

**POSC 109**  
**THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM**  
**FALL, 2019**  
**Syllabus as of July 22, 2019**

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Monday/Wednesday

3:20 – 4:35 p.m.

Classroom To Be Determined

Office Hours Mon/Wed 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

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**THIS COURSE'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE TOPIC**

**The Instructor's Dilemma**

The purpose of this course is to provide a sophisticated introduction to American politics and government. But it can only provide an introduction to an immensely complicated topic, or set of topics.

To me, a sophisticated understanding means knowing what to look for in order to understand political events, and knowing enough to reject some common rhetoric about politics. But any instructor of this course must be aware of another dimension of what students learn, or conclude. Politics is a basic aspect of human society, which affects us whether we like it or not. There is a lot not to like. So we all have to develop a moral orientation to the political systems in which we live. By that I mean not a sense of what policies are "right" or "wrong," but a sense of what forms of behavior we consider acceptable, either for us or by political leaders. Unlike in almost any other course, what you study here can influence your own choices about how you act as a citizen – both the extent to which you will be involved in government and politics, and how you view your responsibilities in those roles.

Both kinds of understanding are a challenge. On the intellectual side, politics in the U.S., though generally pretty visible, can be quite hard to follow because the country and its governing institutions are so complicated. As the class will be reminded when we read some of the *Federalist Papers*, complexity is part of the design. Federalism, the combination of 13 colonies and eventually fifty states into both national and state governments, creates complexity to start, and then the separation of powers into separate legislative and executive branches – with two legislatures – makes the system even more complicated.

A moral orientation is difficult because most Americans – actually, most of anybody – seem to think of "politics" as usually "dirty" or at least unpleasant.<sup>1</sup> As the famous saying goes, "laws are like sausages; it is better not to see them being made."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, we cannot learn about how U.S. politics

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<sup>1</sup> Some political theorists, following the tradition exemplified by Aristotle, view participation in politics as the highest form of human activity. That should not, however, be interpreted as meaning politics is a realm of virtuous behavior. I would say that, if it is the highest activity, that would be because virtue is so hard, yet simultaneously so important to try to attain.

<sup>2</sup> The quote is usually attributed to the "iron Chancellor" who first unified Germany, Otto von Bismarck (1815-1890). Attributing the quote to a political genius is easy to understand. But I'm not sure it's confirmed by evidence. Some say the source is an American lawyer and poet named John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887), who also is credited with introducing the Indian parable of the blind men and the elephant to western audiences. That story also might have some relevance to the U.S. political system.

works without frankly confronting the less attractive aspects of the system. Whenever I teach this course I therefore worry about discouraging students, leaving only people who are not bothered by the less admirable aspects of political behavior still willing to participate.

I hope you will not be too discouraged, for the results of politics and government are an important part of your lives, and conceding political power to other people does not seem like a good solution. I also don't believe human behavior in politics is especially different from behavior in other activities. I don't believe politicians misrepresent their products much more than other salesmen do while trying to make sales, and I think that many politicians inherently face extremely difficult ethical trade-offs. Just imagine if you had to make decisions about domestic surveillance in the face of valid threats of violence; or what you might consider "fair" tactics if you thought your opponents could do great damage to the country.

### **Coping With Conflict**

Therefore one purpose of this course is to help students appreciate the dilemmas of political behavior. That does not mean to excuse everything you see – but it does mean to be fully aware of moral complexity.<sup>3</sup> One of the most difficult tasks in building any society is to develop norms of moral political behavior, and then to stick to them. It is a topic that does not fit easily into a textbook, for it can seem to be so much a matter of opinion rather than “science.” Yet the United States is now in a period of the country's political history when, as at some other times, the bounds of legitimate political conflict are in question. That is not a good place to be.

I am not sure what I believe about how bad the situation is. I do think it has been faced before, though not with the same technology or exact same divisions. A core question for the course, then, will be how the U.S. political system manages and structures conflict, and with what effects.

One goal for political systems is to take the conflict that naturally exists in society and channel it in a constructive way. By “constructive” I mean a way that enables people to live together in complex societies in a way that meets some standards of decency and justice. This is made more difficult, naturally, by the fact that people disagree about what those standards might be. But in healthy systems the vast majority of people think the result is close enough to their personal standards, even if they have different standards. We might call that compromise.

Yet systems break. Officially, the U.S. political system has continued since the elections of the first U.S. Congress and of President Washington in 1788. In reality, it collapsed in 1861 and had to be re-founded, with similar institutions but different meanings, after this nation's bloodiest war.<sup>4</sup> Since the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments, the U.S. has seemed much more stable than most other advanced industrial nations. It survived the Great Depression, in particular, without turning towards either fascism or communism. But our country's massive failure and near-misses in the past, as well as the horrible experiences of some other countries, should make us sensitive to risks.

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<sup>3</sup> I also am not endorsing views that continually sacrifice basic human decency to notions of “the greater good.” As Harry Potter could tell you if he were real, great evil can be found on that path too.

<sup>4</sup> Almost half a million soldiers died in the Civil War, see <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/many-americans-died-u-s-wars/> World War II had over 90,000 fewer deaths – in a population over four times as large. About 0.31% of the U.S. population died as soldiers in World War II, compared to 1.58% - five times as large a proportion – in the Civil War. And these figures do not include collateral damage to civilians – which were much lower in the World Wars because they were not fought on U.S. soil.

## Confronting Complexity

Understanding the sources and depth of disagreement, and the difficulties of politics, are important for evaluating the political system. But they leave out more basic questions like Who Wins, What They Can Win, and Why. In short, how does the system work?

This is where the confusion comes in. The good news is, there is lots of information. The bad news is, there are so many factors that it is usually hard to say how much difference each makes.

In the study of politics there are no natural laws. There are general patterns, more like probability statements, which can be applied (somewhat) to understand particular cases. So a course like this can only aim to offer students some understandings that they can use to try to make sense of particular cases.

In order to understand the behavior and outputs of the American political system, you need to understand both the interests and attitudes represented in politics, and the opportunities and constraints created by structure. The American political system is an **interaction between political structures (“the system”) and political beliefs, with beliefs only mattering to the extent that they are organized to influence the system.** The rules for making decisions (the system) structure whose beliefs affect what the government does, how much. The structures also influence beliefs, because they help determine which ideas get attention and they also affect beliefs about government itself. A system designed to frustrate action may frustrate citizens as well. But beliefs also influence structure, because one thing that political combatants do is try to change the rules to favor their sides. The Constitution itself was a change in the rules pushed by people who wanted to change the outputs of government.

The different parts of the system become chapters in textbooks, or individual courses in a political science department. They can be divided into five basic categories. The first is the basic rules of the game – the Constitution and understandings of the relationship between government and citizens. The textbooks usually define the latter relationship as a matter of “rights” and “liberties”, but that conception leaves out obligations of citizens to each other or the government. Courses on these topics, of course, are central to legal education as well as to political science.

A second set of topics involves the formation of attitudes that then are organized and seek to influence government decisions. Examples are “public opinion,” interest groups, political parties, and “the media.” A third set involves the parts of the government that make and implement authoritative policy. Examples include the three “branches” – Congress, the presidency and the judiciary – as well as the government agencies that do the work (sometimes called “bureaucracy”) and the roles of state and local governments (federalism).

The two types of institutions are linked by a fourth topic, elections. And the result of all this activity is what government actually does – public policy. Public policy can be discussed either as a general topic (at CWRU, POSC 386) or in terms of specific subtopics (such as U.S. Foreign Policy, or Health Politics and Policy, or Environmental Politics and Policy).

Each of these topics can be the subject of a full-semester course, but in this class may only be addressed in one to three class sessions. Therefore this course has to provide only highly selective

information. That is what textbooks do, but I have never found one I really liked. So I have written my own analyses of many of the topics. For others, I am selecting reading that I believe make some key points well. **A further goal of the course, then, is for students to gain a useful, overall understanding of the processes by which beliefs are brought into political conflict (or, ideally, "deliberation,") and how decision-making processes within each part of the "separated institutions sharing powers" combine into policy outputs.**

In covering these topics, it seems to me that a big problem with textbooks (including my essays) is that they can make the topic dry by reducing it to a series of facts and analytic points. So I have also included some stories. The stories about the early years of the United States are one example. Another long and dramatic story involves Prohibition. We will end the course with that story, even though most of it happened more than a century ago, because I think it shows a lot of the basic dynamics of politics even today.<sup>5</sup> Others will be included at what I consider appropriate points in the class.

Any class of this sort has to leave out material that either the instructor or students might prefer to see receive more attention. Introductory courses in U.S. Politics or Government also will differ in the extent to which they emphasize the different parts of the topic. I have made a few choices for this course that probably differ from other professors' approaches – or from mine at other times:

\* I generally pay less attention to "rights" and "liberties" than is common in many textbooks and classes. I do not think the U.S. political system is particularly unusual in the extent of such rights and liberties it extends to citizens; I think rhetoric about rights and liberties tends to disguise more than it explains as part of political debate; and I think a focus on those topics explains little about how decisions are made.

\* In this class, however, I am devoting a bit more attention than seems to be the norm to the judicial branch and judicial processes. That is in part because I view the role of the courts as more fundamental to government than some other scholars might, because of my focus on how conflicts are managed in a society. I also am using the material on the courts in part to supplement the course's treatment of Congress. Last but not least, I am emphasizing the courts in order to raise the question of in what sense one can plausibly talk about "a government by laws, not men."

\* I am not providing the discussions of a range of policy areas that you will find in many textbooks. I would love to – I'm a policy scholar. But I can't find a way to fit it in. Please take one of the policy courses if you're interested.

\* Especially with the Prohibition book, however, I am directing more attention than is usual to how decisions were made in the past. I do not mean to suggest that the system hasn't changed since then. But I do think it's important to realize that a whole lot of the political behaviors that we see and may horrify some of us are nothing new. If Madison and Hamilton could look back 2000 years to Greece, we can look back a bit more than a hundred years to when Wayne Wheeler, a graduate of Case Western Reserve University School of Law, was leading perhaps the most powerful social movement and interest group in the nation's history.

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<sup>5</sup> The number of pages of reading for some of the assignments about stories may seem rather high to students. I think they will not be as burdensome as that may sound because they are narratives, so much easier to read than most of the more academic material.

Last but not least, I am devoting rather more reading to elections than I have at other times when I have taught this course. You can probably figure out some reasons for that choice.

### COURSE READING MATERIAL

You should obtain two books for this course:

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton University Press, 2016.

Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. New York: Scribner, 2010.

Other required readings will be posted on the course Canvas site. A few readings can be downloaded from public websites.

### GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

**\* You will be required to write three essays in which you analyze course material.**

The first two essays will each count for 22 percent of your grade. Each should be no less than 2,000 words long. The first will be due at the beginning of class on **October 7**, and the second at the beginning of class on **November 18**.

The final essay will count for 25 percent of your grade, and will take the place of a final exam. It is due to me by e-mail by Noon on **December 12**. This essay should be between 2500 and 3000 words long. Instead of a final exam, we will meet at that time to talk about the essay topic. Attendance is mandatory, as is timely submission of your essay. On the plus side for you, I will provide lunch.

\* In addition, each student will submit **three reading responses**. The topics will be the questions listed as “think about” below for each date, and responses will be required only on the days for which “think about” is in italics. Each student should write a response **of about 600-800 words**, and should be prepared to explain their thoughts to the rest of the class for about five minutes. Because I do not know how many students will be in the class, I do not know if we will have time for oral presentations by each student who writes a response each day.

\* These assignments will begin with the class held Sept 9. We will make up a schedule of who will respond when during the previous week. Each response will account for 7 percent of your grade.

**\* The final ten percent of your grade will be determined by class participation.** The participation portion of the grade is meant to reward contributions to discussion and encourage class attendance. “Contributions” can easily include good questions, not just answers. Nor are students expected to hit the mark in everything they say – that’s my job, and even I may not manage it!

I understand that conflicts arise which may make it sensible not to attend class. You may have religious obligations, or have to travel for sports teams. There are occasional situations when a student needs to travel for research or a presentation, or for job interviews. I would not want to interfere with that kind of opportunity. Students who wish to miss class due to such conflicts should let me know, in

writing, and with documentation where appropriate. I will normally approve, but reasons like "I'm behind in my other work" will not do. Managing your time so that doesn't happen is part of your job. Please also inform me if you are ill. If you are sick enough to have to inform me that you missed class due to illness twice in a row, you should go to the health service, get looked at, and then bring me a note from them.

Although there are legitimate reasons to miss class, it's best to miss as little as possible. I will take attendance, and, if a student misses more than six sessions of class without proper explanation, that can be a reason to reduce the participation grade.

No person can lose points by talking in class – unless they are abusive or disruptive. The participation portion could only lower your grade, compared to your performance on written work, if your attendance is poor. If your participation is good, that can be a reason to raise your average from your written work a bit, and so (sometimes) over the borderline between two letter grades.

**\* There will be limited opportunities to earn extra credit** by attending programs about politics and policy, sponsored by the Center for Policy Studies. Details will be explained in class and in a separate handout.

So, to summarize, your grade will be composed of:

22% First essay  
22% Second essay  
21% Reading responses  
25% Final essay  
10% Participation

And then the average will be supplemented by any extra credit.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS**

All written assignments can be penalized half a grade for each day they are late. Students who have a reason for delay that could be anticipated in advance must inform me in advance, if they wish to seek an exception to the penalty. Students who face unanticipated emergencies must document that and inform me as soon as possible, if they seek an exception. I will judge each case on its merits.

You must document all sources you use in writing your papers according to an accepted style guide. A good standard approach is in the Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), but any standard format will be fine for this class. Plagiarism of any form will be punished by referral to the appropriate university judicial proceedings, as well as by a failing grade in the assignment on which the plagiarism occurs. Plagiarism includes, according to the MLA Handbook (New York: MLA, 1988), two related activities: repeating "as your own someone else's sentences, more or less verbatim," and "paraphrasing another person's argument as your own, and presenting another's line of thinking as though it were your own." Proper citation of sources will allow you to incorporate others' analyses without committing plagiarism.

I have regular office hours but I am very willing to meet at other times. Please just contact me so we can schedule time, as you need it. Please also remember that this syllabus is supposed to be a resource to help you understand what I hope we accomplish with the course. As you do reading you should

consider both the individual things to "think about" and the essay topics that you will be asked to answer based in part on each reading.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### *Part I: The Basics*

- Aug 26**      **Introduction to the class.**  
Some of the perspectives I introduce can be reviewed in a manuscript posted on Canvas, titled "Politics and Government." You should review that sometime before the first essay exam.
- Aug 28**      **Two Views of Conflict**  
E.E. Schattschneider, "Preface," and "The Contagiousness of Conflict." From *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (1960) pp. vii-viii; 1-19.  
John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse: "Conclusion: The people and their political system," from *Congress as Public Enemy: Public attitudes toward American political institutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1995), p. 145-162.  
Think about: How do the views of conflict in these two pieces differ? Could both be true?
- Sept 2**      **No Class, Labor Day**
- Sept 4**      **Original Tensions and Compromises**  
The Constitution of the United States of America  
*The Federalist Papers*: Numbers 10, 51, 62, 63  
Joseph Ellis, "The Generation," pp. 3-19 in *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Press, 2002).  
Think about: What were the most important aspects of the constitutional design, according to its supporters? Were the reasons they used to justify it the same as the reasons they adopted it? What were the major unanswered questions?
- Sept 9**      **"Rights" and "Liberties"**  
Robert J. Spitzer, "The Second Amendment." Chapter 2 in *The Politics of Gun Control 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), pp. 19-46.  
Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address  
Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, Second Inaugural Address  
Think about: Does the Constitution establish "our rights and liberties?" If not, what does?
- Sept 11**      **Divisions and Deals**  
Ellis, "The Dinner," pp. 48-80 in *Founding Brothers*.  
Schattschneider, Chapter 4, "The Displacement of Conflicts," from *The Semi-Sovereign People*, pp. 62-77.  
Think about: What cleavages do you see in U.S. politics today? Who defines them?

## Part II: Elections – or "Popular Control of the Government"

Sept 16

### How Elections Are Fought

Joseph White, "Understanding Elections"

*Think about:* Are elections as described here "fair?" What would you change, if anything?

NOTE: We will have class for half an hour, but then as many of us as can will adjourn to the annual Constitution Day program, at the Moot Court Room of the School of Law. That will be a discussion on "Battle for the Ballot Box" – the current legal struggles over who gets to vote, when, and how. The program begins at 4:00 p.m. and continues to 5:30.

Sept 18

### The Idea of Democratic Control

Achen and Bartels, Preface and Chapters 1-2 (through p. 51, plus endnotes)

*Think about:* What part of their argument is hardest to accept? What part, if any, seems obviously true? Why?

Sept 23

### Choosing a Government, But Not Policies? "Retrospective Voting"

Achen and Bartels, Chapters 3-6 (through p. 176, plus endnotes)

*Think about:* Do you vote retrospectively? Do people you know vote retrospectively? If so, how do they know whether it is fair to blame, and whom to blame?

Sept 25

### Who Are You? So, Which Side Are You On?

Achen and Bartels, Chapters 7-9 (through p. 266, plus endnotes)

Paul Taylor, "The Reluctant Majority," *The American Prospect*, Summer 2019: 58-67.

*Think about:* What is your political identity? How did you get it? How do your answers fit their argument?

Sept 30

### What Voters Might Do By Voting

Achen and Bartels, Chapters 10-11 (through p. 328, plus endnotes)

*Think about:* If people mainly rationalize their positions on issues to fit their partisan and other identities, how could partisan affiliation ever change?

NOTE: This day is Rosh HaShanah. I will teach and then go to religious services on Tuesday, which is an option for reasons that are hard to explain to non-Jews. But of course anyone who wishes to observe the day today is not expected in class.

Oct 2

### The Two Party System

J. White, "Political Parties Text"

Matt Grossman and David A. Hopkins, "Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 13, No. 1 (March, 2015) pp. 119 – 139.

*Think about:* What does the Grossman and Hopkins argument imply about whether the two parties' activists and representatives in the government will behave in similar ways?



**Oct 7**      **First Essay Due**

*Topic: What should and can be the ways elections contribute to governing the United States?*

Elections are supposed to make the government of the people therefore by and for the people. Achen and Bartels criticize standard arguments about how this could or does work. The authors of the constitution might have questioned whether government should be "by the people" at all. Other readings emphasize the divisions among "the people," and so one might question what "the people" could mean.

In answering this question, therefore, you should consider to what extent you agree or disagree with Achen and Bartels' analysis. You should consider to what extent you agree or disagree with the "founders'" attitude towards democracy – including what the alternative might be. That could include what they hoped to accomplish with the separation of powers. And you should consider whether your or any answer might ever satisfy most Americans.

**Part III: Processes for Decisions: A Government by Laws, Not Men?**

**Oct 9**      *No Class: Professor White Cannot Attend Because of Yom Kippur*

**Oct 14**      **The Congress We Deserve?**

Joseph White, "Congress Text."

*Think about:* How does the argument that Congress, in order to make informed decisions, must divide its labor extensively, fit with Madison's expectation that involving lots of people in choices will prevent domination by minorities? Also, does party governance of Congress seem more like a good or a bad idea?

**Oct 16**      **What Is Presidential Power?**

Joseph White, "Presidency Text"

*Think about:* If presidential power has so little connection to the Constitution, what does that say about the importance of the founding decisions?

**Oct 21**      *No Class, Fall Break*

**Oct 23**      **Two Visions of the Presidency**

David Remnick, "Going the Distance: On and Off the Road With Barack Obama." *The New Yorker* (January 27, 2014) pp. 41-61.

Robert Caro, excerpts from *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Book 4, The Passage of Power* on passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Alfred A. Knopf: 2012).

*Think about:* If LBJ had not been working to pass legislation that almost everyone now views as necessary and good, would you find this story a little scary? Do you agree with Obama that nobody could be LBJ today – and that is a good thing?

- Oct 28**      **Congress, the President, and the Budget: Sharing Power, Trying Not to Share Blame**  
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Policy Basics: Introduction to the Federal Budget Process.” At <http://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-introduction-to-the>  
J. White, “Presidents, Congress, and Budget Decisions,” Chapter 9 in James A. Thurber ed., *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations 5<sup>th</sup> ed.*  
*Think about:* Does my argument that federal budgeting is overwhelmed by blame seem plausible? And who – the president or members of Congress – deserves more blame when things go “wrong”?
- Oct 30**      **What is the Judicial Power and How Does It Work?**  
Joseph White, "Judicial Branch Text"  
*Think about:* Why is judicial independence of the executive branch important? Does that mean we can trust the judiciary to do what's right? And is there any good alternative to the ancient role of judges that I describe?
- Nov 4**      **Judging in Action**  
Excerpts from Robert A. Katzmann, *Judging Statutes*  
Timothy S. Jost, blog post about *King v. Burwell*  
<http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2015/06/25/implementing-health-reform-the-supreme-court-upholds-tax-credits-in-the-federal-exchange/>  
*Think about:* What attributes are needed to be a good judge? What qualities are needed to be a successful legislator? Are the two types bound to misunderstand each other?
- Nov 6**      **Private Government?**  
Selected Readings on Mandatory Arbitration, Posted on Course Canvas Site  
*Think about:* What explains the political developments that led to the current situation with mandatory arbitration, and what does it say about the U.S. system of government?
- Nov 11**      **Federalism**  
Frank Thompson and Joel C. Cantor, “Federalism and Health Care Policy.” Chapter 6 in James A. Morone and Dan Ehlke eds., *Health Politics and Policy 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Cengage: 2014), pp. 94-115  
Selected articles from *Governing* magazine, to be determined  
*Think about:* What, if anything, is the relationship between current practice and the fact that the United States was created as a union of states?
- Nov 13**      **Government Within Politics**  
Joseph White, “Agencies Text”  
*Think about:* James Q. Wilson's two 2 X 2 matrices. What are they meant to explain, and what are their core claims about politics and government in the United States?
- Nov 18**      **Second Essay Due**  
(I'm still thinking about the topic. Maybe something about government by laws or "men." Maybe something about the separation of powers. Maybe "who's in charge, of what?")

## **Part IV: Participation and Influence Again: Plus ça Change?**

### **Nov 20 A Changing "Public Sphere"?**

Katherine Ann Brown and Todd Gitlin, "Partisans, Watchdogs, and Entertainers: The Press for Democracy and its Limits"; Doris A. Graber and Gregory G. Holyk, "The News Industry"; chapters 5-6 in Robert Y. Shapiro and Lawrence R. Jacobs eds., *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media* (Oxford University Press, 2013) pp. 74-104.

*Think about:* What are your sources of information about government and politics? Why those ones? Are they the same as your parents' sources?

### **Nov 25 Organizing Interests (or "Mobilizing Bias")**

Joseph White, "Organized Interests Text"

Tom Wolfe, "Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers."

*Think about:* How does the "Mau-Mauing" story fit into the discussion in my text? More generally, what does the material for today suggest about any biases in who benefits from the political process? Remember Schattschneider as you think about this.

### **Nov 27 Interest Group Politics as a Moral Crusade**

Okrent, Prologue and Part I, Chapters 1-7, pp. 1-114, and notes.

*Think about:* What does this portion of the book tell you about political organization, majority rule, and the building of coalitions?

NOTE: Class may be cancelled because this is the day before Thanksgiving. Or at least made optional.

### **Dec 2 Government and Politics**

Okrent, Part II, Chapters 8-16, pp. 115-266, and notes.

*Think about:* Was Prohibition failing because it was too hard for government to enforce it, or because government was not trying hard enough?

### **Dec 4 The Rich to the Rescue?**

Okrent, Chapters 17 – Epilogue, pp. 267-376, and notes.

*Think about:* Does Prohibition remind you of any current issues? Which ones, and how? Do you think it would have been repealed as quickly, or at all, without the Great Depression? If so, why should that have mattered?

### **Final Essay due by Noon on Dec 12**

Topic: Has the constitutional design worked out in ways that fit James Madison's justifications for it?

In your answer, discuss how individuals seek to influence government decisions; how the formal institutions that make government decisions work; and some of the examples of decisions that we've read about. That must include Prohibition. Other possibilities include federal budgeting, how Lyndon

Johnson and Barack Obama were able to exercise influence as presidents, health policy, why the nation's capital is on the banks of the Potomac, and the increase in use of mandatory arbitration to settle conflicts between customers or workers and corporations. You may use other examples as well, so long as you can find information and support your interpretations of those examples.