

POLITICAL SCIENCE 2103: Politics in America  
University of Oklahoma, Spring 2018

Dr. Israel-Trummel  
Office: Dale Hall Tower 225  
Dylan Billings  
Office: Dale Hall Tower 220

Class: MW 3:00–4:15pm Adams Hall 104  
Office Hours: Monday 12:00–2:00pm  
E-mails: mackisr@ou.edu,  
dylan.billings@ou.edu

Over the course of the semester, we will ask how voters decide, how candidates attempt to disseminate their political messages, and how voters and candidates respond to a politically polarized environment. In the latter part of the class, we will examine how the United States has defined citizenship over time—from property restrictions, race, gender, and national background to felon exclusion laws today—limiting what groups are able to participate in democratic elections. We will develop an understanding of the scientific method and the analytical tools necessary to answer all of these questions.

My goal is to create a class in which everyone is welcome, included, and able to learn and succeed. Please talk to me if there is something I need to know in order to facilitate a positive and productive learning experience for you.

### Course Materials (Required)

Donovan, Todd and Kenneth R. Hoover. 2014. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Haney López, Ian F. 2006. *White By Law: the Legal Construction of Race*. New York: New York University Press.

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

\*\*\* Note that both the Haney López and Alexander books are available to read online via the OU Library, though there are restrictions on the number of students who can access the books at once. You can purchase physical copies from the book store if you prefer. You must get a recent edition of Donovan and Hoover.

All other readings for this course are available via Canvas at <https://canvas.ou.edu>. This is also where all your assignments will be submitted.

### Evaluation

Midterm paper & peer review (15% & 5%)  
Midterm exam (20%)  
Civic engagement (10%)  
Data analysis paper and presentation (20%)  
Class participation and reading notes (30%)

## Due Dates

- Ongoing: Reading notes, due before the class session in which each reading is discussed
- February 20: Midterm Paper
- February 23: Peer Review
- March 2: Midterm Paper Revision
- March 14: Midterm Exam
- April 15: Civic Engagement Hours and Reflection Due
- May 6: Data Analysis Paper Due

## Midterm Paper

You will have one midterm paper on the topics we've covered in both lecture, discussion, and the readings. After submitting your paper, each student will receive another student's anonymized paper to provide critical and substantive feedback. Students will then incorporate the feedback they receive to *rewrite the paper* into a final draft. Both drafts will be considered for the final grade.

All papers for this course should use standard formatting (12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced) and include a citations page. There is a citation guide available on Canvas to help you with proper formatting. Use it!

## Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be closed notes and in-class. It is scheduled for Wednesday, March 14.

## Data Analysis Paper

Your final paper is a data analysis paper. In this paper you will move beyond being a consumer of information and will instead produce research. You will have access to quantitative survey data, which you will use to test your own original hypothesis. You will give a 5-minute presentation of your findings to the class at the end of the semester, before your paper is due.

## Civic Engagement

This course has a civic engagement requirement. You must complete at least 10 hours of civic engagement work *during the semester*. This could include volunteering for a campaign for a candidate (e.g. gubernatorial, congressional, state legislative, etc.) or a ballot initiative or working for a political organization. By April 15, you will turn in a short 2-page reflection on your civic engagement experience as well as a form indicating that you have completed at least 10 hours of work. Choose a campaign that excites you!

## Class Participation and Reading Notes

Attendance is obviously an important part of your class participation. However, merely sitting in a classroom does not qualify as excellent, or even sufficient, participation. This class has some lecture, but is largely a seminar which requires excellent, critical, and active participation from each of us.

Good participation will not only challenge you, but will improve the learning experience of everyone else in class. Granted, “good participation” is a very amorphous concept. If you have any questions about how you could improve your contribution to our discussion, I would be happy to talk with you at any point. Below are the types of questions/statements that can contribute to a productive learning environment. This list is in no way exhaustive, but may prove helpful to you:

1. Questions you ask in an effort to better understand the course material— if you’re confused, someone else probably is too!
2. Questions and comments about the validity or strength of an author’s argument or evidence.
3. Questions and comments that deal with how course materials relate to each another.
4. Questions and comments that tie readings and lectures to current events and ideas from outside the course.

In order to facilitate your participation, you will take notes on the readings we do. Taking useful notes is a skill that requires practice. To aid you in this practice, I recommend trying to make note of the following from your readings:

- What is the central question(s) being asked? This is known as the *research question*.
- What is the outcome of interest? This is known as the *dependent variable*.
- What explains the outcome of interest? This is known as the *independent variable*.
- What is the *argument*? Why does the author think that the independent variable affects the dependent variable?
- What are the *findings*? What pieces of evidence support the author’s argument? What evidence goes against the argument?
- What are your critiques of the study?
- What new questions does this work make you think about? What kind of research project could you undertake to answer these questions?
- Any key terms that are new to you.

These suggestions for your reading notes are posted on Canvas under “Course Materials.” **This will add time to your reading, but it will help you learn to engage with scientific writing and retain the materials.** Furthermore, this will provide you with excellent notes as you write your papers and study for your midterm exam! There is a strong correlation between time spent on reading notes and success on papers and exams. **You must submit your notes to Canvas each week, updating the same file.** This means by the end of the semester you will have one file with notes on every reading for the semester. These reading notes will count toward your total participation grade. **You cannot earn an A in participation without completing your reading notes.** Reading notes should be clearly labeled with the author’s name and the title of the work.

Come to class prepared! Always bring your notes and all of the day's readings to class with you. Having the course materials readily available to you facilitates better discussion and helps you to be more engaged with the material as you can refer directly to the text. **If you do not have your materials with you in class, you are not earning participation points.**

I hope that you will be excited by the relevance of our class to current events. During the week, if you come across a news story relevant to our course content please post it to our course website with your thoughts on the article. By contributing articles, you can earn extra participation points.

### **Technology Policy**

You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes in class. However, you need to read the article "Why Smart Kids Shouldn't Use Laptops in Class" to understand the potential negative effects of having technology in the class. By bringing a computer to class you are agreeing to use it only to take notes, not to surf the web, look at social media, or check your email. If I need to remind you not to do this, you will be asked to leave your laptop in your bag. **You should not have your phone out in class. Do not plan to use your phone to look at readings.**

### **Absence Policy**

I understand that illnesses and family obligations happen, and it can sometimes be necessary to miss class. However, I ask that you notify me 24 hours ahead of time when you will miss a class. For these **excused absences** you can make them up by posting your analysis of that day's readings on Canvas **before your absence** so that your classmates can see your thoughts. The quality of your publicly posted analysis will be used for your participation points. If you do not post on Canvas your excused absence becomes unexcused. **Unexcused absences cannot be made up.**

Please note that failing to take note of the schedule of the course is not a reason to miss class.

### **Be on Time—Both You and Your Assignments**

I expect punctuality from everyone in this class. Chronic or excessive lateness will be treated as at least one absence. Late paper submissions will be penalized at a rate of one grade step for every 24 hours (e.g. an A- would become a B+).

### **Academic Integrity**

I fully expect all students to exhibit integrity as relates to both written work and in-class behavior. Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort. Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. It specifically includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, destruction of property, and bribery or intimidation, as well as assisting others or attempting to engage in such acts. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. "I didn't mean to" is never an excuse for academic misconduct.

This, of course, means that your written work must be your own. **Academic dishonesty is insulting to both you and me and will not be tolerated.** If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. It is your responsibility to make sure that you exhibit integrity. For more information on academic integrity, visit [http://integrity.ou.edu/students\\_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html).

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are for you. They are a time to stop by my office to ask about something you didn't understand from the reading, to discuss paper ideas, or just to check in with me. I hold my office hours on a drop-in basis, so you do not need to schedule a meeting with me during that time. You can schedule a meeting with me outside office hours, but I am not available for drop-ins outside office hours.

Please do not email me to ask when my office hours are held. They are on the top of this syllabus, which is permanently available on Canvas.

### **Email Policy**

As part of my responsibility to you, I will respond to your emails as soon as possible. I typically respond to emails quickly, but be prepared to allow up to 24 hours. Emails sent over the weekend may not be responded to until Monday. If you haven't heard from me within this timeline, please resend your email. Our Clutter system sometimes traps emails, especially those sent via Canvas.

Please take a close look at the article posted to Canvas titled "Advice for Students So They Don't Sound Silly in Emails." Part of college is learning how to prepare for the professional world. Email communication with your faculty is a great time to practice this!

### **Campus Resources and Support Services**

A variety of resources are available here at OU to ensure that you excel in both your academic and social development.

There are multiple sources of **academic support** on campus. Please explore the mentoring, tutoring, writing consultations, study skill seminars, etc. that are available to you.

<http://www.ou.edu/content/graduatesooner.html>

Goddard Health Services and the University Counseling Center are available for assistance with **medical and mental health issues**. Please visit their website for information on specific services and resources. <http://www.ou.edu/healthservices.html>

### **Students with Documented Disabilities**

The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodations in this course should speak with me immediately after the term begins so that we can discuss the accommodations necessary for you to participate fully in the class and to otherwise facilitate your educational opportunities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The Disability Resource Center is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166; telephone: (405) 325-3852. <http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html>

## **Religious Holidays Policy**

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays.

## **Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html> for commonly asked questions.

## **Title IX Resources**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no contact orders, scheduling adjustments and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office (405) 325-2215 (8:00am–5:00pm) or the Sexual Assault Response Team (405) 615-0013 (24/7) to learn more or to report an incident.

## **A Final Note**

If something comes up during the semester and you are struggling to fulfill your expectations in my class, *please* come talk to me as early as possible. It is always easier to deal with a problem earlier rather than later.

## Reading Schedule

A quick note on how to read a syllabus: Each reading is listed under the date for which you should complete the reading and notes. The date is the class day on which we will be covering a given reading. For example, by the time you come to class on January 22, you must have read and taken notes on Donovan and Hoover Chapter 1, Noonan's *Wallstreet Journal* article, and Silver's *NYT* article.

### January 17: Introduction to Politics in America

- AT HOME: Review items on Canvas
  - Syllabus
  - Advice for students so they don't sound silly in emails
  - Why smart kids shouldn't use laptops in class
  - APSA Style Guide
  - Taking Useful Notes on Readings
  - Academic Integrity materials
  - Then sign and return the last page of this syllabus.

## ***THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY ABOUT POLITICS UNIT***

### January 22: Social Scientific Inquiry

- Donovan, Todd and Kenneth R. Hoover. 2014. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Boston: Cengage Learning, Chapter 1.
- Noonan, Peggy. "Monday Morning." *Wallstreet Journal*, 5 November 2012.
- Silver, Nate. "Nov. 5: Late Poll Gains for Obama Leave Romney with Longer Odds." *New York Times*, 6 November 2012.

### January 24: Social Scientific Inquiry

- Donovan, Todd and Kenneth R. Hoover. 2014. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Boston: Cengage Learning, Chapters 2-3.

### January 29: Social Scientific Inquiry

- Donovan, Todd and Kenneth R. Hoover. 2014. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Boston: Cengage Learning, Chapters 4-5.

### **January 31: Social Scientific Inquiry**

- No reading!

### **February 5: Social Scientific Inquiry**

- Gilens, Martin and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564–581.

## ***ELECTIONS UNIT***

### **February 7: Public Opinion and Vote Choice**

- Mayhew, David R. 1987. “The Electoral Connection and the Congress.” In *Congress: Structure and Process*, ed. M. McCubbins and T. Sullivan. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter. Glencoe: Free Press. (pages 206–61)

### **February 12: Public Opinion and Vote Choice**

- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. “Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections.” *American Political Science Review*, 88(1): 63–76.

### **February 14: Public Opinion and Vote Choice**

- Bullock, John G. 2011. “Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate.” *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 496–515.

### **February 19: Public Opinion and Vote Choice**

- Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Chapter 5)
- Gelman, Andrew, Boris Shor, Joseph Bafumi, and David Park. 2007. “Rich State, Poor State, Red State, Blue State: What’s the Matter with Connecticut?” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2: 345–367.

**MIDTERM PAPER DUE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AT 11:59PM**

## February 21

- Writing Day! No reading

## PEER REVIEW DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23 AT 11:59PM

## February 26: Campaigns and Political Communication

- Mendelberg, Tali. 1997. "Executing Hortons: Racial Crime in the 1988 Presidential Campaign." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61(1): 134–157.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. 2002. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 75-90.

## February 28: Campaigns and Political Communication

- No reading
- In class: *The War Room*

## MIDTERM PAPER REVISION DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 2 AT 11:59PM

## March 5: Campaigns and Political Communication

- Enos, Ryan D. and Anthony Fowler. 2016. "Aggregate Effects of Large-Scale Campaigns on Voter Turnout." *Political Science Research and Methods* 1–19.

## March 7: Campaigns and Political Communication

- Zaller, John. 1998. "The Rule of Product Substitution in Presidential Campaign News." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 560(1): 111–128.
- In class: *Journeys with George*

## March 12: Political Polarization

- Fiorina, Morris P. 2013. "America's Missing Moderates: Hiding in Plain Sight." *The American Interest*.
- Layman, Geoffrey C., Thomas M. Carsey, and Juliana Menasce Horowitz. 2006. "Party Polarization in American Politics: Characteristics, Causes and Consequences." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 83–110.

## March 14

- Midterm Exam
- Enjoy your spring break!

## March 26: Political Polarization

- Iyengar, Shanto and Sean J. Westwood. 2015. “Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3): 690–707.
- Druckman, James N., Erik Peterson and Rune Slothuus. 2013. “How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation.” *American Political Science Review*, 107(1): 57–79.

## March 28: Representation

- Grimmer, Justin, Solomon Messing, and Sean Westwood. 2012. “How Words and Money Cultivate a Personal Vote: The Effect of Legislator Credit Claiming on Constituent Credit Allocation.” *American Political Science Review* 106 (4): 703–719.

## April 2: Representation

- Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Chapters 1 and 2)
- Sands, Melissa L. 2017. “Exposure to Inequality Affects Support for Redistribution.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

## April 4: Representation

- Fox, Richard L. and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2004 “Entering the Arena: Gender and the Decision to Run for Office.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 264–280.

## *DEFINING CITIZENSHIP UNIT*

## April 9: The Courts and Racial Restrictions

- Haney López, Ian F. 1996. *White By Law: the Legal Construction of Race*. New York: New York University Press, Chapters 1–4.

### **April 11: The Courts and Racial Restrictions**

- Haney López, Ian F. 1996. *White By Law: the Legal Construction of Race*. New York: New York University Press, Chapters 5–8.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT REFLECTION AND HOURS DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 15  
AT 11:59PM**

### **April 16: Felon Disenfranchisement Laws**

- Weaver, Vesla M. and Amy E. Lerman. 2010. “Political Consequences of the Carceral State.” *American Political Science Review* 104(4): 817–833.
- Anoll, Allison and Mackenzie Israel-Trummel. 2017. “Does Carceral State Spillover Mobilize or Demobilize? The Importance of Policy Moderation.” Working paper.

### **April 18: Mass Incarceration and American Democratic Citizenship**

- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. (Introduction–3)

### **April 23: Mass Incarceration and American Democratic Citizenship**

- Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. (Chapters 4–6)

### **April 25: Final Presentations**

- 5-minute presentations of Data Analysis Paper

### **April 30: Final Presentations**

- 5-minute presentations of Data Analysis Paper

### **May 2: Final Presentations**

- 5-minute presentations of Data Analysis Paper

**DATA ANALYSIS PAPER DUE SUNDAY, MAY 6 AT 11:59PM**