

Political Science 104 – Spring 2019
Introduction to American Politics
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Tuesdays 3pm-4pm
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and by appointment

Access course materials via nb.mit.edu (invitation forthcoming).

Course Description

What is going on in American politics? In 2016, Americans experienced one of the most extraordinary presidential campaigns in recent memory, the Trump presidency has been unprecedented in many ways, and the 2018 Congressional elections resulted in larger turnover than usual in the U.S. House. What is more, modern U.S. politics takes place in an environment that many view as the most polarized in history, with partisans sniping at each other on Twitter, on the floor of the House and Senate, and in rallies and public meetings around the country. “In modern politics,” writes the journalist Russell Berman, “Nothing brings people together more than talking about how far apart they are.”*

Although in some cases political scientists share these conclusions, scholars view politics differently from journalists, activists, partisans, or interested members of the public. This is not, therefore, a course on current events; rather, we discuss major questions about institutional and behavioral aspects of the U.S. system, evaluating competing theoretical claims using empirical evidence.

Popular discussions about politics in this country focus on which party or politician is right or wrong, up or down, winning or losing. The non-stop news cycle provokes speculations and accusations amid a sense that yesterday’s news is irrelevant and the most recent opinion carries the most weight. The latest outrage is presumed to be the most outrageous outrage in the history of outrage. In such an environment it is easy to forget about more fundamental – and more difficult – questions that may help us arrive at more informed explanations of political phenomena: What kinds of institutions are most likely to translate public opinion into public policy? Are there some types of institutions (Courts? Bureaucracies?) that should be more isolated from public opinion than others? Is there such a thing as a unified, recognizable “public opinion”? Should non-governmental organizations such as political parties, interest groups, and the media be accorded influence on governmental decisions? How much influence? Political scientists try to shed light on such questions by precisely articulating normative concerns and by examining the ways that institutions and individuals behave in practice.

Evaluation

The final grade for this course is based on a 1000 point total. I will grant no extensions on assignments except under extraordinary circumstances beyond a student’s control (as verified by a dean’s letter).

* Russell Berman, “What’s the Answer to Political Polarization in the U.S.?” *The Atlantic*, March 8, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/whats-the-answer-to-political-polarization/470163/>.

Papers (500 points)

Each student must write *two* five-page papers during the course of the semester (worth 250 points each). Paper topics, as well as tips on social science writing and a guide to avoiding plagiarism appear below at the end of the syllabus. You have a degree of flexibility on the paper topics you will address and on the due dates for papers, but you must write one paper by March 14 and a second paper by May 2. By the end of week two (Friday, February 22, 5pm) you must email me with your choice of *either* paper topic one (due March 7) or paper topic two (due March 14). By the end of week eight (Friday, April 12), email me with your choice of *either* paper topic three (due April 25) or paper topic four (due May 2). Choose these paper topics wisely based on your interest in the specific topics and on your other scheduled commitments. Late papers fall a third of a grade (i.e. from B+ to B, or 8.33 points in the case of these 250-point papers) for each day (or portion thereof) that they are late.

Grading Standards: An ‘A range’ grade recognizes outstanding, superior work. An “A” paper must contain a clear and original thesis that addresses the paper topic, a logical structure, excellent use of evidence, refutation of counter-arguments, and flawless prose. A ‘B range’ grade recognizes good work. A “B” paper must contain a thesis that relates to the paper topic, must contain supporting evidence, must mention alternative arguments, must have few or no factual errors, and must be generally well-written. A “D+” paper has no recognizable thesis, bears little or no relation to the paper topic, makes poor use of evidence, and has significant factual and writing errors. A “C-range” paper contains some, but not all, of the flaws characteristic of a “D+” paper.

Final Exam (Saturday, May 18, 9am-12:00 noon, 300 points)

The final exam will include a combination of identification, short essay, and longer essay questions. Identification questions will prompt you to define and state the significance of a series of terms that have come up in the course. Both the short and long essay questions will be similar in style to the paper topics and weekly discussion questions, although the shorter essay questions will be more specific than the longer one. Students will have some choice over identification and short essay questions, but not over the longer essay question.

Participation (200 points)

Last but not least, participation is an important element of the course. Friday discussion sections provide excellent opportunities (although not the *only* opportunities) for participation. For each week, I have provided questions (listed below) that I hope will generate discussion. Every Friday, bring to section a *written question or critical comment* (not to exceed a sentence or two) that addresses either the discussion question or some other aspect of the readings or lectures. Our discussions will often be based on these student-generated questions and comments, which I will collect at the end of section but will not grade.

Occasionally, and without warning, I will administer in-class quizzes based on the course material. Although I will collect these quizzes, I will not grade them; completing them counts as part of the participation grade.

All readings that are not in the Kaiser book (see below) will be available on nb.mit.edu, a website that allows for group commenting on PDF files. Another means of participation is to make good use of this format. This does not mean writing mini-essays and attaching them to our readings on the site. It does mean joining an online conversation about readings as you make your way through them, responding to classmates’ comments and offering questions if something about the reading is not clear to you.

As might be expected, higher participation grades will result from frequent and consistent participation, clever arguments, and intelligent and respectful responses to the points made by classmates. It should go without saying that for all this to work, it is important that you COMPLETE THE READINGS AND COME TO SECTION PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT THEM! The quality of the course will suffer along with your grades if you do not do so.

Readings

In addition to readings available on the nb.mit.edu site, described above, the following book might be worth purchasing. It appears on the reading list very late in the semester, and I will be placing several copies on reserve in the library. Accordingly, it is not for sale via the bookstore – it would be possible to succeed in the course without buying it.

- Robert G. Kaiser, *Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How It Doesn't* (New York: Knopf, 2013).

Because major national events such as the early stages of the 2020 presidential race, the immigration debate in Congress, and investigations of the Trump administration will figure into our discussions, you should also keep current by reading at least one news outlet that attempts to view U.S. politics comprehensively (such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc.).

Students with Disabilities

Students who have Letters of Accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For those without Letters of Accommodation, assistance is available to eligible students through Student Accessibility Services. Please contact Jodi Litchfield or Michelle Audette, the ADA Coordinators, for more information: Jodi Litchfield can be reached at litchfie@middlebury.edu or 802-443-5936 and Michelle Audette can be reached at maudette@middlebury.edu or 802-443-2169. All discussions will remain confidential.

WEEK ONE: Foundations and Constitutionalism

Tuesday, February 12; Thursday, February 14

- *Declaration of Independence*
- *Constitution of the United States*
- James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 10
- James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 51
- Anonymous, *Letters from the Federal Farmer*, No. 2

Friday, February 15 – NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS – WINTER CARNIVAL

When historians and political scientists examine the drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, they often come to different conclusions about the founders themselves, their philosophical justifications for the founding document, and the process through which the Constitution became the fundamental law of the land.

Pay close attention to the arguments James Madison makes in Federalist 10 and Federalist 51. What problems does Madison highlight as most important, and what are his arguments about how they are addressed in the Constitution? What are the Federal Farmer's concerns? Were they borne out by history? Do you agree with Madison about the principal importance of these particular problems?

WEEK TWO: The American Political Tradition

Tuesday, February 19; Thursday, February 21

- Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 1-16.
- Alexis de Tocqueville, "Equality of Condition" in *Classic Readings in American Politics, 3rd Edition*, Edited by Pietro S. Nivola & David H. Rosenbloom (New York: Worth Publishers, 1999), pp. 3-8.
- Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* 87:3 (September 1993), pp. 549-566.
- Sven Steinmo, "American Exceptionalism Reconsidered: Culture or Institutions?" in Lawrence Dodd & Calvin Jillson, eds. *The Dynamics of American Politics*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 106-131.

Friday, February 22 - Email me by 5pm with your choice of either paper topic one or paper topic two.

Consider Olson's argument in light of Madison's in Federalist 10. Are the two arguments consistent with one another?

Many scholars argue that America has a distinctive and exceptional "political culture," perhaps rooted in the country's historical circumstances. This culture is characterized by "anti-statism, individualism, populism, and egalitarianism" (Steinmo, p. 109, quoting Lipset). Do you agree that the United States have a single, uniform political culture as some have argued? Or does Smith make a convincing case that there are multiple compelling cultural traditions in the U.S.?

Americans also spend less money on government than do citizens in other nations; our social welfare system, in particular, is significantly smaller than that of many other industrialized countries. What accounts for these distinctive attitudes and spending patterns? How might they be related?

WEEK THREE: The Presidency & Congress I

Tuesday, February 26; Thursday, February 28

- Gary C. Jacobson, "The Triumph of Polarized Partisanship in 2016: Donald Trump's Improbable Victory," *Political Science Quarterly* 132:1 (Spring 2017), pp. 9-41.
- Bert Johnson, "The Iowa Caucus: A View from the Ground," guest post on Matt Dickinson's Presidential Power Blog, January 3, 2012.
- Bert Johnson, "It's Primary Day: The View from the Ground in New Hampshire," guest post on Matt Dickinson's Presidential Power Blog, January 10, 2012.
- Bert Johnson, Margot Graham, Nora Lenhard, Hazel Millard, and Andrew Plotch, "Voices and Views: Life on the Campaign Trail in New Hampshire," Middlebury College News Room, February 9, 2016.
- Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: The Free Press, 1990 [1960]), pp. 3-9; 29-37; 150-151.
- James P. Pfiffner, "Organizing the Trump Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 48:1 (March 2018), pp. 153-167.

Friday, March 1

Based on your knowledge of recent presidential campaigns, is the modern party nomination system working? How about the general election system? If not, what should the goals of such a system be, and what changes would best achieve these goals? What might Neustadt say about how we should elect presidents? Is Donald

Trump handling the presidency as Neustadt would say he should? What advice would you give to President Trump?

WEEK FOUR: The Presidency and Congress II

Tuesday, March 5; Thursday March 7

PAPER TOPIC ONE DUE MARCH 7 AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

- David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 40-77.
- Richard F. Fenno, Jr. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), Chapter 7: “Home and Washington: Linkage and Representation,” p. 214-248.
- Vanessa C. Tyson, *Twists of Fate: Multiracial Coalitions and Minority Representation in the U.S. House of Representatives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Chapter 5, “Power and Influence in the U.S. House,” pp. 126-149.

Friday, March 8

Which account of the goals of members of Congress explains the most: Mayhew’s or Fenno’s? Party unity in Congress has increased dramatically since Mayhew and Fenno wrote their essays. Has this increase in party unity increased the level of accountability in the U.S. system? What evidence do the 2018 elections offer that might help us answer this question? Is Tyson’s account of congressional representation consistent with Mayhew and Fenno’s arguments?

WEEK FIVE: The Courts

Tuesday, March 12; Thursday, March 14

PAPER TOPIC TWO DUE MARCH 14 AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

- Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist* No. 78.
- *Marbury v. Madison* 5 U.S. 137 (1803).
- *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113 (1973).
- Justice Stephen Breyer, “Our Democratic Constitution,” Harvard University Tanner Lectures on Human Values (excerpts). Cambridge, MA, November 17, 18, and 19, 2004.
- Justice Antonin Scalia, Interview with CBS News, September 14, 2008.

Friday, March 15

What role should the courts play in a republican system of government? Consider the philosophical differences between Scalia and Breyer in light of Hamilton’s claim that the judiciary is the “least dangerous” branch (Federalist 78). Under which theory of constitutional interpretation is the judiciary ‘least dangerous’? What would Chief Justice John Marshall say about this? Is there a difference between Marshall’s professed views and Marshall’s actions (in *Marbury*) with respect to this subject? What theory, if any, did the Court use to decide the case of *Roe v. Wade*?

WEEK SIX: Federalism

Tuesday, March 19; Thursday, March 21

- James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 39
- Paul E. Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), Chapter 2: “The Interests of the Limited City,” pp. 17-38.
- *United States v. Lopez* 514 U.S. 549 (1995)
- *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*, United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, March 4, 2015. (excerpts)

Friday March 22

Federalism, the constitutional division of powers between the states and the national government, is a U.S. innovation that has spread to countries around the world. How did the founders justify federalism? Are there other justifications for federalism that you can think of?

Peterson argues that cities are limited in the types of policies they can pursue. Where do these limits come from? What limits, if any, do you suppose apply to states and to the national government?

Among the consequences of the federal division have been the invalidation of the Gun Free School Zones Act (in *Lopez*) and the autonomy of local police forces, some of which have recently been criticized for rights violations such as those outlined in the Justice Department investigation. In light of such consequences, is federalism ‘worth it’?

SPRING BREAK

WEEK SEVEN: Public Opinion

Tuesday, April 2; Thursday, April 4

- Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld & William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), Chapter 14, “Democratic Practice and Democratic Theory,” pp. 302-322.
- Jennifer L. Hochschild and Katherine Levine Einstein, *Do Facts Matter? Information and Misinformation in American Politics* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), Chapter 5: “Endangering a Democratic Polity,” pp. 87-101.
- Morris P. Fiorina, *Unstable Majorities*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2017), Chapters 2: “Has the American Public Polarized?” and Chapter 3: “The Political Parties Have Sorted,” pp. 17-66.

Friday, April 5

How much must voters know about politics to ensure the smooth functioning of a democratic republic? Do modern American voters know that much? How do Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee answer this question? How about Hochschild and Einstein? In light of current events, do you believe Fiorina’s argument that the American electorate has not polarized (p. 30)?

WEEK EIGHT: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Tuesday, April 9; Thursday, April 11

- *Schenck v. U.S.* 249 U.S. 47 (1919).
- *Abrams v. U.S.* 250 U.S. 616 (1919).
- *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (1954) & 349 U.S. 294 (1955).
- *Obergefell v. Hodges* 576 U.S. ____ (2015).
- Alan Abramowitz, “How Race and Religion have Polarized American Voters,” Chapter 12 in Daniel J. Hopkins and John Sides, eds. *Political Polarization in American Politics* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), pp. 80-87.

Friday, April 12 – NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS – SPRING STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Email me by 5pm with your choice of either paper topic three or paper topic four.

Compare Holmes’ arguments in *Schenck* with his dissenting opinion in *Abrams*. Are these two opinions consistent? Think back to our discussion of constitutional interpretation (Week 4).

In the 1986 case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the Supreme Court upheld a state law banning same sex intimacy. In the 2015 *Obergefell* decision, just a few decades later, the Court ruled that states must grant marriage rights to same sex couples. What accounts for the Court’s shift in position on homosexuality between 1986 and the present? What does Scalia think? Based on the court decisions, as well as the discussion in Abramowitz, what role do you believe public opinion plays in Supreme Court decisions?

WEEK NINE: Representation and Participation

Tuesday April 16; Thursday, April 18

- Martin Wattenberg, *Where Have All the Voters Gone?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), Chapter 3, “Types of Individuals Who Vote,” pp. 58-81.
- Theda Skocpol, “Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civic Democracy,” *Perspectives on Politics* 2:1 (March 2004), pp. 3-20.
- David Broockman, “Are Politicians and Activists ‘More Extreme’ than Voters? A Skeptical Perspective,” in Hopkins and John Sides, pp. 47-54.
- Lilliana Mason, “Party polarization is making us more prejudiced,” in Hopkins and Sides, pp. 55-60.

Friday, April 19

In light of Wattenberg’s and Skocpol’s arguments, what would be necessary to increase the amount of political participation in the United States? Do you believe we are seeing such a trend now, with close competition between the political parties and intense get-out-the-vote efforts? Does Skocpol’s account of history suggest that a fundamental change has occurred in the United States that is unlikely to be reversed?

What aspects of representation do you view as most important? How much political participation is necessary to ensure accurate representation? Considering Broockman, Mason, and Fiorina (Week 7), does the U.S. have a problem of representation at present?

WEEK TEN: Interest Groups and Political Parties

Tuesday, April 23; Thursday, April 25

PAPER TOPIC THREE DUE APRIL 25 AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

- Review *Federalist 10* and *The Logic of Collective Action* (from weeks One and Three)
- Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech, *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), Chapter 1: “Advocacy, Public Policy, and Policy Change,” pp. 1-28.
- Mark Brewer, “The Evolution of American Party Coalitions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol, and John Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 9:1 (March 2011), pp. 25-43.

Friday, April 26 – NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Does the Baumgartner et al. reading support Madison’s argument or Olson’s argument with respect to groups? Does it support the claims of some activists that inequality and money in politics have distorted the policy-making process?

Is the Tea Party an example of the type of political party change that we have seen in the past (described in Brewer), or is it different? If it is similar, what does history predict will happen next? If different, is it more consequential or less consequential than previous changes to the party system? Are the protests on the left after President Trump’s election similar to the Tea Party protests on the right?

WEEK ELEVEN: Political Parties and the Media

Tuesday, April 30; Thursday, May 2

PAPER TOPIC FOUR DUE MAY 2 AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

- John Aldrich, *Why Parties? A Second Look* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), Chapter 1: “Politics and Parties in America” pp. 3-26.
- Kevin Arceneaux and Martin Johnson, *Changing Minds or Changing Channels? Partisan News in an Age of Choice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), Chapter 3: “Selective Exposure and Media Effects,” pp. 40-55.
- Jeremiah J. Garretson, “The How, Why, and Who of LGBTQ ‘Victory,’” in Marla Brettschneider, Susan Burgess, and Christine Keating, *LGBTQ Politics: A Critical Reader* (New York: NYU Press, 2017), pp. 252-

Friday, May 3

Which of the theories of political parties described by Aldrich do you find most plausible, considering the history of parties, the rise of the Tea Party movement, and protests on the activist left in the last several years?

In light of the Arceneaux and Johnson chapter, should social scientists be concerned about the media’s effect on public opinion? Why or why not? Have recent changes in the way the media are organized made the media less influential or more influential? What would Garretson say to Arceneaux and Johnson? Does Garretson view the media as influential or not?

WEEK TWELVE: The Bureaucracy and the Permanent Campaign

Tuesday, May 7; Thursday, May 9

- James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and How They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), Chapter 17: “Problems,” pp. 315-332.
- Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), Chapter 1: “The Choreography of American Politics,” pp. 1-14.
- Kaiser, Ch. 1-8

Friday, May 10

What would you advise an elected official about how the bureaucracy works? Should the problems that Wilson identifies cause us to alter our expectations of the bureaucracy, or should they prompt us to enact reforms of the bureaucratic system?

Consider the McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal argument in light of Fiorina’s claims about (the lack of) polarization (Week 7). Can these arguments be consistent with one another, or do they contradict each other? Why has Congress polarized over the last 40 years?

Monday, May 13

- Kaiser, Ch. 9-24.

If Fiorina is correct, and the public is not polarized, what accounts for polarization among elected officials? Did Barack Obama adopt polarizing strategies, or did he become a polarizing figure as the result of forces beyond his control? In the debates over Dodd-Frank, did members of Congress behave as they should? Did they behave as political scientists would have predicted? Do you see parallels between the first two years of the Trump administration and the debates over Dodd-Frank? What is to be done?

Saturday, May 18

FINAL EXAM

9:00am-12:00noon

Paper Topics – PSCI 0104, Spring 2019

- 1) Hamilton and Madison argue that in drafting the U.S. Constitution, the founders designed a system of institutions that was as little dependent as possible on the virtues of office-holders. As Madison put it, “Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm” (Federalist 10, p. 3). Although the system may not depend on “enlightened statesmen,” does it in fact depend on an “enlightened citizenry”? What cultural values – if any – do you believe the U.S. public must possess if the constitutional system is to endure? Do you think cultural changes are occurring that could threaten U.S. institutions? Explain your argument using evidence and examples from course materials. DUE **MARCH 7** AT BEGINNING OF CLASS.
- 2) Is the modern system of presidential nomination and election an appropriate way to select presidents? That is, does the system ensure that the winner has the tools required to govern successfully? If so, point to specific aspects of the system that ensure that this is the case. If not, explain why not, and suggest at least one change in the system that would bring it closer to this goal. Support your argument with reference to evidence from readings, lectures, and/or discussions. DUE **MARCH 14** AT BEGINNING OF CLASS.
- 3) In 2009, President Obama nominated Sonia Sotomayor to serve on the Supreme Court. As the Senate considered her nomination, some critics raised as an issue a statement Sotomayor made in a 2001 speech at the University of California, Berkeley (see the text of the speech at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/us/politics/15judge.text.html>). Sotomayor said: “I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn’t lived that life.” A generalization of this statement might be that a person with a variety of practical life experiences will be a better Supreme Court justice than a person with limited experiences, even if both people are equally well-versed in the law. Do you believe this is correct? Back up your argument with evidence and examples from course materials, taking care to address both sides of the question. DUE **APRIL 25** AT BEGINNING OF CLASS.
- 4) Suppose a Senator from your political party, concerned with declining participation rates, is considering various policies that might increase participation in politics, reduce public cynicism about the institutions of government, and cause Americans to be better citizens. The Senator’s aides have come up with three options: 1) compulsory voting; 2) a system of periodic, non-binding national referenda on major public policy issues; or 3) government-funded political campaigns. You must write a memo to your Senator explaining which of these options is most promising. (Feel free to propose an alternative reform if you believe that none of these would be effective.) Be sure to explain why the proposals that you oppose would not work. Support your argument with evidence and examples. DUE **MAY 2** AT BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Tips on Writing Good Papers for Political Science Courses

- 1) Read the essay question several times and be aware of what the question asks. Then figure out what your answer is and what your argument or thesis will be. To write a good paper, you must have an argument of your own – your paper should not be a mere summary of a reading or readings.
- 2) Develop an organizational plan for the paper. This may be either a detailed outline or a well-considered list of points.
- 3) State your thesis early (i.e. the first paragraph) and use the bulk of your paper to develop it.
- 4) Elaborate on your thesis, supporting it with evidence from the readings. Cite readings only where they assist you in your argument – do not attempt to summarize all the assigned readings.
- 5) Distinguish other people’s ideas from your own by citing them. Use direct quotes only when it does not make sense to paraphrase, and make sure you work them into your argument rather than letting them be your argument. In other words, explain how each idea or piece of evidence fits rather than just describing the idea or piece of evidence.
- 6) Be sure your writing is clear and free of grammatical errors.
- 7) In your concluding paragraph, restate your argument and indicate its significance.
- 8) It can often be difficult to discover errors or areas that need improvement in one’s own writing. Some ways of getting around this problem include: Reading the paper out loud to yourself; re-reading the paper after spending a few hours (or a day) doing something else; or having a friend proofread your paper for you.
- 9) Using the first person is acceptable, especially if it helps you avoid the passive voice. For example, “I argue in this paper...” is preferable to its convoluted passive equivalent, “It will be argued in this paper...”. The first person becomes obnoxious, however, when it becomes too familiar. For example: “As I was sitting in my room last night, I thought to myself, ‘What’s the deal with that argument in *Federalist* 10?’...” This approach may be suitable for a personal essay, but not for analytical writing.

Paper Format for PSCI 104

- 1) Papers must be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, with 1-inch margins and PAGE NUMBERS.
- 2) Cite sources by the last name of the author or editor of a book or article and the page number: (Kaiser, 29).
- 3) You do not need to attach a reference sheet if you stick to the assigned readings. If you add any sources that are not on the syllabus (and you are NOT expected to do so), then attach a reference sheet with the author’s name, publication title, place of publication, year of publication, and page numbers (if an article).
- 4) Put a cover sheet on your paper with your name, the date, a title, and the *signed* academic honesty statement: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.” For the purposes of PSCI 104, authorized aid includes general conversations with classmates about the issues raised by the paper topics, assistance from writing tutors, as well as proofreading by classmates or other students. Unauthorized aid includes uncited ideas or quotations from others (plagiarism), as well as use of material from online paper mills.

Guidelines for Citation and for Avoiding Plagiarism

The Middlebury Judicial Affairs Office, informed by Honor Code Review Committees over the years, points out that standards for proper citation and avoiding plagiarism are not always clear.[†] Most people understand that if a student hands in a paper that she or he downloaded off the internet, this constitutes plagiarism. Similarly, if a student includes direct quotes from a source without citation, this is also plagiarism. Less well understood are instances that fall short of these extremes. Consider the following source material.

Source:

“Overall, then, we take the bulk of our evidence to support the view that party insiders have largely controlled the outcome of nine of the last ten party nominations [for president], with the exceptional case being 2004. And even in 2004, the outsider challenge to party insiders failed.”

- Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 232.

I – It is plagiarism if the source is quoted without quotation marks, even if the source is cited.

Incorrect:

Experts cite evidence to support the view that party insiders have largely controlled the outcome of nine of the last ten party nominations (Cohen et al., p. 232).

Correct:

Experts cite evidence “to support the view that party insiders have largely controlled the outcome of nine of the last ten party nominations” (Cohen et al., p. 232).

II – It is plagiarism if an *idea* or *concept* is taken from the source without proper citation.

Incorrect:

The endorsements of elite party officials control presidential nominations.

Correct:

The endorsements of elite party officials control presidential nominations (Cohen et al., p. 232).

III – While not plagiarism, it is unconvincing to assert something about a source without direct reference to evidence from the text.

Less convincing:

Cohen et al. offer convincing evidence from multiple case studies to demonstrate that party insiders control nominations.

More convincing:

Cohen et al. offer convincing evidence from multiple case studies to demonstrate that party insiders control nominations (Cohen et al., pp. 187-234).

[†] <http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/administration/newfaculty/handbook/honorcode>