

Conf. dr. Octavian Roske

POWER AND PERSUASION: THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCENE

Fall 2020

THE COURSE: The United States is the first modern nation in which citizens deliberately shape political articulations of their own government. Citizenship presupposes responsibility and a sense of participation in local and federal government. The course explains how the democratic system works by forming political attitudes and incorporating them in official decisions. **REQUIREMENTS:** Students will be required to make three oral in-class presentations, write two short papers, and participate in class discussions of the readings. Grades will be determined as follows: oral in-class presentations 80%, two short papers 20%.

OCTAVIAN ROSKE: Associate Professor, University of Bucharest. Published *Contemporary American Fiction, 1975-1985*, 1989; *American Conservative Tradition, 1783-1860*, 1998; *Repressive Mechanisms in Romania, 1945-1989. Biographical Dictionary*, Vols 1-9, 2001-2009.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Introduction. Method. Sources. Requirements

WEEK 2: American Rivalries: States' Rights vs. National Supremacy

Readings: James A. Morone and Rogan Kersh, *By the People. Debating American Government*, Brief Third Edition, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 80-105, N2. Bruce Miroff, Raymond Seidelman, and Todd Swanstrom, *Debating Democracy. A Reader in American Politics*, Seventh Edition, Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012, pp. 48-62.

WEEK 3: Powers and Constraints: Congress Reconsidered

Readings: Donald A. Ritchie, *The U.S. Congress. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 84-110. Lou Frey, Jr. and Michael T. Hayes (editors), *Inside the House. Former Members Reveal How Congress Really Works*, Lanham, New York, Oxford: U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, University Press of America, 2001, pp. 157-183.

WEEK 4: Institutional Resources of Presidential Power: Personal and Political Background

Readings: Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavrek, *The Logic of American Politics*, Sixth Edition, Los Angeles, London: CQ Press, 2014, pp. 298-338, 733-734. Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith. Memoirs of a President*, Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1995, pp. 459-489.

WEEK 5: Presidential Campaign: The Winner-Take-All System

Readings: James Pfiffner, *The Modern Presidency*, Sixth edition, Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011, pp. 18-55. Republican Candidates Debate in Greenville, South Carolina, February 13, 2016. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>.

WEEK 6: Power and Persuasion: Presidential Debates

Readings: Sidney Kraus, *Televised Presidential Debates and Public Policy*, Second edition, New York, London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2011, pp. 29-67, 134-139. The Final Trump-Clinton Debate, Las Vegas, October 19, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/10/19/the-final-trump-clinton-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm_term=.8d5da7668f28.

WEEK 7: *Abuse of Power: The Shadow of Presidential Scandals*

Readings: Robert Shogan, *The Double-Edged Sword. How Character Makes and Ruins Presidents, from Washington to Clinton*, Boulder, Colorado, Oxford: Westview, 2000, pp. 223-256, 295. The Clinton Impeachment Inquiry and Trial (1998-1999), in William H. Chafe, Harvard Sitkoff, and Beth Bailey (editors), *A History of Our Time. Readings on Postwar America*, Sixth Edition, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 404-411.

WEEK 8: *The Invisible Power: The Federal Bureaucrats*

Readings: Morone and Kersh, *By the People*, pp. 399-427, N7. David E. Lewis, “The Politics of Presidential Appointments,” in Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith, *Principles and Practice of American Politics. Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Fifth Edition, Los Angeles: Sage, CQ Press, 2013, pp. 345-368.

WEEK 9: *The Supreme Court: Making Policy by Deciding Cases*

Readings: Walter E. Volkmer, *American Government*, Fourteenth Edition, Boston: Pearson, 2013, pp. 268-285. Miroff, Seidelman, and Swanstrom, *Debating Democracy*, pp. 286-303.

WEEK 10: *Why Third Parties Do Not Win: Moderation in Politics*

Readings: Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, and Vavrek, *The Logic of American Politics*, pp. 524-574. Republican Platform, 2016. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers_pdf/117718.pdf.

WEEK 11: *Elections and Voting: The Importance of Political Campaigns*

Readings: Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsie, and Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government. Power and Purpose*, Brief Thirteenth Edition, New York, London: W.W. Norton, 2014, pp. 312-357, A66-67. James C. Ceaser, Andrew E. Busch, and John J. Pitney, *Defying the Odds: The 2016 Elections and American Politics*, Lanham, Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017, pp. 101-134

WEEK 12: *The Real Power: Interest Groups*

Readings: Barbara A. Bardes, Mack C. Shelley, and Steffen W. Schmidt, *American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials, 2015-2016 Edition*, Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2016, pp. 201-226. Burdett A. Loomis, “Connecting Interest Groups to the Presidency,” in George C. Edwards III and William G. Howell (editors), *The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 404-424.

WEEK 13: *Freedom of the Press: Media and Politics*

Readings: Kernell, Jacobsen, Kousser, and Vavrek, *The Logic of American Politics*, pp. 616-662. *New York Times Co. v. United States* (1971), <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/403/713>.

WEEK 14: *Rethinking American Power: Decisions in Foreign Policy*

Readings: Joyce Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Fourth Edition, Lanham, Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017, pp. 79-115, 212-218. President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat, October 7, 2002. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html>.

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Volkmer, Walter E., *American Government*, Fourteenth Edition, Boston: Pearson, 2013.