plagiarize, but it also makes it very easy to find the plagiarized material. In other words, Google works for you and for me

For more details please see the University Policy on Academic Integrity in the CMU Website

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**Please note:**

**Laptops are not allowed** in class unless the student is authorized by the instructor

Please disconnect your cell phone before class. Texting is not allowed.

**Recording of Lectures** University policies establish that “no student may record or tape any classroom activity without the express written consent of the instructor”.

**Use of Internet sources:** Please use reliable sources. Blogs and Wikipedia are not reliable sources

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**Syllabus**

Please make sure to the readings before class

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**Jan 12: Introduction to the US Constitution and Madison’s ideas**

No readings assigned

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**Section 1: Congress**

Jan 14: The mess we are in and how we got here; Qualifying expert witness and The new normal: Divided Government

Read: The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis, Chapters 1-3 or pp. 1-46
Jan 19: The role of race; gerrymandering and the money ball  
Read: The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis, Chapters 4-6 or pp. 47-94

Jan 21: All Politics is no longer local and War Powers  
Read: The Partisan Divide, Ch. 7, or pp. 95-146  
Thomas E. Woods, Jr., “Presidential War Powers” (These articles are available on bboard)

Jan 26: Do independents matter: Relying on base voters; The new media and House elections  
Read: The Partisan Divide, Chapters 8-11, or pp. 147-198

Jan 28: Senate elections; When Congress was fun…; Committee selections and leadership and Conclusions  
Read: The Partisan Divide, Chapters. 11- 14 or 199-252

Section 2: The Presidency,  
Feb 2: Introduction and the Conservative View  
Read: Michael Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 1-49

Feb 4: Moderate and Liberal Views  
Read: M. Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 50-97

Topic of first policy memo distributed Feb 4. Memo due Feb. 14 before 8:00 PM

Feb 9: Toward a Constitutional Presidency and the Unitary Executive
Read: M. Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 98-154

**Feb 11: Libertarian Views and Conclusions**
Read: M Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 160-180

**Memo due Feb. 14 before 10:00 PM**

**Section 3: The Courts:**

**Feb 16: Uncertain Justice and Equality, The Constitution and Race: How did the Constitution deal with Slavery?**
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 1-51

**Feb 18: Health Care: Liberty on the Line**
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 52-87

**Feb 23: Campaign Finance and Freedom of Speech**
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 88-153
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/05/21/120521fa_fact_toobin#ixzz2GI8G2dH
For excellent information on money and politics go to the website of the Center for Responsive Politics or OpenSecrets.org, or to Money and Politics

**Feb 25: Gun Rights and Presidential Power**
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 154-218
March 1st: Privacy, Gay Rights and Abortion,
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 219-81

March 3: No classes Network DC
Happy Spring Break!

March 15: Making Rights Real: Access to Justice and the Court and the Constitution
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 282-320

Memo 2 topic distributed March 15, Memo due March 26th before 10:00 PM

Section 4: Affluence and Influence: Selected chapters
March 17: Introduction to Democratic Decision Making
Read: Martin Giles, Affluence and Influence, pp. 1-49

March 22: Data, Methods, and Policy Links
Read: Martin Giles, Affluence and Influence, pp. 50-96

March 24: Policy Domain and Democratic Responsiveness
Read: Martin Giles, Affluence and Influence, pp. 97-123
Memo Due: March 26 before 10:00 PM

March 29: Interest Groups and Democratic Responsiveness
Read: Martin Giles, Affluence and Influence, pp. 124-161
March 31st Parties: The Politics of Inequality
Additional Reading will be distributed to the class via email

Section 5: The Obama Presidency and Selected Policy Topics:

April 5: Representation and Counter-Representation and Obama by the Numbers
Read: The Obama Presidency: Promise and Performance, pp. 1-70

April 7: Social Security: Contrasting Views
Read:
Martin Feldstein, “Privatizing Social Security the $10 trillion Opportunity”
Peter Orzag and Peter Diamond, “Saving Social Security: A Balanced Approach”
Peter Diamond, “Evaluating Issues in Privatizing Social Security”
(All articles on bboard)

April 12 and 14: Medicare, Obama’s Health Reform and African American Perspectives on Obama
Read: The Obama Presidency, pp. 71-85 and 127-150
Chapin White “The Health Care Reform Legislation: An Overview”
David Cutler, “The Simple Economics of Health Reform”
B. Fernandez and A. Mach, “Health Insurance Exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” Congressional Research Service Report 2012
Craig Richardson, “Mandatory Health Insurance: Lessons from Massachusetts”
Memo 3 Topic: distributed April 14, Memo due April 28 before 10:00 PM
April 19: Environmental Policies: Contrasting viewpoints
Read: The Obama Presidency, pp. 85-102
Environmental Policies: Contrasting viewpoints
Congressional Research Service, “Environmental issues in the 109 Congress”
Natural Resources Defense Council, “The Bush Administration’s First Term Environmental Record”
Ryan Lizza, “As the World Burns: How the Senate and the White House Missed their best Chance to Deal with Climate Change”, The New Yorker, October 11, 2010
(All articles on bboard)
Additional articles will be emailed to the class

April 21: Education Policy
Education Policy: Bush and Obama on Education: No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Race to the Top
Education Policy Analysis Archives, “Conflicting demands of NCLB and State Systems”
George Bracey, “NCLB: Where does the Money Go?”
A few short articles on the Obama policy will be emailed to the class.
Joseph Carroll, “Race and Education 50 Years after Brown v. Board of Education: Majority of whites, blacks satisfied with their own educations, but blacks to a lesser extent” Gallup data
(Articles available on bboard)

April 26: Minority party strategies and Coalitional Divisions
Read: The Obama Presidency, pp. 127-190

April 28: Conclusions
Read: The Obama Presidency, pp. 191-228

3rd memo due April 28 before 10:00 PM