

American Political Development (POLS 3019)
Barnard College
Fall 2018

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Office hours: Thursdays, 12:30-2:30 and by appointment

Class location: 403 Barnard Hall
Class time: Tuesdays, 12-1:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

American political institutions and public policies are unique in many ways, relative to those of other western democracies, and are often inefficient or otherwise suboptimal. Nowhere has this been more evident than in recent debates over healthcare reform. The field of American political development (APD) seeks to understand such puzzling patterns. Why do institutions and policies emerge, why do they take certain forms, when and why do some undergo major transformations, and what kinds of factors limit change? How and why is the American system exceptional from an international perspective, and how does this impact policy? What can we learn about contemporary policies and institutions by examining their historical roots? Questions like these—big questions, aimed at major policies and large-scale change—drive the APD literature.

The APD canon spans American history, from the founding through the contemporary era, and addresses a wide range of topics. For the sake of coherence, our readings will focus primarily on social welfare state development from the New Deal to the present, but students are free to analyze any issue area and time period in their papers. We will discuss the major factors that contributed to the establishment and form of key social welfare policies, and how and why they have evolved over time. We will also discuss how these policies, in turn, have shaped citizens and institutions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Readings and assignments are geared toward helping students achieve the following objectives:

1. Become familiar with the analytical tools of the American political development tradition and what they bring to bear on major transformations in American political life.

2. Think critically about social welfare policies as “outputs” of the political system, learning how and why major policies were established, whom they included and excluded, and how and why they changed over time.
3. Analyze social policies as “inputs” into the political system, considering how they shape citizens and institutions.
4. Identify an important and precise research question, use the tools of social science to investigate it, and ultimately present a clear, persuasive, and concise written and oral argument.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will reflect four components: discussion participation, discussant service, response papers, and a research paper. Details are given below, and additional guidelines are attached to this syllabus.

Final grade breakdown:

Discussion participation	20%
Discussant service	10%
Response papers (2 x 10%)	20%
Research paper	50%
Proposal: 10%	
Final paper: 30%	
Presentation: 10%	

Participation

This course is a seminar, not a lecture, so active participation will be key to its success. Attendance is mandatory, and participation accounts for 20% of your final grade. Your participation grade is based primarily on your contributions to in-class discussions of assigned readings. However, discussion questions submitted before class and participation in the research forum will also be taken into consideration.

Reading discussions. Reading discussions are the core of our class meetings. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and think critically about them in preparation for class discussions. Please see the attached class participation guidelines for a list of questions to consider while reading. To receive an A for participation, students should be prepared to answer questions of this nature in every class meeting, demonstrating careful reading and critical thinking skills.

Discussion questions. Students are encouraged to post discussion questions for the group, based on the week’s readings, on Courseworks. If you would like to

contribute questions, please do so at least 12 hours in advance of our meeting (preferably 24) so I have time to incorporate them into my plan for the day. Please note, this applies only when you are *not* the discussant. When you are the discussant, you are required to submit questions to the class via email at least 24 hours before our meeting.

Cell phones must be silenced and placed out of sight (e.g. in a bag) during class. Students are encouraged to limit their use of laptops in class. If you would like to request an exception, please come speak with me.

Research Paper Forum by Week

Every week, the last portion of our classes will be dedicated to a research paper forum, the subject of which will vary by week. Below is a summary of the progression of the research forum by week. Paper-related due dates and events are also listed here.

1. Formulating research questions
2. Formulating research questions; sources of historical data
3. Sources of historical data
4. Research questions and data (workshop together)
5. **Proposals due.** Discuss proposals
6. Discuss proposals
7. Discuss proposals
8. **Progress meetings (outside class).** Discuss proposals
9. **Progress meetings (outside class).** Discuss proposals
10. Election holiday (Week 10)
11. **Draft due (optional).** Writing (topic sentences; concise writing)
12. Giving a presentation
13. **Paper due.** Presentation day 1
14. Presentation day 2

Discussant Service

Each week, there will be a discussant (occasionally two) responsible for reading the materials especially closely and preparing comments and questions. Discussants must email discussion questions to the class at least 24 hours before our weekly meeting. Please circulate only the questions, and not all of your notes on the readings. Great discussion questions will not simply ask for students' opinions, but push them to think about the arguments and evidence analytically based on what we've learned in class up to that point.

Discussants will begin class by speaking for 5-7 minutes each about the week's readings. Time yourself—I will cut you off at 7 minutes! You can think of this as a reading response paper that is presented orally to the class instead of in writing to me alone. As with response papers, your discussant comments should go well

beyond summary—your own voice should be clear. You might assess the strength of arguments made, talk about how readings speak to (or past) each other, how we might think about current events in light of the week’s readings, etc. This is not a formal written assignment, but students must turn in their speaking notes.

I will lead the class discussion, incorporating your questions into my plan for the day. Your discussion service is worth 10% of your final grade. Your participation in the subsequent class discussion will count toward your class participation grade.

Response Papers

Each student will write two 2-3 page response papers over the course of the semester. At least one of these papers must be completed by October 16th. These papers should succinctly note the main takeaways from the week’s readings and explain how they fit into the literature. The reading responses should go well beyond summary—your own voice should be clear. Assess the strength of arguments made, think about how they relate to class themes or other readings, etc. Each of these papers is worth 10% of your final grade.

The class participation guidelines attached to this syllabus can help you write response papers as well. You do not have to answer all of the questions listed in the guidelines in a 2-3 page paper, but these questions can give you a sense of the kinds of things you might discuss in your paper.

Research Project

Each student will write a 25-30 page paper. Your paper should not be vaguely “about” a topic—it should ask and answer a precise question. The research project has four components: a proposal, a progress meeting, the paper itself, and a presentation.

Proposal (due 10/2). A 3-4 page paper proposal is due on October 2nd. Proposals should include the elements listed below. This is worth 10% of your final grade for the course. Please bring a hard copy to class. Late papers will receive a penalty of 3 points per day (including weekend days). If you submit a late paper, you must email it to me and leave a hard copy in my mailbox in the political science department. Late papers will not be considered submitted until they arrive in my email inbox.

1. A clear statement of the research question, and why it matters.
2. A list of scholarly works relevant to your question.
3. For those works that you chose to read for the individualized reading week, a summary of what they bring to bear on your research question.
4. An outline of your plan for answering the question. You should have a good sense of what kinds of evidence are available, and how you could use them in a manageable way to investigate your question.

Paper (due 11/27). The paper is due on November 27th, and is worth 30% of your final grade for the course. Please bring a hard copy to class. Late papers will receive a penalty of 3 points per day (including weekend days). If you submit a late paper, you must email it to me and leave a hard copy in my mailbox in the political science department. Late papers will not be considered submitted until they arrive in my email inbox.

I will read and comment on a draft of your paper, as long as you email it to me no later than November 13th (two weeks before the deadline). This is optional, but encouraged.

Progress Meetings (Weeks 8-9). Sometime during week 8 or 9, each student is required to meet with me to discuss paper progress. Of course, students are always welcome to schedule meetings during other weeks as well.

Presentation (11/27 or 12/4). Our last two meetings will be dedicated to research presentations. Sign-ups will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. You will have 10-12 minutes to share your research paper with the class. Time yourself—I will cut you off at 12 minutes! Students are encouraged to use presentation slides. Email the slides to me at least one hour before class, so I can load them all up before we begin. Each presentation will be followed by a few minutes of Q&A. Please note that all papers are due on November 27th, regardless of when the paper is scheduled for presentation.

For Seniors

All Seniors who have designated this course as the Colloquium to fulfill their Senior Capstone requirement must also complete the following:

1. Provide constructive criticism and feedback to your designated peer partner(s). You and your partner should hold meetings, in consultation with the instructor, to discuss your assignments, e.g. research proposals, research methods, rough drafts. A portion of the class participation grade will reflect the quality of your mentoring.
2. Attend at least one of the Senior overviews of the library and online resources hosted by the instructor or another member of the Political Science Department.
3. Generate a poster that summarizes your research question, argument, and findings. The poster should accompany your class presentation and will be displayed at the Senior end-of-year Departmental party in May. The poster will not be graded, but is required to receive a "Pass" for your Senior requirement and will factor into Departmental considerations for Senior Project Distinction.

BARNARD COLLEGE WELLNESS STATEMENT

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself—your own health, sanity, and wellness—your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>
- <http://barnard.edu/counseling>
- <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>
- [Stressbusters Support Network](#)

BARNARD HONOR CODE

Students are expected to comply with the Barnard Honor Code (<http://barnard.edu/dos/honorcode>) for all course requirements.

BARNARD COLLEGE OFFICE OF DISABILITIES SERVICES (ODS)

Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities in accordance with college policy. For details, see the ODS webpage (<http://barnard.edu/provost/teaching/courses>).

COURSE TEXTS AND SOFTWARE

The books listed below have been ordered through the bookstore and placed on reserve at Barnard Library. Please note that two of them are also available electronically through the library. All other materials are available through Courseworks.

- Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2005. *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Frymer, Paul. 2008. *Black and Blue: African-Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party*. Princeton: Princeton University Press [book available electronically through the library].
- Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Hacker, Jacob. 2002. *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle Over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Katznelson, Ira. 2013. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Mettler, Suzanne. 2011. *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Morone, James. 2003. *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*. New Haven: Yale University Press [book available electronically through the library].

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (9/4): What is American political development?

- Reading assignment
 - Mettler, Suzanne and Richard Vallely. 2016. "Introduction: The Distinctiveness and Necessity of American Political Development." In *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, Ed. Richard Vallely, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert Lieberman. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Additional assignment: Over the summer, as explained via email, please keep a running list of questions you have about American politics. Are there particular policies or features of policies that are puzzling to you for some reason? Are there things you would have expected to change that have been stagnant, or things you would have expected to be consistent that have changed? Are there certain policies you would expect to exist that don't, or policies you would not expect to exist that do? Think of this as a list of genuine curiosities you have about the state of American politics. Please bring it to our first class. It does not need to be long. We will talk during the first few weeks about how you could mold some of these questions into research questions that could be addressed using the analytical tools of APD.
- In-class research forum. Formulating research questions.

Week 2 (9/11): "Why is there no socialism in the United States?"

- Reading assignment
 - Hartz, Louis. 1991. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace, and Company. Chapter I, VIII-IX.
 - Foner, Eric. 1984. "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" *History Workshop* 17: 57-80.
- Additional assignment: none.

- In-class research forum. Formulating research questions; sources of historical data.

Week 3 (9/18): “The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time”

- Reading assignment
 - Kennedy, David M. 2013. “What the New Deal Did.” *Political Science Quarterly* 124(2): 251-268.
 - Katznelson, Ira. 2013. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, and 7.
- Additional assignment: none.
- In-class research forum. Sources of historical data.

Week 4 (9/25): Inequality and the New Deal; “racial orders” in APD

- Reading assignment
 - Katznelson, Ira. 2005. *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton. Preface, Chapters 1 and 5.
 - Mettler, Suzanne. 1999. “The Stratification of Social citizenship: Gender and Federalism in the Formation of Old Age Insurance and Aid to Dependent Children.” *Journal of Policy History* 11: 31-58.
 - King, Desmond and Rogers M. Smith. 2005. “Racial Orders in American Political Development.” *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 75-92.
- Additional assignment: none.
- In-class research forum. Research questions and data (workshop together).

Week 5 (10/2): Individualized reading week

- Reading assignment: Reading assignments for this week will be individualized. Students are responsible for choosing a selection of scholarly work relevant to their proposed research questions. At minimum, the amount of reading should be similar to that typically assigned for class. Your proposal should specify what you read, and summarize how it has informed your research project. Please see me if you would like help choosing materials.
- Additional assignment: Paper proposal due.
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together. This week, the class meeting will be devoted primarily to the research forum.

Week 6 (10/9): The role of “moral panics”

- Reading assignment
 - Morone, James. 2003. *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Introduction, Parts IV and V.

Additional assignment: none.

- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together.

Week 7 (10/16): Healthcare; path dependence

- Reading assignment
 - Hacker, Jacob. *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle Over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction (skim), Part III.
 - Hacker, Jacob. 2010. "The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened: Or Why Political Scientists Who Write about Public Policy Shouldn't Assume They Know How to Shape It." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(3): 861-876.
 - Pierson, Paul. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 94(2): 251-267.
- Additional assignment: At least one response paper must be completed by this date.
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together.

Week 8 (10/23): Organized labor

- Reading assignment
 - Frymer, Paul. 2008. *Black and Blue: African-Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party*. Princeton: Princeton University Press [book available electronically through the library]. Chapters 1-5.
 - Farhang, Sean and Ira Katznelson. 2005. "The Southern Imposition: Congress and Labor in the New Deal and Fair Deal." *Studies in American Political Development* 19: 1-30.
- Additional assignment: Individual paper progress meetings.
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together.

Week 9 (10/30): Welfare in the contemporary era

- Reading assignment
 - Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 3, 5-8.
- Additional assignment: Individual paper progress meetings.
- In-class research forum: Discuss paper proposals together.

Week 10 (11/6): No class (election holiday)

Week 11 (11/13): Policy feedback

- Reading assignment
 - Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2005. *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-8.
- Additional assignment: Last day to submit a draft of your paper for review (optional).
- In-class research forum: Concise writing exercise.

Week 12 (11/20): The growth of the invisible welfare state

- Reading assignment
 - Mettler, Suzanne. 2011. *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Additional assignment: Your second response paper must be completed by this date.
- In-class research forum: How to prepare and give an effective presentation.

Week 13 (11/27): Research presentations

- Research paper due.

Week 14 (12/4): Research presentations

Discussion Participation Guidelines - APD

Class participation is worth 20% of your final grade. To get an A for participation, you must come prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each week. As you read, think about the questions listed below. This will help you prepare for discussion.

Core questions:

- What is the central argument? (1-2 sentences)
- What kind of evidence is used to support the argument?
 - Were you convinced? Why or why not?
- Are there any key concepts? What are they? Are they useful for understanding the subject matter of the book/article? Could they be useful for understanding other things?

Additional questions:

- What, if anything, can we learn about contemporary politics from this examination of the past?
- If there is more than one reading assigned for the week, how do they relate to each other? Are the arguments complementary? Are they in tension with each other? If so, which do you find more compelling and why?
- How do they relate to readings from prior weeks?
 - Again, are they complementary? In tension?
 - What might authors of other books/articles we've read say about this reading?
- Does this reading help to answer any of the motivating questions of the class? If so, how?

I strongly recommend writing some notes immediately after you finish each book or article, so it's still fresh in your mind.