American politics is often seen as a confusing frustrating landscape that generates many losers, but few winners. But it doesn’t have to be that way. One of the best ways to understand politics in the United States is through the voices of those who live it, make it, and implement it. This fall, we will go on a journey through American politics by using stories (including your own). You will learn about American political institutions, political participation, the Constitution, federalism, framing, the Electoral College, the role of interest groups, and much more.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures, and decision-making processes of the American political system.
- Evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas.
- Relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates and outcomes in the United States.
- Develop an analytical, social scientific disposition toward American politics.

Assessment

a) The main project for this course will be the Digital Story (100 points). This is an initiative of The Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. Each student will be responsible for creating a 3 to 5-minute video with voiceover using a typed script, photographs, and voiceover narration. All the technology is available for free online, and I will stagger each step throughout the quarter. All digital stories will be uploaded and made available to the world 😊

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Tentative Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create account</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>August 23rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose subject</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>August 30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write script</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>September 11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn how to use WeVideo and complete tutorials</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 16th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select images for video</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>October 30th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete voiceover</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>November 15th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create video and present in class</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>November 27th &amp; 29th</td>
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b) **The Political Mixtape Essay (15 points):** This fun, but graded assignment will force you to think critically about the nexus between music and politics. You will write an essay describing five songs from any genre of music that deal with politics in the United States. This essay is basically your version of liner notes. I will provide more instruction in class.

c) **Midterm (50 points):** This exam will consist of a combination of short-answer and multiple-choice questions and cover the material from August 23\textsuperscript{rd} to October 4\textsuperscript{th}.

d) **Speech Responses (25 points):** Choose any five of the speeches I have assigned from *American Political Thought* and write short, 200-word essays for each. I don’t want to read summaries. Tell me how these speeches/political documents make you feel and if you agree or disagree with what the speaker is trying to say.

e) **Participation (10 points):** In order to receive all ten points, I expect you to not only come to class, but to participate. This could range from asking smart questions to engaging in thoughtful discussion with your classmates to coming to my office hours.

Digital Story + Mixtape + Midterm + Responses + Participation = 200 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>180 – 185</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>156 – 159</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>140 – 145</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>120 – 125</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 120</td>
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**Required Book**


**Course Schedule**

**August 21\textsuperscript{st} (T):** Introduction + Syllabus + Expectations/

**August 23\textsuperscript{rd} (R):** Foundations + American Political Culture
- Winthrop’s “Little Speech on Liberty” (1639), *The Mayflower Compact* (1620), and Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Self Reliance” (1840), Herbert Hoover’s “Rugged Individualism” (1928), and Charles Beard’s “Myth of Rugged Individualism” (1931)

**August 28\textsuperscript{th} (T):** The Constitution
- Samuel Adams’s “The Rights of the Colonists” (1772), Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense” (1776), and Thomas Jefferson’s “Declaration of Independence” (1776)

**August 30\textsuperscript{th} (R):** The Constitution
- Federalist #1 & #51, and Jefferson’s “Letters on the Constitution” (1787, 1789)

**September 4th (T): Federalism**
- Patrick Henry’s “Debate in the Virginia Ratifying Convention” (1788), Jefferson’s Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (1777)

**September 6th (R): Federalism**
- Angelina Grimké’s letter (1837) and William Lloyd Garrison’s *Liberator* (1831) and “Declaration of Sentiments” (1833)

**September 11th (T): The Judiciary**
- Federalist #78

**September 13th (R): The Judiciary**

**September 18th (T): Civil Liberties**
- *Eugene v. Debs* (1918), Benjamin Tucker’s “Liberty” (1881),

**September 20th (R): Civil Liberties**
- William Scheuerman’s “The Case of Edward Snowden” (2014)

**September 25th (T): Civil Rights**
- Frederick Douglass’s “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852), Elizabeth Stanton’s “Seneca Falls Declaration” (1848), Dr. Martin Luther King’s “The Power of Nonviolence” (1957), and *Oberfell v. Hodges* (2015)

**September 27th (R): Civil Rights**

**October 2nd (T): Interest Groups**
- Federalist #10, Upton Sinclair’s “The Jungle” (1906),

**October 4th (R): Interest Groups**

**October 9th (T): Midterm Review**

**October 11th (R): MIDTERM EXAM**

**October 16th (T): Framing & Priming**

**October 18th (R): Political Psychology**
October 23rd (T): Congress

October 25th (R): Congress
  • Barry Goldwater’s “The Conscience of a Conservative”

October 30th (T): Presidency
  • Ronald Reagan’s “First Inaugural Address” (1981)

November 1st (R): Presidency and the Bureaucracy

November 6th (T): NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

November 8th (R): Voting and Participation
  • Malcolm X’s “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964), Ayn Rand’s “The Virtue of Selfishness” (1962), and Kimberlé Crenshaw’s “Mapping the Margins” (1991)

November 13th (T): Elections
  • Donald Trump’s “Inaugural Address” (2017)

November 15th (R): Campaigning
  • Barack Obama’s “Speech on Race” (2008), Gladden Pappin’s “The Anxieties of Conservatism” (2017)

November 20th (T): The Electoral College

November 22nd (R): THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
  November 27th (T): In-Class Presentations
  November 29th (R): In-Class Presentations

Course Policies

1. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and gender pronouns of your choice. Please advise me of this early via your college-issued email account or during office hours so that I may make the appropriate notation on my class list.

2. Attendance: Absence from more than fifteen percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive. Students missing more than five class sessions will lose one full letter grade from the participation portion of their total average for each additional absence. Another incentive to come to class: I will not be posting lecture notes to OAKS.
3. **Late Work** will be severely penalized. Work is considered late (and the clock begins ticking) if it is not handed in at the time requested. You will lose one point for every hour the assignment is late.

4. I am offering extended **office hours** this fall (eight total hours per week), but the times favor those who are “morning people.” See the first page of the syllabus for specifics.

5. I prefer **hard copies** of all essays because it is easier for me to grade. I also like to read your work blind, so write or type your name on the *back* of each essay.

6. When you enrolled in the College of Charleston, you were bound by an **Honor Code**. I expect you to abide by that code. If you are found to have cheated on a quiz or plagiarized any of your written work, you will fail this course and be turned over to the Honor Board for further disciplinary action. If you have any doubts about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, ask before you act.

7. I have built-up a reputation over the last 15 years as a **professor who values students** and their personal experiences. If you are going through anything that hinders your ability to do your best, please come and talk to me. I can also refer you to other college resources. I am known to grant extensions for reasonable requests.

8. One underutilized student resource is the **Center for Student Learning (CSL)**, which offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies, writing, tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills consultations and workshops. For more information on what help is available to you for free as students, visit the CSL website at [http://csl.cofc.edu](http://csl.cofc.edu), call (843) 953-5635 or visit the office on the library’s ground floor.

9. **Extra Credit:** CofC offers a dynamic selection of lectures, film screenings, and other globally-conscious events. From time to time, I will offer extra-credit opportunities that will be predicated on attending an event *and* submitting a short reflection.