Spring 2-1-2019

PSCI 540.01: American Government

Robert P. Saldin  
*University of Montana - Missoula, robert.saldin@umontana.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/10377

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
American Government
Political Science 540
University of Montana
Wednesdays 12:00 – 2:20, LA 344
Spring 2019

Rob Saldin                   Office: Liberal Arts 354
robert.saldin@umontana.edu      Office Hrs: Wed. 2:20-3:30
(208) 850-5967 (cell)           & by appointment

Required Texts and Other Readings

We will read the following books:

- Andrea Louise Campbell, Trapped in America’s Safety Net: One Family’s Struggle (University of Chicago Press, 2014).
- David C.W. Parker, Battle for the Big Sky (CQ Press, 2014).

Readings in scholarly journals can be accessed through the Mansfield Library’s website. Other readings are available via the web links provided on this syllabus. And still other readings—designated with an asterisk (*)—will be posted on the course’s Moodle website. The instructor reserves the right to add, eliminate, or alter course readings.

Requirements and Grading

Participation: 33.3%
Research Paper: 33.3%
Final Exam: 33.3%

Participation: Most of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings in a seminar setting. As such, class participation will be very important. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Daily attendance will be taken. Students missing 3 or more of our scheduled class meetings will not pass the course.
• Every other week, students will write a two-page response paper on a central aspect of that week’s material, circulate it to the class via email by 5:00 AM on Wednesday (so others have time to read it prior to class), and present their response papers in class.
• Students will formally present their research papers in class at the end of the semester.

Research Paper: Students will write a paper of about 20 – 25 pages on a topic of their choosing that is related to the course and that is approved by the instructor. Papers will be due on April 26. Each student will meet with the instructor at least once during the semester to discuss his/her paper and its design.

Final Exam: All students will complete a take-home final exam at the end of the semester.

Field Exam: Graduate students in the Political Science M.A. program will also complete the American Government field exam.

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**** The Final Exam and the Research Paper must be completed in order to pass the course.****

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

Accessibility

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements must contact the instructor as soon as possible and must contact DSS in order to arrange for a letter of approval for accommodations to be provided to the instructor. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154; phone: (406) 243-2243.
COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: THE STUDY OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Week 1, Jan. 16: Introduction to the Course

Week 2, Jan. 23: What is Political Science, and What Should it Aspire to?

Week 3, Jan. 30: Traditional Political Science

PART II: CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

Week 4, Feb. 6: Behaviorism

Week 5, Feb. 13: Rational Choice

Week 6, Feb. 20: Historical Institutionalism and American Political Development

Week 7, Feb. 27: Individual Research Paper Conferences

Week 8, Mar. 6: Ideas

PART IV: DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO STUDYING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Week 9, Mar. 13: An Ethnographic Study of American Social Policy

Week 10, Mar. 20: Studying Politics on Campus

Week 11: Spring Break

Week 12, Apr. 3: Soaking and Poking on the Campaign Trail

PART V: SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTROVERSIES

Week 13, Apr. 10: Irregularities in LaCour

Week 14, Apr. 17: A Criminal Research Agenda?

Week 15, April 24: Research Paper Presentations