

**American Political Systems
Political Science 1150-01
Fall 2023**

Steven Rogers

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Office/Student Question Hours: [Book Appointment Online](#)

Class time: MWF 11:00am – 11:50am

Class Location: Davis-Shaughnessy Hall 373

Rogers's Office: McGannon 134

Catalog Course Description

This course will provide you with an overview of the literature and theoretical concepts associated with political science as it relates to American politics. The intent is to provide you with a sample of key findings in the literature, as well as help you develop critical skills for evaluating research.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on institutional aspects of the United States government, with a focus on legislative, executive, and judicial institutions.
2. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on political behavior, focusing on public opinion, partisanship, and elections.
3. Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will gain a better understanding of human diversity. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.

University Core: Ways of Thinking: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below:
Component-level Student Learning Outcomes

the absence will be excused if the student emails Professor Rogers within 36 hours of the missed class period. If a student is absent for three or more

Course Outline

The following listing of topics outlines the subjects we will cover in class and the reading assignments for each topic. This tentative outline aims to give you an overview of the course. Professor Rogers will notify you throughout the semester when you will be responsible for specific readings in class and on the Canvas calendar. Professor Rogers reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as the semester progresses. You are responsible for any of the changes to the assigned readings. Readings on the syllabus designated as Kollman will be in the Kollman text, and all other readings will be available on Canvas. If you have trouble accessing any of the online pieces or the Canvas calendar is not updated, **please let Professor Rogers know as soon as possible.**

Topic 1: The Constitution

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to identify
 - Reasons why the colonists sought independence and how these shaped the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution
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Topic 3: Congress

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
 - Describe the basic procedures of how a bill becomes a law
 - Recognize the importance of Members' of Congress goals and how Members achieve these goals
 - Explain what collective action problems, public goods, and negative agenda power are and how political parties help solve collective action problems in Congress
 - Identify the differences between Cartel Theory, Conditional Party Government, and Pivotal Politics

Readings

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Topic 4: The Executive Branch

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
 - Identify the similarities and differences between Neustadt, Kernell, and Canes-Wrone's arguments about how the President can most effectively use his/her informal powers.
 - Define and distinguish between a President's expressed, delegated, and inherent powers.
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Topic 5: Representation

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
 - Define the concepts of “delegate representation” and “trustee representation.”
 - Explain how majority-minority districts promote descriptive representation but potentially inhibit substantive representation
 - Explain why women are less likely to run for office, according to the Gendered Perceptions Hypothesis
 - Explain the extent to which individuals of different races, genders, and classes are descriptively and substantively represented in the U.S. government
 - Identify reasons why there is (and is not) polarization in the US Congress

Readings

- Burke, Edmund. “Speech to the Electors of Bristol.” in Canon (Section 21). [5 pages]
- Kollman 13.3. Fox, Richard and Jennifer Lawless. “Gendered Perceptions and Political

Topic 6: The Judiciary

Learning Objectives

- A student will be able to
 - Describe the main functions of District Courts, Courts of Appeals, and the US Supreme Court, along with the basic structure of the federal court system
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Topic 7: Public Opinion & Political Knowledge

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
 - Identify the differences in Key and Lippmann's perceptions of voter competence
 - Describe the extent to which voters have ideologies or belief systems, according to Converse
 - Define ideology and ideological constraint
 - Identify and describe the axioms of Zaller's "Receive-Accept-Sample" model along with their implications

Readings

- Quealy, Kevin. "If Americans Can Find North Korea on a Map, They're More Likely to Prefer Diplomacy" [3 pages]
- Lippmann, Walter. 1925. "The Phantom Public" Excerpt. [4 pages]
- Key, V.O. "The Voice of the People: An Echo" from *The Responsible Electorate*. (Canon Section 47) [6 pages]
- Clawson and Oxley, Chapter 5. "Ideological Incongruence and Critiques." [8 pages]
 - Focus on pages 133 - 141
- Kollman 9.2: Zaller, John. "The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion." [5 pages]
- **Suggested Readings:**
 - Dropp, Kyle. "The less Americans know about Ukraine's location, the more they want the U.S. to intervene."
- **Suggested Podcast:**
 - [What's Wrong with Democracy](#) – Larry Bartels [47 minutes]

Questions to consider while reading:

- What does Lippmann mean when he says, "It is bad for a fat man to be a ballet dancer."? How does this compare with Key's conception of the electorate? [Lippmann, Key]
- According to Converse: [Converse]
 - To what extent are voters ideological?
 - What is ideological constraint?
 - Are individuals' opinions and attitudes stable?
- What does Zaller mean when he states individuals appear to make decisions off "the top of their head?" [Zaller]

Accompanying Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, and Vavreck Reading

- Chapter 10 (Focus on p. 399 – 414)

Topic 8: Rational Choice

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
 - Describe why it could be “irrational” to vote
 - Identify ways voters can act rationally despite not being fully informed
 - Define the concepts of a heuristic and expected party differential
 - Describe how Page and Shapiro’s argument differs from Converse’s

Readings

- Kollman 9.1: Lupia, Arthur and Mathew D. McCubbins. “The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?” [13 pages]
- Page and Shapiro,

Topic 9:

Topic 11: Groups and Self Interest

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to

Topic 13: Public Policy: Taxes

- Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. "Taxing the Rich: A History of Fiscal Fairness in the United States and Europe." [15 pages]
- Kollman 15.1: Mettler, Suzanne. "The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policy Undermine American Democracy." [12 pages]
- "What is America Introduces a Wealth Tax?" *The Economist*

Questions to consider while reading:

- What are the different types of arguments to establish "fairness" in taxation? [Scheve]
- What is the "submerged state?" [Mettler]

University Services

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center (SSC) supports students in reaching their goals in and out of the classroom.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost’s Office website at: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/academic-integrity-policy.pdf>.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student’s eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and within the instructor’s official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to CADR. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member**

even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you. For more information, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at 314.977.3484 or titelx@slu.edu.