

## **PSC 32-114: American Politics**

Tuesday/Thursday 10-11:15 am

Mood-Bridwell 109

### **Spring 2020**

Dr. Emily Sydnor  
Contact:  
Office phone: 512-863-1587  
[sydnoe@southwestern.edu](mailto:sydnoe@southwestern.edu)

Mood-Bridwell 239  
Office Hours:  
Mon. 1-3, Thurs. 1-2:15 pm  
and by appointment

*Community Engaged Learning Student Assistant (CELSA)*

Antonio Esparza  
[esparzaa@southwestern.edu](mailto:esparzaa@southwestern.edu)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In the 2014 midterms, 18.1 percent of students on college campuses turned out to vote (NSLVE, 2014). In 2018, the number more than doubled to 40.3% of students nationwide (NSLVE, 2018). Why did these young Americans choose to participate in the elections when so many others stayed home...and what prevented everyone else from showing up as well? In this course, we will approach American politics from a participatory standpoint, examining the psychological and institutional variables that lead any given individual to vote. This investigation will be bookended by conversations about why participation is vital to American democracy in the first place, and about how changes in both institutions and behavior can lead to the breakdown of democracy, even (potentially) in the United States. We will pair our academic learning with engagement with the Georgetown and Southwestern communities, applying concepts from the reading and our discussions to “real-life” efforts to improve voter registration and voter turnout, increase citizens’ knowledge about elections and candidates, debate issues in city council and mobilize voters for the candidates of our choice.

This course will help you understand the incentives and motivations of actors throughout the American political system so that you can interpret what you read and hear about American politics in a more analytical manner. The course serves simultaneously as a “civics” course that helps you become a more confident participant in American politics and as an introduction to the theories and methods used in the study of American politics.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. *List* the major institutions in American government and *explain* their functions.
2. *Assess* the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system.
3. *Interpret* statistical and graphical political data.
4. *Apply* theories of political science to contemporary political events.
5. *Connect* government institutions and responsibilities to everyday life and your learning in other Southwestern classes.
6. *Communicate* your ideas through writing and oral presentation.
7. *Identify what you need to know* to be an engaged American citizen.
8. *Recognize the value* of your own political engagement.

## MATERIALS

Kollman, Ken. (2019). *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. (2018). *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown.

## HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

This course emphasizes active learning, using a range of interactive assignments to investigate American politics. Here are a few tips that will help you be successful in this course.

1. **Plan ahead.** Keep due dates for both the weekly assignments and the larger projects in mind and plan your work accordingly. Part of surviving college and the professional world beyond is knowing how to budget your time, and I will not be forgiving of late assignments that are the result of poor planning.
2. **Prepare for and participate in class discussion.** Discussion is a major part of our day-to-day classroom experience, and I have several tips you can use make it a particularly productive one:
  - i. First, attend each class with a copy of that day's assigned reading. You may not always need the textbook, but if there are journal or newspaper articles or pieces from Moodle, it is highly likely we will look at them in class.
  - ii. Speak up when you have a thought—you don't have to raise your hand, but please don't talk over your classmates.
  - iii. With that in mind, you are invited and encouraged to disagree with one another and with me. You will never be penalized for challenging anything I say, nor will you be rewarded for figuring out what I think and repeating it back to me. Communication is collaborative—the only way that we learn to understand different perspectives and work towards common goals is by sharing our perspectives and listening to others' with respect. If you feel like you cannot talk in class because of your political beliefs, please come talk to me. I cannot work to improve the classroom environment if I don't know about the problems within it.
3. **Use your resources.** I am your most valuable resource, and I want to help you! If something isn't clear after our class discussion or an assignment, don't hesitate to visit my office hours, talk to me after class, or send me an email. I aim to be responsive and timely in my feedback and email replies. That being said, see number 1 above—don't email me at midnight the night before an assignment is due and expect a response. Instead, think about your schedule and come see me in advance if you think there will be any problems.

I recognize that it can feel daunting to get involved in politics and that it is sometimes hard to know where to start. To help overcome this feeling of inertia, our class has a Community Engaged Learning Student Assistant (CELSA) who will be sending you information about ways to get involved on campus and in the Georgetown and Austin communities. Don't hesitate to reach out to Natalie if you are having trouble fulfilling your community-engaged learning requirement or if you have questions about ways to get involved in politics.

Beyond campus, there are dozens of great resources for learning more about American Politics. [The Monkey Cage](#) and [Mischiefs of Faction](#) are two blogs written by political scientists on a range of topics. [FiveThirtyEight](#) offers data-driven analysis of myriad topics and is one of the

most well known forecasters of American elections. The Pew Research Center's [U.S. Politics and Policy](#) wing and the [National Election Studies](#) offer a wealth of polling and survey data on a range of issues. And if there's another type of information you're looking for, just ask me or one of Southwestern's librarians—we'll help you track it down.

## ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Your grade in this class is calculated out of a total of 1000 points. Next to each assignment below, I have included the total point value possible.

### 1. Class Preparation Activities (100 points)

In the schedule below, you'll see an assignment listed with each day's reading. These assignments are designed to get you thinking about the class topics before you come to class and will help us get the discussion started each week. **You should post your responses to these assignments on Moodle**; an assignment tab will be created for each day's prompt. Most assignments will require a minimum of 1-3 paragraphs. The assignments will be graded on completion—**for each assignment you turn in, you will receive 5 points**. An additional 30 points will be allocated at the end of the semester based on the quality of your responses. The mathematically inclined will realize that if you do all the CPAs, you will receive more than 100 points.

### 2. Integrating Experience and Research (300 points)

Throughout the course of the semester, you are required to find at least one way to get involved in politics.

*Community Engagement (100 points)*: One-third of your total project grade will come from participating in a certain number of activities on- and off-campus. The minimum requirements for different point amounts are as follows:

**100 points**: four events or activities; must include some on- and some off-campus engagement.

**80 points**: three events or activities; must include some on- and some off-campus engagement.

**60 points**: two events or activities

**40 points**: one event or activity

**0 points**: no civic engagement

**To receive credit for attending an event you must post on our class blog about your experience.** Your blog post must contain two parts. First, you must **upload a picture** of the event! (Selfies work too, but please don't post anything that might include private information, like voter registration forms). Second, you must include a **brief (250-500 word) written post** about the event. See the assignment hand-out for details about what to include in your journal entry.

You can access the class blog through Moodle or by going to <https://politicalengagementatsu.wordpress.com/>

**Having trouble figuring out what to do to become engaged?** Our CELSA will be posting on the class blog each week with a list of activities, events, and programs on campus and in the local community. Make sure you head there to learn about a variety of opportunities.

*Final paper (250 points):* Your final paper for this class will bring together information from all of your journal entries to make a coherent argument about how your engagement has shaped your understanding of politics and government over the course of the semester. This paper should have a thesis statement that makes an argument about how your experience offered insight or understanding of the concepts and ideas we've discussed in class. It should also cite specific material from our course readings and class discussions. This reflective paper will be 4-5 pages long.

**3. Midterm (150 points)**

The midterm will cover the material we discuss before spring break. It will include a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions that focus on themes and content from both class discussion and your readings.

**4. Final Exam (200 points)**

The final will be cumulative and will include a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions that focus on material from both class discussion and your readings.

**5. Attendance & Participation (200 points)**

Part of being a good colleague and good democratic citizen is engaging in thoughtful and civil discussion and actively listening to your peers. I expect you to participate in class activities and discussions, thereby improving your verbal communication skills and practicing how to analyze, critique, and respond respectfully in discussion.

In order to participate, you must be present! Much of the work we do in class will reinforce the assignments you complete for a grade; therefore it is to your benefit to be in class every day. You are allowed **two unexcused absences** throughout the course of the semester. Each unexcused absence exceeding two will result in a five-point deduction from your final participation grade. In other words, if you earn 140 points on participation but are absent 4 times, you will receive 130 points. Doctor's notes do not exempt absences from this policy (but please let me know in the event of any prolonged, severe illnesses or other extenuating circumstances).

**6. Extra Credit (up to 50 points)**

Throughout the semester, there will be events on campus that do not qualify as civic engagement opportunities but that would serve as interesting or useful opportunities for you to make connections between our class and other areas of your academic life. **To receive credit for each event, you must write a brief (less than 500 words) reaction discussing how the experience connects to your American Politics class experience and submit it on Moodle within a week of the event.** You will receive 10 points for up to 5 events; the events must be pre-approved by the professor and many will be announced in class.

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES**

Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due on Moodle by the beginning of class.

Course Preparation Assignments	Daily
Midterm	Feb. 27
Draft of Civic Engagement Paper	April 3
Peer Review	April 7
Final Civic Engagement Paper	April 21
Final Exam	May 5

(May 1 for graduating seniors)

## COURSE POLICIES

*Pre-requisites:* There are no prerequisites for this course.

*Late assignments:* You may turn in an assignment late for a five point grade deduction per day (so a 100-point paper receives a 95 if it is turned in within the first 24 hours after the deadline, 90 when two days late, etc.). **I will not remind you to turn in late assignments.**

*Citations:* The political science department has decided that students in every course will use the same method of citation in all their writing assignments: the Chicago Style. For the sake of uniformity, we ask you all to consult the same text, Kate Turabian's guide to the Chicago style, titled *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, for information on how to employ this method of citation in your writing. Therefore, **I will not accept work that is not cited properly according to Turabian.**

*Academic Integrity:* Please read the honor pledge and learn what constitutes an honor code violation, especially as regards cheating and plagiarism. People usually are aware of what constitutes cheating, but many might be unsure of what exactly plagiarism is all about. The academic honor code can help clarify. Plagiarism is intellectual theft and you must know what constitutes it to avoid it. Using the words and ideas of others without acknowledgement is the essence of plagiarism. **You can unintentionally plagiarize by failing to cite sources or incorrectly citing your sources.** To avoid honor code violations, read the section below and cite your sources properly. In addition, on all your written work for this class, you must affirm the Honor Code by writing the pledge and signing your name beneath it: "I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not." Questions about the Honor Code may be directed to: Shelley Story, Dean of Students ([storys@southwestern.edu](mailto:storys@southwestern.edu)). Phone: 512-863-1281.

*Grading:* You can calculate your own grade at any point in the semester by knowing how many points you've earned and dividing that number by the total possible points available. The scale below helps you translate that fraction into a letter grade:

A+	98-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	94-97	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63

The University Honor Code applies to all graded assignments. The work should be yours alone and no one else's.

*Accommodating Disabilities:* Southwestern University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should contact the Center for Academic Success to determine their eligibility to receive accommodations. To arrange accommodations, students should contact Jennifer Smull, Assistant Director of Academic Success, ([smullj@southwestern.edu](mailto:smullj@southwestern.edu)) within the Center for Academic Success (in the Prothro Center): call 512-863-1286 or email [success@southwestern.edu](mailto:success@southwestern.edu). Students seeking accommodations should notify the Access and Academic Resource coordinator at least two weeks before services are needed. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with the appropriate faculty member. More information can also be found here: <http://www.southwestern.edu/offices/success/forstudents/services.php>.

*Technology:* You are welcome to use your laptop or tablet to take notes for class, and at times we may use multiple laptops to look up information and watch or listen to course material. However, I expect these items to only be used for class-related purposes and not for your amusement or distraction. On the first day of class, we will come to an agreement as a class as to the penalty for inappropriate use of technology.

## SCHEDULE

### Why do we need citizens to participate in politics and government?

Jan. 14            Introductions, no reading.

Jan. 16            *Structures of Government and the American Regime*

**To read:**

“Lycurgus” by Plutarch, selections

*Democracy in America*, by Alexis de Tocqueville, selections.

“Harrison Bergeron,” by Kurt Vonnegut

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Consider the types of regimes described in each reading. Which would you most like to live in, and why?

Jan. 21

**To read:**

Kollman ch. 2

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Last class, we discussed three questions asked about every regime: who governs? To what ends? What is life like? Answer each question in the context of the Articles of Confederation. What changes with the Constitution?

Jan. 23

*Political Culture*

**To read:**

Hartz, Louis. (2014). “From *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution*” in *The Enduring Debate: Classic & Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds. New York: W.W. Norton.

Wood, Gordon S. (2014). “From *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*. In *The Enduring Debate: Classic & Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds. New York: W.W. Norton.

Smith, Rogers M. (2014). “Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America” in *The Enduring Debate: Classic & Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds. New York: W.W. Norton.

Elazar, Daniel J. (2014). "The Three Political Cultures" in *The Enduring Debate: Classic & Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Imagine an alien landed in Georgetown and wanted you to explain the political culture of the area. What would you say? How would you explain the difference in political culture in Georgetown and, say, Boston, Massachusetts?

Jan. 28

*Federalism*

**To read:**

Kollman, ch. 3.3

*The Economist*. (2016). "[Donald Trump's administration could deport millions of undocumented immigrants, using a system perfected under Barack Obama.](#)"

Gulasekaram, Pratheepan and Karthick Ramakrishnan. (2015, Sept 24). "[Forget Border Walls and Mass Deportations. The Real Changes in Immigration Policy Are Happening in the States.](#)" *Washington Post*.

Dalmia, Shikha. (2015, Dec. 7). "[A State's Rights Approach to Immigration Reform.](#)" *Reason.com*

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

What level of government (local, state, national) should have the primary responsibility for deciding immigration policy? Why did you make that choice? Why are the other options less effective?

**What affects political engagement and participation?**

Jan. 30

*Gerrymandering*

Gladwell, Malcolm. (2018). "Divide and Conquer." *Revisionist History*. Podcast available at: <http://revisionisthistory.com/episodes/21-divide-and-conquer>

Ingraham, Christopher. (2016). "[This Is Actually What America Would Look Like Without Gerrymandering](#)" *Washington Post*, January 13.

Jarvie, Jenny. (2017). "[Why Texas is Texas: A gerrymandering case cuts to the core of the state's transformation](#)" *LA Times*, July 11.

**Course Preparation Assignment:**

Each of the pieces we read or listened to for class today makes an argument about how institutions—the rules of the game—shape Americans' ability to participate in politics. What are some of those rules? What do you think about Gladwell's proposal that Texas break into several smaller states? How would it change the rules of the game?

Feb. 4

*Primaries and Elections*

**To read:**

Kollman, ch. 10.2, 10.3,

Boatright, Robert. "From *Getting Primaried*" *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Ann G. Serow & Evertett C. Ladd, eds. Baltimore: Lanahan Publishers.

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

If a news outlet reported that President Trump was "getting primaried," what would that mean? What would the potential effects be for his chances at re-election? On the Democratic side, there is no front-runner. What should we expect to happen there, given what Scala describes of primary procedures?

Feb. 6

*Voter ID laws*

**To read:**

Hershey, Marion Randon (2009). "What We Know about Voter-ID Laws, Registration, and Turnout" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(1): 87-91.

*Before class, you will each sign up to read one of the following:*

Barreto, Matt A., Stephen A. Nuno and Gabriel R. Sanchez (2009). "The Disproportionate Impact of Voter-ID Requirements on the Electorate—New Evidence from Indiana" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(1): 111-116.

Mycoff, Jason D., Michael W. Wagner, and David C. Wilson (2009). "The Empirical Effects of Voter-ID Laws: Present or Absent?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(1): 121-126.

Ansolabehere, Stephen (2009). "Effects of Identification Requirements on Voting: Evidence from the Experiences of Voters on Election Day" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(1): 127-130.

**Course Preparation Assignment:**

One of the major questions surrounding voter ID laws is "what are the effects of voter ID laws on participation?" Before you start your reading on voter ID laws, generate 2 hypotheses that answer this question, using the form "If voter ID laws are passed, then..." To what extent does the data in the readings support your hypotheses?

Feb. 11

*Interest Groups*

**To read:**

Kollman, ch. 11

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

What strategies do interest groups use to try to affect political change? Who is most likely to benefit from their efforts? Why?

Feb. 13

*Ideology*

**To read:**

Ceaser, James. (2002). "Progressivism and the New Deal" *American Government: Origins, Institutions and Public Policy*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. (1944). *State of the Union Message to Congress*. Washington, D.C. (Also known as the "Second Bill of Rights")



Ceaser, James (2010). "Four Heads and One Heart: The American Conservative Movement."

Kollman, ch. 6.5

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

One purpose of an ideology is to offer an explanation for why social and political conditions are the way they are. After reading these pieces on liberal progressivism and conservatism, what accounts of existing order does each offer? How are they alike and different?

Feb. 18

*Political Parties*

**To read:**

Kollman, ch. 12

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Why do we have political parties? What do they do that is good for American democracy? How might they hurt it? Please include at least two positives and two negatives in your answer.

Feb. 20

*Public Opinion*

**To read:**

Kollman, chs. 9.1, 9.2, 9.5, and 9.6

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

George Gallup originally designed polls to help make the democratic system more responsive to the people. Did he succeed? If someone from the Gallup poll called to ask you how you voted in the 2016 election, would you tell the truth? What if Katie Couric stopped you outside the polling place and asked you how you had voted?

Feb. 25

*The media*

**To read:**

Kollman, chs. 14.1 and 14.3

Jolly, Jihii (2014). "[How Algorithms Decide the News You See.](#)" *Columbia Journalism Review*.

**Course Preparation Assignment:**

Play a full game of "[Factitious](#)," a game that asks you to distinguish between real and fake news. How'd you do? What criteria did you use to make your decision? What made certain articles harder or easier to label as fake?

**Why does citizen engagement matter for American government?**

Feb. 27

**Midterm**

March 3

**SUPER TUESDAY**

**No class.**

Use this time to knock out at least one of your civic engagement opportunities.

- March 5 *Legislation and Representation in Congress*  
**To read:**  
 Kollman, chs. 5.1, 5.2, 5.5
- Class Preparation Assignment:**  
 Throughout your civic engagement activities, have you seen elected officials respond to citizens? If so, how? Are there ways the system could have been more responsive? Do you think increased responsiveness is a positive outcome for our political system?
- March 10 *Congressional Power of Impeachment*  
**To read:**  
 Gendler, Alex. (2017). "[How Does Impeachment Work?](#)" *Ted-Ed, YouTube*
- Congressional Research Service (1998). "[Impeachment Grounds: Part 3: Hamilton, Wilson and Story](#)" *CRS Report for Congress 98-895A*.
- Victor, Jennifer N. (2019). "[Why Impeachment Is Starting Now, In One Chart](#)" *Mischiefs of Faction*, September 24.
- Class Preparation Assignment:**  
 Why do you think the Founders set up the impeachment process the way they did? After doing the reading, what questions do you still have about the contemporary impeachment inquiry?
- March 12 *Popular Vote vs. The Electoral College*  
**To read:**  
 Amar, Akhil Reed. (2000). "[The Electoral College, Unfair from Day One.](#)" *New York Times*, November 9.
- Editorial Board. (2017). "[Let the People Pick the President.](#)" *New York Times*, Nov. 7.
- Posner, Richard A. (2012). "[In Defense of the Electoral College.](#)" *Slate.com*, November 12.
- Guelzo, Allen and Hulme, James. (2016). "[In Defense of the Electoral College](#)" *Washington Post*, November 15.
- Rudalevige, Andrew. (2016). "[The Electoral College Has Serious Problems. So Do Any Alternatives.](#)" *The Washington Post*, November 15.
- Class Preparation Assignment:**  
 Imagine you are a Congressional staffer whose boss is contemplating proposing a Constitutional amendment to dismantle the Electoral College. Make a list of arguments for *and* against the continued use of the Electoral College as a means of deciding the presidency. Then offer a recommendation to the Congressperson. Should we have an Electoral College? Justify your recommendation with evidence from contemporary politics and your readings.

**NO CLASS MARCH 17 OR 19 FOR SPRING BREAK.**

March 24 *Judicial Review and the Supreme Court*

**To read:**

Kollman, chs. 8.1, 8.5

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

How important is it that Americans respect the Supreme Court of the United States? How responsive is the Supreme Court to public opinion and political considerations? Is this appropriate? Why or why not?

March 26 **To read:**

Scalia, Antonin. (2005). "Constitutional Interpretation the Old Fashioned Way" *Speech at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*, Washington, D.C., March 14.

Breyer, Stephen (2014). "Our Democratic Constitution" in *The Enduring Debate: Classic & Contemporary Readings in American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. David T. Canon, John J. Coleman, and Kenneth R. Mayer, eds. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Identify the logic behind the "originalist" and "living constitution" positions. If you could choose one interpretation strategy to impose on all justices, what would it be? Would it be different from either of the two theories described in the readings?

March 31 *The Presidency*

**To read:**

Kollman, ch. 6.1, 6.4

Feldmann, Linda. (2018, Jan. 4) "[Disrupter in Chief: How Donald Trump is Changing the Presidency.](#)" *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Buncombe, Andrew. (2018, Jan. 17). "[Donald Trump One Year On: How the Twitter President Changed Social Media and the Country's Top Office.](#)" *The Independent*.

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Make a list of the five best and worst presidents. What makes some of these presidents great? How often do we really have a great president? Why were others poor presidents? What criteria should we use to judge presidents—policy accomplishments? The ability to inspire? Character?

April 2 *The Bureaucracy*

**To read:**  
Kollman, ch. 7

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

www.usa.gov is a central portal for all government services. Select an agency from the A-Z list on the site. Read the information on usa.gov and visit the agency's own website to answer the following questions: 1) which agency did you review and what services does it provide? 2) Was information about services easily accessible via the agency's web page? 3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of e-government?

**Draft of Community Engagement Paper Due to Peers**  
(uploaded in Google Drive folder)

April 7 **In-class peer review**

Come to class having read your assigned colleagues' paper drafts.

April 9 *The Future of American Democracy?*

**To read:**  
Levitsky and Ziblatt, intro – ch. 3

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Political science is guided by several different theoretical approaches and each approach starts with different assumptions. For example, *behavioral* political science assumes that in order to understand an outcome of interest, we need to look at the behavior and attitudes of citizens or elites. *Institutional* theories of politics assume that the design and organization of the political system (for example, whether a government is parliamentary or presidential) explain outcomes. Levitsky and Ziblatt attribute our current political moment to a combination of behavioral and institutional factors. Make a list of at least three of these factors, label each as behavioral or institutional, and briefly articulate how they help us understand Trump's election.

**NO CLASS APRIL 14 FOR RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WORKS SYMPOSIUM**

**NO CLASS APRIL 16 (DR. SYDNOR AT MIDWEST POLITICAL SCIENCE ANNUAL MEETING)**

I strongly recommend you use your class time during these two days to make edits to your Community Engaged Learning Papers and make sure you've completed all of your blog posts.

April 21      **To read:**  
Levitsky and Ziblatt, chs. 4-7

**Course Preparation Assignment:**

Levitsky and Ziblatt argue that the concern about contemporary American democracy is grounded in the erosion of norms of forbearance and mutual toleration. These norms have come under fire before. Is the contemporary experience unique, and if so, how? How has partisan polarization contributed to the erosion of these norms?

**Civic Engagement Paper due**

April 23      **To read:**  
Levitsky and Ziblatt, chs. 8-9

Tresiman, Daniel (2018). "[Is Democracy Really in Danger? The Picture Is Not as Dire as You Think](#)" *Washington Post*, June 19.

Illing, Sean. (2018). "[Intellectuals have said democracy is failing for a century. They were wrong.](#)" *Vox.com*, Aug. 9.

**Class Preparation Assignment:**

Levitsky and Ziblatt argue that democracy in the United States is under threat and that we need to be increasingly vigilant in our watch for the erosion of democratic norms. Treisman and Illing disagree, arguing that contemporary concerns about American democracy are overblown. Given what you've read and everything we've discussed this semester, what do you think? Provide at least three pieces of evidence in support of your argument.

April 28      No reading, exam review day

**Course Preparation Assignment:**

Submit three multiple choice questions and a short answer question that you think would make good, challenging exam questions.

**YOUR FINAL EXAM IS TUESDAY, MAY 5 FROM 1:30 TO 4:30 PM IN MBH 109.**

**IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO GRADUATE IN MAY OR AUGUST 2020, YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE YOUR EXAM ON OR BEFORE MAY 1.**

Please contact me by April 24 with a date and time at which you would like to take the exam.