COURSE SYLLABUS

U.S. Politics and Foreign Policy in the 21st Century

Central European University
Fall 2016
4 Credits (8 ECTS Credits)

Co-Instructors

Erin Jenne, PhD
Associate Professor, IRES Dept.

Levente Littvay, PhD
Assistant Professor, Political Science Dept.

Course Description

While most courses focus on either the domestic or the foreign policy aspect of U.S. politics, our starting assumption is that it is impossible to have a sound grasp of either without also taking the other into account. By integrating domestic politics and foreign policy, the course seeks to achieve a more holistic understanding of America’s role in the world since the end of the Cold War, while plotting out its future trajectories - with a special focus on the outcome of the 2012 U.S. presidential election. With this in mind, this course is divided into three main parts. We begin with a brief review of the different traditions or schools of thought concerning American foreign policy. We then go into America’s political institutions on the domestic level—focusing in particular on the major institutional debates (federalism versus states’ rights; separation of powers within the American government) as well as the major Supreme Court cases that have shaped U.S. politics over the course of its history. The second (largest) part examines how U.S. politics plays out in elections and voter choice, political participation, electoral irregularities, political parties, and election campaigning. We also look at the broader context of U.S. domestic politics, including religion and culture; economic inequality; race, gender, and age; and changing American demographics—we examine how these features of society have changed moving into the 21st Century and with what impact on the political landscape. The final seminar will be spent reflecting on what all of these elements (both those that have changed and those that remain the same) mean for the future of U.S. politics and America’s role in global politics. Students are encouraged to reflect on the extent to which, and why (or why not), the U.S. stands apart from previous (and future) global hegemons in its politics and foreign policy. Throughout, the course will emphasize the backward and forward linkages between U.S. domestic politics and foreign policy, highlighting the ways in which these shape the outcome of this very important event for the U.S. society and the world at large.

Aims
The course's main aim is to provide students with a sound understanding of:

1. The main political debates that animate contemporary U.S. politics and foreign policy;
2. The main theoretical frameworks in social science used to explain U.S. politics and foreign policy;
3. How to test these competing explanations using evidence;
4. The policy ramifications of these different explanations;
5. The principal trends in U.S. politics and foreign policy.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Make reasoned and informed arguments about events in U.S. politics and foreign policy and critically evaluate them;
- Distinguish between political debates and social science debates concerning U.S. politics and foreign policy;
- Identify what is unique about American politics versus what is common to all major countries or great powers;
- Make an informed estimate of future trends in U.S. politics and/or foreign policy based on existing theories and evidence;
- Argue convincingly for different sides of each major political debate in U.S. politics;
- Identify interconnections between U.S. politics and foreign policy;
- Conduct informed political analysis of U.S. elections and discuss the impact of elections on U.S. domestic and foreign policy;
- Evaluate the relative effects of public opinion, demographic trends, geopolitical pressures, the media, and special interests and/or campaign finance on U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

**Course Requirements:**

**Team Projects (40%).** Details TBA.

**Final Exam (40%).** At the end of the course, there will be a final exam that tests students on their understanding of the topics, theories, and debates discussed in class. It will not test the students’ skills in rote memorization, but rather broad theories, ideas and problems facing the U.S. in the 21st century in both domestic and foreign policy. Therefore, the exam will be made up of two essay questions, weighted equally, asking broad questions that students will be asked to reflect on
critically, make an argument, and integrate the readings and theories from class into their answer. The exam is intended to take one hour and forty minutes, but students will be allowed extra time to finish the exam should they require it.

**Class Participation (20%).** This is a small graduate seminar that is intended to be highly interactive. Students will be expected to attend all the seminars and contribute to (without dominating) class discussions.

Throughout the semester, students are strongly encouraged to attend, wherever possible, a series of films (held in the evenings on Thursday or Friday) that relate to contemporary U.S. politics and foreign policy. In the event that attendance is not possible, students are asked to view the films or debates on their own time.


**Before the first course**

- Read the Declaration of Independence. Available at: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html);
- Read the Federalist Papers #10, #39, #51, #64, #69, #75. Available at: [http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html);
- Review the basics of the following court cases: [http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0101289.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0101289.html);
COURSE SCHEDULE

AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Historical Background
(Week 1)

September 20, Tuesday

ORIGINS AND THEMES OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:

US Constitution (specifically Articles I:7-10; II:2-3, III:2, VI).

The Federalist Papers, #64 (The Powers of the Senate, by John Jay), #69 (The Real Character of the Executive, by Alexander Hamilton), #75 (The Treaty Making Power of the Executive, by Alexander Hamilton).¹


Optional readings:


September 22, Thursday

ORIGINS AND THEMES OF AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

US Constitution (all of it, including the amendments).

Federalist Papers #10 (The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection, by James Madison), #39 (The Conformity of the Plan to Republican Principles, by James Madison), and #51(The Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments, by Alexander Hamilton or James Madison).


¹ http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html
Barnes, Jeb. 2007. “


Optional readings:


INSTITUTIONS, POLITICAL CLEAVAGES, AND ELECTIONS

Political Parties and Voter Realignment
(Week 2)

September 27, Tuesday

POLITICAL PARTIES TODAY (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


September 29, Thursday

*RACE, GENDER, AND DEMOGRAPHICS IN AMERICAN POLITICS* (Levente Littvay)

**Mandatory readings:**


**Optional readings:**


Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1980[1960]. *The American Voter*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. [CEU Library Call Number: 324./9/73 CAM; will be placed on reserve for the class]


October 4, Tuesday
MEDIA AND CAMPAIGNS (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

October 6, Thursday
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

**Congress and Elections**  
(Week 4)

**October 11, Tuesday**  
*Voter Disenfranchisement* (Levente Littvay)

**Mandatory readings:**


**Optional readings:**


**October 13, Thursday**  
*CONGRESS AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION* (Levente Littvay)

**Mandatory readings:**


Unpublished Manuscript by the same team of authors (and Federico Vegetti)

**Optional readings:**


Money in Politics
(Week 5)

October 18, Tuesday
CAMPAIGN FINANCE (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


2 This is subject to change if a scholarly political science article appears on the topic. Students will be notified of the potential change well in advance of the class.
October 20, Thursday
SPECIAL INTERESTS (Levente Littvay)³

Mandatory readings:

Culture and Religion
(Week 6)

October 25, Tuesday⁴
CLASS AND CULTURE (Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

³ A mandatory reading might be added on the topic of the Occupy Wall Street movement, should an article be published in a scholarly journal in the meantime (as of August 2012). Students will be notified well in advance of any change in this respect.
⁴ This class will be rescheduled to another day. CEU will be closed.
⁵ Precise chapters/pages will be communicated to students in advance of this session.
October 27, Thursday

RELIGION AND CULTURE (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Neo-Realism, American Hegemony and Empire
(Week 7)

November 1, Tuesday

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

November 3, Thursday

REALISM AND AMERICAN HEGEMONY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


---

6 This class will be rescheduled for student project presentations.


Optional readings:


Pashakhanlou, Arash Heydarian. 2009. "Comparing and Contrasting Classical Realism and Neorealism: A Re-examination of Hans Morgenthau’s and Kenneth Waltz’s Theories of International Relations". *Neo-Realism, American Hegemony and Empire (Week 8, continued from previous week)*

**November 8, Tuesday**

*EXCEPTIONALISM AND AMERICAN EMPIRE* (Erin K. Jenne)


Optional readings:


---

**NOVEMBER 8**

**ELECTION NIGHT**

---

**November 10, Thursday**

*DISCUSSION OF ELECTION RESULTS* (Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

**Neo-Liberalism, International Organizations and US Leadership (Week 9)**

**November 15, Tuesday**

*UNITED STATES AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY* (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


November 17, Thursday
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MULTILATERALISM AND U.S. LEADERSHIP (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


Diasporas, Special Interests and American Foreign Policy
(Week 10)

November 22, Tuesday
ETHNIC GROUPS AND DIASPORAS (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


November 24, Thursday
INTEREST GROUPS, LOBBYISTS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


TBD – Reading on the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Optional readings:


Bureaucracies, the Presidency and American Foreign Policy
(Week 11)

November 29, Tuesday
AGENCIES, ADVISORS AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:

Stevenson, Jonathan. 2011. "Owned by the Army: Has the President Lost Control of His Generals?" Harper's (May).


December 1, Thursday
THE PRESIDENT, LEADER PSYCHOLOGY, AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:

Stevenson, Jonathan. 2011. "Owned by the Army: Has the President Lost Control of His Generals?" Harper's (May).
Optional readings:

Wrap-Up and Final Exam  
(Week 12)

December 6, Tuesday  
FORECASTING U.S. POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:

December 8, Thursday  
FINAL EXAM!!!(Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

---

7 Please ignore page 642.