

POLS 3301-991/9Z1 Citizen Politics

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Dr. Andrew J. Drummond
Stabler Hall 603N
Office Hours: M 11:00-1:00 *and by appointment*
Phone: 501-569-8841
Email: ajdrummond@ualr.edu

Course Prerequisites: POLS 1310 or junior standing

Overview and Objectives

Citizen Politics is a course situated around the individual. How do people articulate their demands to the state, and does the state listen when they do? We will examine the various correlates and modes of political behavior across the context of Western Democracies. Students will become familiar with broad changes in political activity, from decreasing reliance on political parties, to increasing calls for direct involvement in politics and the rise of protest behavior throughout Europe and the United States. In addition, we will examine cultural shifts, technological shocks to associational life, and the resurgence of fascist parties and movements in places like Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, and France. Current elections and social movements occurring throughout the semester will provide immediate cases for analysis and opportunities to test the theories we are engaging. The course will be taught entirely online through Blackboard.

Learning Objectives

In keeping with the UALR Political Science department's mission "to provide students with both a substantive knowledge of politics and the skills necessary to make use of that knowledge effectively", this course will focus on developing and enhancing the following knowledge and skills goals:

1. The behavior of individual actors at both the mass and elite levels
2. Analysis/Research – the ability to pose and answer questions effectively
3. Critical thinking – the ability to read and evaluate primary texts, ideas, theories, and political analysis
4. Argumentation/Persuasion – the ability to use logic and evidence to build a persuasive argument
5. Written and Verbal Communication – the ability to communicate ideas clearly on paper or through oral presentations

6. Practical Applications – the ability to take information gained through coursework and use it effectively in real world or simulated exercises

Required Readings:

1. Dalton, Russell J. *Citizen Politics* 5th Edition.
2. Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*
3. Dalton, Russell J. *The Good Citizen*
4. Online Readings (On WebCT, marked here with *).

Assignments and Grading Breakdown

30% Midterm #1
30% Midterm #2
10% Participation
30% Final Paper

Description of Assignments and Grading Policy

-- There are two midterm examinations that will test your knowledge of the course concepts and the case study materials we cover as we do our comparisons. Test dates are firm. Only in cases of extreme emergency should students expect that a make-up will be warranted. In any event, students should contact me before the due date to let me know if they are unable to fulfill a class requirement. Late assignments will receive automatic deductions of a third of a letter grade per day they are late.

-- These tests are meant to be taken as any in-class test would be taken. This means you should not be consulting notes, lectures, or the course texts as you take the test. The time limit for the exams will be 90 minutes. My exams are writing (typing) intensive, short answer and essay format, and well prepared students often find they need most or all of the time to complete the exam. Exceeding the time limit for an exam will result in a 5% deduction per 15 minutes over the limit. You should be sure to save your answers often in blackboard as you go in case of a technological glitch. If you submit your test without saving your answers, it is likely that I will receive an incomplete test. If you think this may have happened, you should email me to inform me and we will discuss what options are available. You should always contact me as soon as possible. Failing to contact me before the end of the assignment or exam window will extremely limit what options, if any, are available for completing the work.

-- The final paper is worth 30% of your total grade and entails original research on some aspect of political participation, associational life, and/or political culture, with an eye toward investigating changes in behavior and attitudes over the past few decades for at least two countries. The paper is a research paper, and so you will need to rely on scholarly resources. The Ottenheimer Library has a website that will provide you with remote access to a variety of useful databases. I will link to the site in Blackboard as well. There will be a paper prompt distributed after the first midterm, and an entire message board thread dedicated to discussing topic selection for this final paper. Because the area of investigation for this research is so broad, all final paper topics must be approved by me first to ensure that students are embarking on a doable project.

-- Course readings are all required. Online readings are accessible through Blackboard. All the reading material, as well as lecture and discussion matter, will be fair game for examination.

-- **A note on civility.** This class will not work without your participation in the form of responses on the blackboard web shell. Your posts should be thoughtful, informed by the readings, and civil (i.e., no personal attacks or impolite language, etc.). Posts of this sort are grounds for a zero on your participation score, which will make passing the class extremely difficult. Please consult the guidelines for effective discussion below for a breakdown of how participation will be assessed.

Discussion Guide*

There are multiple purposes to the discussion topics. The primary reason for the discussion requirement is to simulate a classroom experience. Another purpose is to get you to apply some of the concepts covered in the text. I will post questions for each lesson and you and your classmates will post your thoughts and opinions in reply. Hopefully these questions will cause you to think more in depth about the reading assignment. One last goal of this is to help you make connections from the course material to the current events of the day. The discussion element of the online course can provide an avenue for a critical appraisal of different ideas and conflicting opinions.

Students often have the example or connection that helps another student finally make sense of a concept. Thus, you are expected to make a significant contribution to these discussions. "Significant" is not easy to define, but it means more than simply "I agree or disagree with what you said." Your comment should be relevant to the question or to the ongoing discussion about the question, and it should be based on knowledge of the assigned reading or lecture. The bottom line is that you need to participate. I will be keeping track of each discussion and your grade will depend on whether or not you are involved and whether or not your responses reflect a meaningful connection to the course material. Participation will account for 10% of your final grade. Below is a guide to online participation in this class.

Grading Scale for Participation

Full Credit:

- A minimum of **three** postings during the allotted time spread out over a minimum of three days.
- Well-developed, thoughtful postings.
- A willingness to engage in dialogue with other students; i.e. react and follow-up on what others say.
- I expect students to read all postings made either by me or their classmates.

Partial Credit: (50%)

- fewer than 3 postings per week
- Short, underdeveloped posts

- Making posts just before the deadline
- Failure to read all or at least most of the comments posted by your classmates

*This document was developed by the Department of Speech Communication, UALR and compiled by Gerald W. Driskill. Content from the original document was modified for this political science course.

Plagiarism/Cheating

Those found to have cheated in the class will receive an automatic failing grade for the assignment or test in question, which may result in a failing grade for the course. In particular, I discourage the use of outside resources in formulating your responses to test questions since everything you need to know for the answer is available in our readings and my lectures. The readings for this course are carefully selected so that you will be able to adequately answer all questions without addressing outside resources – outside sources have not been evaluated for their reliability, and so they should not form the basis for your responses. In any event, answers that do not address the appropriate class sources will not receive full credit, and any work that is copied from somewhere else (including verbatim copies of my lectures, the reading material, or classmates’ message postings) will result in a zero on the test, which may result in a failing grade for the course.

Grade Breakdown

Letter Grades (% Range)	
A (90-100%)	Student demonstrates an excellent understanding of the course concepts and communicates clearly their larger significance. Student has engaged fully with the readings and the result is a cogent and thoughtful response / paper.
B (80-90%)	Student has engaged with the readings and demonstrates an ability to apply them to his/her answers or writing, but demonstration of the larger significance of the response is lacking; less thoughtful.
C (70-80%)	Student demonstrates a working knowledge of the course material, but response does not provide evidence of critical engagement with the readings; not demonstrably thoughtful.
D (60-70%)	Student does not demonstrate an adequate mastery of the course material and readings.
F (Below 60%)	Student demonstrates little understanding of course concepts and readings.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement—such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos—please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the Disability Resource Center, telephone 501-569-3143 (v/tty). For more information, visit the DRC website at <http://ualr.edu/disability/>.

Reading Schedule

***The order of readings in the syllabus is subject to change. Please check the course website regularly for announcements.

Wk 0. 8/19 Introductions

Wk 1. 8/23-8/29 What is Micropolitics?

A. Ch. 1 *Citizen Politics* (CP)

B. Ch. 2 CP

Wk 2. 8/30-9/5 Political Participation

A. Ch. 3 CP

B. Ch. 4 CP

Wk 3. 9/6-9/12 Political Orientations

A. Ch. 5 CP

B. Ch. 6 CP

Wk 4. 9/13-9/19 Party Systems and Political Cleavages

A. Ch. 7 CP

B. Ch. 8 CP

Wk 5. 9/20-9/26 Political Behavior

A. Ch. 9 CP

B. Ch. 10 CP

Wk 6. 9/27-10/3 Midterm Exam and Bowling Alone

A. **Midterm Examination #1**

B. Chs 1, 2 *Bowling Alone* (BA)

Wk 7. 10/4-10/10 Social Capital

A. Chs. 3, 4 *Bowling Alone* (BA),

B. Chs. 5, 6 BA

Wk 8. 10/11-10/17 *Social Capital (cont'd)*

A. Chs. 7, 8 BA

B. Ch. 10 BA

Wk 9. 10/18-10/24 *Explaining the Decline*

A. Ch. 13 BA

B. Chs. 14, 15 BA

Wk 10. 10/25-10/31 *Social Capital and Democracy*

A. Chs. 21, *skim* Ch. 22 BA

B. Midterm Examination #2

Wk 11. 11/1-11/7 *Election Discussion*

A. Breaking down the 2010 Congressional Elections

B. Chs. 1 *Good Citizen* (GC)

Wk 12. 11/8-11/14 *Citizenship in Context*

A. Ch. 2 GC

B. Ch. 3 GC

Wk 13. 11/15-11/21 *Reexamining Trends in Civic Attitudes and Behavior*

A. Chs. 4 GC

B. Ch. 5 GC

Wk 14. 11/22-11/28 *Reexamining (cont'd)*

A. Ch. 7 GC

B. No Class Thanksgiving Break

Wk 15. 11/29-12/5 *Civic Society Revisited*

A. Ch. 8 GC

B. Ch. 9 GC

12/10 Final Papers due by 5PM over email