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
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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


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 19:** First policy memo due before 10:00 PM
- **March 30:** Second policy memo due before 10:00 PM
- **May 7:** Third policy memo due before 10:00 PM

**Memo Grading Criteria**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Impact on the grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar and spelling:</strong> minor problems</td>
<td>minus half grade point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major problems</td>
<td>minus one point</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Missing sections:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Abstract and/or conclusions:</td>
<td>minus half point each</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Missing one of the content sections:</td>
<td>minus one point</td>
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<td>c) Failing to analyze the problem:</td>
<td>minus one point</td>
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</tbody>
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**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 view points 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

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

Syllabus
Please make sure to the readings before class

Jan 17: Introduction to the US Constitution and Madison’s ideas
No readings assigned

Section 1: Congress
Jan 19: The mess we are in and how we got here; qualifying the expert witness; the continuing role of race, and the new normal: Divided government
Read: The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis, Chapters 1-4 or pp. 1-60
Jan 24: Gerrymandering, the money ball and all politics is no longer local
Read: The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis, Chapters 5-7 or pp. 61-146
Additional article on Gerrymandering will be emailed to the class

Jan 26: Do independents matter, relying on base voters and War Powers
Read: The Partisan Divide, Ch. 8 and 9, or pp.147-170
Additional articles on War Powers on bboard
Thomas E. Woods, Jr., “Presidential War Powers” (These articles are available on bboard)

Jan 31: Focus the New Media and House and Senate elections
Read: The Partisan Divide, Chapters 10-12, or pp. 171-218
Additional short articles on the New Media will be sent to the class

Feb 2: When Congress was fun…; Committee selections and leadership and Conclusions
Read: The Partisan Divide, Chapters 13-16 or pp. 219-287

Section 2: The Presidency

Feb 7: Introduction and the Conservative View
Read: Michael Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 1-49

Feb 9: Moderate and Liberal Views
Read: M. Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 50-97

Topic of first policy memo distributed Feb 9. Memo due Feb. 19 before 10:00 PM
Feb 14: Toward a Constitutional Presidency and the Unitary Executive
Read: M. Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 98-154

Feb 16: Libertarian Views and Conclusions
Read: M Genovese, Contending Approaches to the American Presidency, pp. 160-180
S. G. Calabressi and D. Lev, “The Legal Significance of Presidential Signing Statements”
The Forum Vol. 4, No 6 (on bboard)

Memo due Feb. 19 before 10:00 PM

Section 3: The Courts:

Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 1-51

Feb 23: Health Care: Liberty on the Line
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 52-87

Feb 28: 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#ixzz2Gl8G2dH

For excellent information on money and politics go to the website of the Center for Responsive Politics or Open Secrets.org, or to Money and Politics
March 2: Gun Rights and Presidential Power
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 154-218

March 7: Privacy, Gay Rights and Abortion,
Read: L. Tribe and J. Matz, Uncertain Justice, pp. 219-81

March 9: 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 9, Memo due March 30 before 10:00 PM

Section 4: Money and American Politics
March 21: Please read two chapters of Martin Gilens, Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America (Princeton University Press 2012). Read: “The Preference Policy Link” chapter 3 and “Money and American Politics” Ch. 8 (The chapters will be emailed to the class)

March 23: Additional Articles on Money and Politics and the impact of unequal power will be emailed to the class before Spring break

Memo 2 Due: March 30 before 10:00 PM

Section 5: Why is Voting so complicated?
Read: Richard Hansen, The Voting Wars: From Florida 2000 to the Next Election Meltdown
March 28: The next meltdown (maybe it already happened) Florida and fraud
Read, Hasen, pp. 1-75

March 30: No votes, who counts and litigation,
Read, Hasen pp. 76-159

April 4: Deus ex machine, the tweeting the next meltdown, and an analysis of the 2016 election
Read, Hasen, pp. 160-201
Additional reading on the 2016 election will be emailed to the class

Section 6: Selected Policy Topics:

April 6: 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 11 and 13: Medicare, Medicaid and The Affordable Care Act
Read:  
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”

April 18 and 20: Poverty and Antipoverty policies
Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, “The State of the Union: Poverty and Inequality, Report 2014”

Welfare Policies
Robert Moffitt “A Primer on U.S. Welfare Reform” Institute for Research on Poverty

Wages, the Earned Income Tax and others
I. Sawhill and Q. Karpilow, “Raising the Minimum Wage and Redesigning the EICT”, Center on Children and Families, Brookings Institution, 2014

April 25: Environmental Policies: Contrasting viewpoints
Read:
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, if needed

April 27 No classes
May 2nd: 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)

Memo 3 Topic: distributed April 20, Memo due May 7th before 10:00 PM

May 4 What is President Trump going to do?

3rd memo due May 7th before 10:00 PM