

**AMERICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL STUDIES**  
**Masaryk University**  
**October 2 - 14, 2023**

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**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Lecture:**

You are encouraged to raise your hand to ask questions during the lecture or about reading points that you feel need clarification. Do not hesitate to ask questions because the discussion could clarify important points for all students.

**Reading:**

The required reading is approximately 26 pages per class if it were spread over the seven classes. The lecture outlines and associated reading are PDF files keyed to each class date, e.g., Oct3L is a lecture outline and Oct3Ra, Oct3Rb and Oct3Rc are associated readings for the October 3, 2023, lectures. [The PDF Read Me file explains the association of the lecture outline(s) and reading.] The pound sign (#) before any reading indicates it is required. The syllabus also includes supplemental resources, e.g., The “Elections” Section of the 2012 *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

**Examination:**

The final examination will be a comprehensive essay that draws together the lectures, required reading, and video “Super Chief: The Life and Legacy of [Chief Justice] Earl Warren.”

**Grading System:**

- A (91%+): Excellent performance; the student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
- B (81-90%): Very good performance; the student has mastered the material, understands the subject well, and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
- C (71-80%): Fair performance; the student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
- D (61-70%): Poor performance; the student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course.
- E (51-60%): Barely passed; the student has barely succeeded in mastering the subject matter;
- F (50%-): Fail; the student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter.

**Assignments:**

- October 2     **Introduction:** Course overview and The American Political System
- #American Political System schematic
  - #2016 General Election Ballot, Orleans Parish
  - #2020 General Election Ballot, St. Charles Parish
  - #The Electoral College Explained (13 pgs.)

October 3

### **Selecting the President: A Process of Reform in Continued Flux**

**Lecture:** The Public Funding of Presidential Elections

#Federal Election Commission, “Understanding public funding of presidential elections” <https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/understanding-public-funding-presidential-elections/> (accessed 22 August 2020).

**Lecture:** National [Democratic Party] Convention Delegate Selection Reforms

#Kevin J. Colman, Joseph E. Cantor, and Thomas H. Neale, “Presidential Elections in the United States: A Primer.” (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, April 17, 2000), pp. 1-48.

**Lecture:** Selecting U.S. Presidents by Accident of Design

#“A Complicated Path to the Democratic Nomination (5 pgs.)

October 4

### **The President: Role, Limitations, and Power**

**Lecture:** The President: Public Expectations

**Lecture:** The President in Office

#“Inside the Complicated Reality of Being America’s Oldest President” (9 pgs.)

#The Calm Man in the Capital: Biden Lets Others Spike the Ball but Notches a Win (5 pgs.)

#President Donald J. Trump: “YOU’RE FIRED!” (23 pgs.)

#“New Insights Into Trump’s State of Mind on Jan. 6 Chip Away at Doubts”

October 5

### **The Congress: An Organized Counterbalance to the President?**

**Lecture:** The Organization and Operation of U.S. Congress

#Robert B. Dove, Parliamentarian, United States Senate, “From a Bill to a Law: Enactment of a Law” (Updated February 1997) (28 pgs.)  
[http://thomas.loc.gov/home/laws\\_made.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/laws_made.html).

#R. Eric Petersen, “Roles and Duties of a Member of Congress.” (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, November 4, 2010). (10 pgs.)

#The Senate Filibuster: For and Against (10 pgs.)

#“How Public Views Congress and Their Own Representative” (1 pg)

#“Congress Has Become a Toxic Mess. Can It Be Saved?” (4 pgs.)

October 6

### **The U.S. Court System**

**Lecture:** Supreme Court Establishment, Organization and Operation

#Establishment of U.S. Supreme Court Power

#U.S. Court System Map, <http://www.uscourts.gov/courtlinks/>

#U.S. Supreme Court Members

#Federal Court Appointment Process

#“The Supreme Court of the United States: Organization and Operation” (18 pgs.)  
<https://www.supremecourt.gov/about/about.aspx>.

October 9 **The U.S. Supreme Court in American Society**

**Video:** “Super Chief: The Life and Legacy of [Chief Justice] Earl Warren”

**Lecture:** The Responsibility and Powers of the Courts

#October Term 2022 (16 pgs.)

#October Term 2021 (25 pgs.)

#“Gridlock in Congress Has Amplified the Power of the Supreme Court” (5 pgs.)

October 10 **Political Parties, Presidential Elections, and the Future of American Politics**

#American Political Parties Since 1789 (schematic) and “Political Parties” on Ballots in the 2012 Presidential Election.

**Lecture:** The Future of American Politics: A Continuing Voter Revolt?

#Trump Capture of the Republican Party (19 pgs.)

#The Relentless Shrinking of Trump’s Base (12 pgs.)

#2020 Voting Complexities (13 pgs.)

#How Liberals Rehearsed for Trump’s Power Grab (9 pgs.)

**Lecture:** The Impact of Social Media on Democracy: The American Experience

#Russian 2016 Presidential Election Interference (43 pgs.)

#How Fake News on Facebook Helped Fuel a Border Crisis in Europe (6 pgs.)

#Internal Alarm, . . . : Facebook’s Employees Dissect Its Election Role (8 pgs.)

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Political Polarization in the American Public: *How Increasing Ideological Uniformity and Partisan Antipathy Affect Politics, Compromise and Everyday Life*. It only exists online and is accessed at <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/> (The report has an Introduction and 5 Sections, and it has links with interactive graphics).

\*\*\*See Democracy in Action, *P2020: The Race for the White House*, for an online book that covers the 2020 presidential election from “Context” and “Pre-Campaign” to “Election Day” and “Inauguration.” <https://www.democracyinaction.us/2020.html>

October 11 **Review Session**

October 12 **FINAL EXAMINATION**

October 14 **Course grade by email request.**

## ***Supplemental Documents/Data Sources:***

“The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription,” The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html) (accessed March 15, 2010).

“The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription,” The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html) (accessed March 15, 2010).

“The Bill of Rights [Amendments 1-10]: A Transcription,” The U.S. National Archives & Records Admin. [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html) (accessed March 15, 2010).

“The Constitution: Amendments 11-27” The U.S. National Archives & Records Administration [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_amendments\\_11-27.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html) (accessed March 15, 2010).

***Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012*** (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), Section 7, Elections, pp. 243-264 (accessed February 22, 2012). Series of tables with useful information about U.S. elections. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/11statab/election.pdf>.

**NOTE:** Statistical information is available online from 1878 through 2012, and it can be accessed with the link [http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical\\_abstract.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical_abstract.html) (accessed August 20, 2013). Statistical information for 2013 is available online, and it can be accessed with the link <http://statab.conquestsystems.com/sa/> (accessed August 20, 2013).

#CNN, “2008 National Exit Poll,” <http://edition.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/president/> accessed November 14, 2012 (5 pgs.)

#CBS News, “2010 National Exit Poll,” accessed January 25, 2011 at: [www.cbsnews.com/election2010/exit.shtml?state=US&jurisdiction=0&race=H&tag=contentBody;electionCenterHome](http://www.cbsnews.com/election2010/exit.shtml?state=US&jurisdiction=0&race=H&tag=contentBody;electionCenterHome) (15 pgs.)

#CBS News, “2012 National Exit Poll,” accessed November 7, 2012 at: [www.cbsnews.com/election-results-2012/exit.shtml?state=US&race=P&jurisdiction=0&party=G&tag=contentBody:exitLink](http://www.cbsnews.com/election-results-2012/exit.shtml?state=US&race=P&jurisdiction=0&party=G&tag=contentBody:exitLink) (14 pgs.)

#**The New York Times**, “2014 National Exit Poll,” accessed February 5, 2015 at: [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/11/04/us/politics/2014-exit-polls.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/11/04/us/politics/2014-exit-polls.html?_r=0) (7 pgs.). This version is compact but comprehensive, and it shows changes from 2010 to 2014. For a more detailed version of the same election poll, see NBC News, “2014 National Exit Poll,” accessed February 5, 2015 at: [www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/2014/US/house/exitpoll](http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/2014/US/house/exitpoll) (32 pgs.)

#Fox News, “2016 National Exit Poll,” accessed November 9, 2016 at: [www.foxnews.com/politics/elections/2016/exit-polls](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/elections/2016/exit-polls). (38 pgs.). For a more condensed graphical version of the same election poll see **The New York Times**, “Election 2016: Exit Polls,” [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.com.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.com.html) (4 pgs.).

***There was no National Exit Poll in 2018 or 2022.***

#The New York Times, “National Exit Polls: How Different Groups Voted” (accessed November 4, 2020) [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-president.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=styln-elections-2020&region=TOP\\_BANNER&context=election\\_recirc](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-president.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=styln-elections-2020&region=TOP_BANNER&context=election_recirc). See also, ABC News, “Your Voice,/Your Vote,” National Exit Poll (accessed November 4, 2020) <https://abcnews.go.com/Elections/exit-polls-2020-us-presidential-election-results-analysis>.

*Also, see the following web sites:*

**Executive Branch:** <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

**Legislative Branch:** United States House of Representatives  
<http://www.house.gov>

United States Senate  
<http://www.senate.gov>

**Judicial Branch:** United States Supreme Court  
<http://www.supremecourtus.gov>

U.S. Courts: The Federal Judiciary  
<http://www.uscourts.gov/courtlinks/>

**Elections:** U.S. Department of State  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/politics/elecover.htm>

Federal Election Commission  
<http://www.fec.gov>

The Democratic Party  
<http://www.dnc.org>

Republican National Committee  
<http://www.rnc.org>

**General Information:** The Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>

Office of the Federal Registrar  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>

**Historical Documents:** The National Archives and Records Administration  
<http://www.archives.gov>

Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office; Ben’s Guide to U.S. Government for Kids (grades 9-12)  
<http://www.bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/documents/index.html>