COURSE SYLLABUS

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

Central European University
Fall 2012
4 Credits (8 ECTS Credits)

Co-Instructors

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

AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Historical Background
(Week 1)

September 17^{th}, Monday

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 20^{th}, 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

Optional readings:

American Politics Movie Club - September 20 (Thursday): Boogie Man

INSTITUTIONS, POLITICAL CLEAVAGES, AND ELECTIONS

Political Parties and Voter Realignment
(Week 2)

September 24th, Monday
POLITICAL PARTIES TODAY (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:


**September 27th, 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]


**American Politics Movie Club - September 27 (Thursday): Recount**

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October 1st, Monday
MEDIA AND CAMPAIGNS (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

October 4th, Thursday
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

American Politics Movie Club - October 4 (Thursday): Screening of the October 3 Presidential Debate

**Congress and Elections**

(Week 4)

**October 8th, Monday**

*Election Fraud and Caging: The 2000 Election and the Case of Florida* (Levente Littvay)

**Mandatory readings:**


**Optional readings:**


October 11th, Thursday
CONGRESS AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:
Money in Politics
(Week 5)

American Politics Movie Club - October 11 (Thursday): Abramoff Frontline Documentary (PBS)

October 15th, Monday
CAMPAIGN FINANCE (Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

October 18th, Thursday
SPECIAL INTERESTS (Levente Littvay)3

Mandatory 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.
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.

American Politics Movie Club - October 18 (Thursday): Screening of the October 16 Presidential Debate

Culture and Religion
(Week 6)

October 22nd, Monday
CLASS AND CULTURE (Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:

Optional readings:

October 25th, Tuesday
RELIGION AND CULTURE (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:

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.

Optional readings:


American Politics Movie Club - October 25 (Thursday): Screening of the October 22 Presidential Debate

**AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

**Neo-Realism, American Hegemony and Empire**

*(Week 7)*

**October 29th, Monday**

*NEO-REALISM AND AMERICAN HEGEMONY* (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


**November 1st, Thursday**

*CLASSES (TOGETHER WITH THE MOVIE CLUB) ARE CANCELLED DUE TO NATIONAL HOLIDAY.*

**Neo-Realism, American Hegemony and Empire**

*(Week 8, continued from previous week)*

**November 5th, Monday**

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

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


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6 This class will be rescheduled for student project presentations.


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**NOVEMBER 6**

**ELECTION NIGHT**

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**November 8th, Thursday**

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

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


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**November 12th, Monday**

**AMERICA AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY** (Erin K. Jenne)

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Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


**November 15th, Thursday**

*INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MULTILATERALISM AND U.S. LEADERSHIP* (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


American Politics Movie Club - November 15 (Thursday) - Taxi to the Dark Side (2006)

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

**November 19th, Monday**
*ETHNIC GROUPS AND DIASPORAS* (Erin K. Jenne)

**Mandatory readings:**


**Optional readings:**


November 22nd, Thursday

**INTEREST GROUPS, LOBBYISTS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY** (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


American Politics Movie Club - November 22 (Thursday): *Why We Fight* (2005) or *Iraq for Sale* (2006)\(^7\)

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\(^7\) One of the movies will be selected; students will be notified of the choice ahead of the class.
Bureaucracies, the Presidency and American Foreign Policy  
(Week 11)

November 26th, Monday  
AGENCIES, ADVISORS AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


November 29th, Thursday  
THE PRESIDENT, LEADER PSYCHOLOGY, AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:

American Politics Movie Club - November 29 (Thursday): Fog of War
Wrap-Up and Final Exam  
(Week 12)

**December 3rd, Monday**  
FORECASTING U.S. POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY (Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

Mandatory readings:


Optional readings:


**December 6th, Thursday**  
FINAL EXAM!!!(Erin K. Jenne and Levente Littvay)

\(^8\) Please ignore page 642.