

TOPICS IN AMERICAN POLITICS – MONEY AND POLITICS

Political Science 328-801, Spring 2015
 Monday Wednesday 11:20 – 12:50 pm
 Classroom: Schmitt Academic Center Room 200

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 (including Monday and Tuesday)

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Course Description

The title of this course is “Money and Politics,” which is a broad concept; we are not going to be able to cover all the ways that money interacts with politics in two months.... But the key focus of this course is an investigation into some of the ways money may (or may not) create political inequality. Money is very unequally distributed in American society at present, as we will discuss during the first two weeks. But so what? What are the consequences of income / wealth inequality in America? How does that affect our political process? And how can we be sure?

Even if money does produce some political inequalities that some object to, what is there to be done about it? How much can “reform” hope to accomplish? There are some important and fascinating issues (or at least I think so; I’ll do my best to convince you) at the intersection of money, inequality, politics, elections and the Constitution. There have been many attempts to study the impact of money on American politics, particularly on elections. So we are going to review some of these efforts, and what the current “rules of engagement” are (at least circa 2010-2015 – it keeps changing!) After this class you will have a better understanding of what rules govern the use of money in politics – and more important, *why* – than 99% of the American public does.

Last, this is an applied course on how we do “political science” to study empirical phenomena. I take the 300-level ranking to indicate that I can assign material in this class that would not be out of place at a graduate school level. Trying to honestly determine (or in political science, “identify”) the exact impact of money on politics – as opposed to the often-hysterical, self-serving journalistic hype – is a demanding task. I’ll introduce you to some of the difficulties, and to a few of the more colorful scandals and controversies that have enmeshed Capitol Hill and Illinois. Hopefully this will spark some “critical thinking” that you may apply to other challenging intellectual puzzles.

Required Readings

All readings for this class are available on D2L, either directly as downloads or through the library electronic course reserve. A small number of additional readings may be added as the class progresses. As a 300-level course, it is a fairly heavy reading load many weeks (about a max of 100 pages / week). Printing it all out (which I recommend) will be costly, but not more so than the cost of many textbook courses. I expect you to be doing your own supplementary reading as part of your final paper research. A handful of readings may be added, in particular to Week Ten, which is currently left blank.

Grades

Your grade for this class will be determined as follows:	PERCENT	DUE
Attendance & Participation	20%	
Midterm	15%	April 27
Final Paper Proposal	5%	May 6
Short Discussion Paper	5%	May 11
Final Paper 5 pp Draft	5%	May 27
10 – 20 pp Final Paper	30%	June 10
Final Exam	20%	June 10, 11:45 – 2 pm

Breaking these down:

Attendance & Participation (20%): There is a lot of text below, I know. But every DePaul instructor handles class participation differently. I want to spell out here what my expectations are, so there is no confusion later. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

People disagree over what “political science” means. But a key part of the discipline includes the public discussion of issues facing we the people. At one level, poli sci is a bunch of people sitting around debating issues of public significance (but making careful use of definitions and evidence to support their arguments). For this reason, while I will lecture quite a bit at times, my course also depends on student input. So I assign a high portion of your grade to attendance and participation. I will eventually learn all my attending students’ names, and something about their attitudes to American government. I also try and tailor presentations to the interests of my class. But this doesn’t work if students do not come prepared.

I do not pop-quiz; I do “pop-question.” I will not assign unannounced quizzes to test whether you are doing the reading. But to get a sense of everyone’s preparation, I will ask each day for someone to summarize key points from the day’s argument. I do recognize that students have extracurricular and other out-of-class commitments that occasionally prevent them from having a specific reading prepared in time. For that reason, three times this quarter (and no more), you can approach me before the start of class and indicate, “I didn’t read it yet.” I won’t call on you that class.

I also do not care if you miss a class, as long as you are a regular and active participant the rest of the time. *If you are a non-talker*, or if you miss more than a week, there are three ways to work on this part of your grade: 1) office hours visits; 2) help update the D2L website by posting links to interesting news stories that illustrate class concepts; 3) perfect attendance. If you show up to every single class, even if you never speak, I will assume some learning and effort has taken place on your part, and you will get a minimum B for Participation. Miss a class for any reason, and you cannot get this “safe harbor” grade. If you show up late to class, if you are up to twenty minutes tardy, then I will still give you credit for attendance. Obviously do not make a habit of coming late, or you and I may need to have a discussion, and I may revise this policy in your specific case. Also, it is your responsibility to make sure that I actually do mark you as present, if the train ran late that day. After twenty minutes I have often put away my attendance list, and I might not catch your late arrival. You must double-check with me *after that class*. An email later in the day is too late. If you show up more than 20 minutes late, then I still encourage your showing up to get some of that day’s material, but you may not get credit for attendance.

Midterm (15%) and Final Exam (20%): The midterm and final will consist of terms-to-identify and essay questions. I will randomly select some of these terms for you to define. This system can be a blessing or a snare. It can lull students into procrastination and then punish slackers. Try and memorize all these words the night before and you may be in some trouble. I will release a list of possible essay questions a week or two in advance of the final, but not for the midterm. For the essay portion only of each of these tests, however, students may bring in one 8 ½ x 11 sheet with any notes you wish.

I allow for makeup exams only in the case of documented hardships (a medical emergency, a sports trip you notified me about during the first week, a loss in the family, etc). If you have any doubts about what constitutes a “hardship,” contact me in advance about it. Without a documented exemption, you cannot make up the final.

Short Discussion Paper (5%): May 11 will be a full class discussion day where the instructor will take a back seat. To facilitate this discussion, students will need to write a 2-3 page essay answering a question that they will discuss the answers to on this day. More on this assignment to come. This paper may be potentially expanded into the final paper below.

Class Paper (40%) For this class, you have an open-topic research paper that you need to write on some aspect of money and politics that is clearly connected to class themes. I will be discussing this topic in more detail on the first day of class, and after the midterm on April 27. You can write a largely normative (ie theoretical) paper, say a critique of a Supreme Court decision or a reform proposal. Alternatively, you must investigate some way that money seems to produce (or, alternatively, *not* produce) a political outcome. There may be some case example we have discussed that you wish to explore further, or you may want to write a current events research paper about money and a recent or future election. Or whatever. Either way, you need to write a 10-20 page argument about something involving money and politics that interests you, and a paper that clearly cites / is connected to at least one of our in-class readings. I will explain more what I mean by “argument” in class, but the main point is that this paper should not simply be a book-report summary of additional readings. You need a real non-obvious conclusion, buttressed by supporting evidence. As a 300-level class, the grading standards here are of course high, and it will be legitimately difficult (though certainly possible!) to score an A on this paper.

Since this is a self-driven project, I will mandate some deadlines to help you keep pace. I need a detailed paper proposal by May 6, which includes at least three additional sources you will use to research and write your paper. There will be a sheet on D2L that specifies what you need to submit. This proposal alone is 5% of the paper grade, but it is graded pass-fail (i.e. A or F). I will give you back detailed comments on this proposal. You can change your topic after this date, but unless you clear the change with me, do not assume that any last-minute change will be accepted as an appropriate final topic.

Second, I need at least five pages of a draft of your paper by May 27. (This draft must start demonstrating clear evidence of your argument and what some of your independent research is, in order to get an A). This draft is again 5% of your class grade, and it is graded A-B-C-D-F. Again, you can change your topic after this draft is submitted. I will email or hand back comments about your five-page draft by June 3. The hard copy of your final 10-20 page paper is due by the final on Wednesday, June 10, and you must also place a copy in Digital Dropbox for TurnItIn.

My goal, in all this, is that you leave the class with a well-written, well-researched 10-20 page writing sample that you can potentially use when hunting jobs after DePaul. Again, I will grade this paper hard, and there is no point to a good writing sample that is full of grammar or spelling

errors, so for the 5-page draft and the final exam, I will deduct for grammar / spelling errors (see examples below). I recommend taking your final copy to the DePaul writing center if you have any concerns about your writing skills. I am happy to read and comment on emailed drafts.

Academic Honesty

Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Student Handbook or by visiting Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>). DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution.

Grading Standards

To abide by my own rules for citation, I must give credit to Dr. Wayne Steger for his clear criteria on grading. I have adopted his standards for my own courses:

“A designates work of extra-ordinarily high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; and arguments are clearly organized with supporting ideas. Participation indicates that the student is prepared at all times if asked to provide a summary of the assigned readings, asks thoughtful questions, and volunteers in class.”¹

“B designated work of high quality; reflects a clearly organized but less than comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; presents organized arguments that are supported by ideas. Student participates as above about 75% of the time, and attends nearly all class periods.”² (*If attendance is perfect, automatic B as specified above – this is my own grading choice, not Dr Steger's*).

“C designates work which meets the minimal requirements of the assignment; written work reflects adequate organization and development of ideas, but arguments are communicated in a superficial or simplistic manner. Student does not volunteer, but responds to direct questions, often remains silent during group discussions, and often cannot summarize readings if called upon.”³

“D designates work of poor quality which meets the minimal requirements of the assignment, but demonstrates poor organization of ideas and / or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and / or simplistic; may indicate that the student has not read assignments thoroughly. Students does not volunteer, cannot respond to

¹ Dr. Wayne Steger, course syllabus, “American Political System PSC 120 Winter Quarter 2005.” Available at <<http://condor.depaul.edu/~wsteger/psc120/index.html>>, last checked on 9/5/06.

² *Ibid* (means same as previous footnote).

³ *Ibid*.

direct questions, keeps silent during class discussions, and is unable to summarize readings if called upon.”⁴

“F designates work of poor quality that does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment or task; fails to reflect an understanding of the issues at hand; fails to present organized arguments or fails to adequately support arguments with ideas; or which is not handed in on time. Student fails to participate even minimally in class or group discussions. Student may be frequently absent and participation is inadequate (silent) when student attends.”⁵

Additional Course Policies

Special needs: Any student who has special needs should contact the instructor immediately so that arrangements can be made as soon as possible.

D2L: I make extensive use of the D2L website for my classes. I post a summary of all my lecture notes and / or Powerpoint presentations so you can review them later. These notes are not comprehensive and will not substitute for doing the actual course readings when it comes to examinations. But they are a good start.

SPRING 2015 MONEY AND POLITICS

All reading will be available online on D2L or as handouts. I may post a few additional readings as the course progresses. There may be some guest speakers to be announced.

WEEK ONE, MARCH 30 – APRIL 1: Introduction, and Begin Inequality in America

An introduction to the basic themes and format of the class, a review of the syllabus, and some initial lecture material on the challenges of studying the impact of money in politics. We’ll talk briefly about the final paper. And we will note two interesting empirical relationships to get us started, the relationship between “self-funding” and electoral victory, and between campaign spending and percentage of votes won. We will start to set up two case examples, the 2013-2014 midterms and the Chicago mayoral and aldermanic elections.

Readings: (Monday) None. (Wednesday) Fortier and Malbin, “An Agenda for Future Research on Money in Politics in the United States”; Additional current events readings on D2L; Class handout: “Empirical vs. normative theory”

WEEK TWO, APRIL 6-8: Continue Discussion of Inequality in America

Monday we discuss more the distribution of income / wealth in America, including a much-discussed essay by Paul Krugman and one counter-argument to it. We will try and break down some of the empirical / normative disputes concerning how much and under what circumstances inequality might matter politically. Wednesday I will also introduce you to recent efforts to survey the wealthiest of Americans, and the most comprehensive analysis thus far of the “one percent of the one percent” from the 2012 election cycle.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

Readings: Krugman, “For Richer”: Wilkinson, “Thinking Clearly About Economic Inequality”; Current events readings about inequality; Drutman, “The One Percent of the One Percent”; Page et al., “Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans”

WEEK THREE, APRIL 13-15: Introducing the Key Actors in 2012, 2014 and Beyond

This week we look back at the 2012 and 2014 elections as “case examples,” and sketch out some of the emerging 2016 contest. We start defining how some of the key actors, including how the so-called “super PACS” and “501c4s” are active today. I fill in a few blanks concerning current campaign finance law (much more to come), and I lecture on how super PACs played such an important role in the 2012 Republican primary, and how 501c4s picked up their activity in 2014.

Readings: Current events readings defining Super PACs and 501c4s; Kimball and Smith, “Barking Louder”; Fowler and Ridout, “Political Advertising in 2014”

WEEK FOUR, APRIL 20-22: Why Donors Give, and Researching Money in Politics

We have looked at the source of money and some of the avenues through which money flows into politics. This week we look more at some of the reasons why people give large amounts of money to the political process, and what the politicians themselves think about this part of their job. Part of our data is self-reports from elected officials and from lobbyists. We also look at a past case example involving Chicago money and local politics.

Readings: *This American Life* excerpt, “Take The Money and Run For Office”; excerpts from Martin Schram’s *Speaking Freely: Former Members of Congress Talk about Money in Politics*; a set of current events articles; Cari Hennessy, “Money and Influence in the Chicago City Council”

WEEK FIVE, APRIL 27-29: Midterm, and More About Your Class Paper

Monday is the midterm. Wednesday we talk more about your final paper. Think more about a final paper topic this week

Readings: Farrell, “Good Writing in Political Science”

WEEK SIX, MAY 4 – MAY 6: Challenges in Demonstrating “Corruption” From Money

So how does money affect politics? There have been many arguments raised about the money-influence connection. This week we start looking at some of the different methods to study this question. Monday we examine the legal definition of corruption and some colorful case examples. I emphasize how hard it is to prove legal corruption. Wednesday we examine two important and influential academic articles. Ansolabehere et al. is a “micro” study that tries to explain particular votes or areas of influence. Gilens and Page is a more “macro” study that looks at overall outputs in a democratic system. Both of these articles include statistics and regressions; feel free to skim the statistics-ese. I will be lecturing extensively on those parts of the readings.

Readings: A collection of current events articles on recent Illinois corruption, and a primer on Gilens and Page; Ansolabehere and Snyder, “Why Is There So Little Money in US Politics?”; Gilens and Page, “Testing Theories on American Politics”

**** Final Paper Proposal due May 6 ****

WEEK SEVEN, MAY 11-13: Discussion – So Should We Change Anything? And What Does the Constitution Permit Us to Change?

Monday will be a structured discussion, reflecting back on earlier classes, brainstorming what if anything should be changed about money and United States elections. Then we begin a four-or-five class “constitutional law seminar” where we review what the Supreme Court currently permits and forbids, under its interpretation of the Constitution and the First Amendment. In other words, it is time to tackle *Citizens United* and how we ever got to super PACs and the equally-important 501c4s. Before we can understand *CU*, however (and it is arguably a very misunderstood decision), it is critical to review the history (and the politics behind) the first major campaign finance reform laws, the Federal Election Campaign Acts of the 1970s, and still the single-most important Supreme Court case precedent, *Buckley v. Valeo*.

Readings: An excerpt from Gary Jacobson; Hasen, “The Nine Lives of Buckley v. Valeo”; an excerpt from the *Buckley v. Valeo* case decision itself; Mutch, “Money and Speech”

**** Short Paper Due May 11; Proposal Comments Returned by May 11 ****

WEEK EIGHT, MAY 18-20: The Road to *Citizens United*, and More of the Challenges in Regulating Money in Political Campaigns and Advertising

We continue to discuss FECA, *Buckley* and the road from *Buckley* to *Citizens United*. Warning, there are some fairly legalistic / technical reads in this part of the course. Further emphasis is placed here on the ways that campaign finance laws both reflect and shape power dynamics between outside groups, individual candidates and the political party organizations. We work up to how the next most significant reform after FECA was passed, the 2002 “McCain-Feingold” law, or BCRA, and how part of BCRA was ultimately challenged by *Citizens United*.

Readings: Excerpt from Corrado, “A History of Federal Campaign Finance Laws,” pp. 28-51; Ortiz, “The First Amendment and the Limits of Campaign Finance Reform”; West, “Issue Advocacy and the Christian Action Network”; Raja, “Why Super PACs”

WEEK NINE, WEDNESDAY MAY 27: *Citizens United*, And Beyond

Monday: No Class! Wednesday we continue our survey of constitutional law by connecting the dots up to the *Citizens United* decision, discussing why it has become one of the most controversial decisions of the modern Supreme Court. We look more at some contemporary analyses of the legal / political landscape after *CU* and the 2012 presidential election, possibly with some discussion of the new “hot case” in campaign finance, *McCutcheon v. FEC*.

Readings: Jeffrey Toobin, “Money Unlimited”; *Citizens United* excerpt; Possible additional current events readings To Be Determined

**** 5 page final paper draft due May 27 ****

WEEK TEN, JUNE 1-3: To Be Determined

In a class with some fairly complex readings, I want to leave Week Ten blank for now – we may need another class to finish up *Citizens United*, or to further address a class interest, and / or we may have slotted in a guest speaker and pushed back our class readings. Also this field is so fast-

moving, there may be a big new development to discuss by June 1. I will try and keep any new readings here to under 50 pp, to free up some space for your ongoing final paper research.

*** 5 page draft returned by June 3 ***

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 11:45 – 2 pm: Final Exam

Your final 10-20 page paper must be dropped off by 5 pm on June 10, both as a hard copy and in the D2L Dropbox (I'll be scanning it through TurnItIn). If you would like written comments on the paper, please also include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the final paper. If you would just like emailed comments, make sure to include your email address somewhere on the final paper. The final exam is June 10 too, but for the final exam you will have all the possible terms to ID you might be tested on, plus all the possible questions in advance (although you will not know which ones you will be tested on), so that should make the exam somewhat less stressful, allowing you to concentrate on the final paper.

*** Final Paper Due June 10 ***

SPELLING / GRAMMAR MANDATES FOR THE FINAL PAPER

Students are often unsure just what particular instructors are looking for, when they stress good writing standards. My primary mandate is that students must leave time to review and do basic proofreading / formatting on their final papers, if they wish to avoid a deduction. So here are my automatic red flags, or “Zachary Cook’s Unforgiveable Errors,” any of which, each time they are committed, will see an automatic half-letter deduction, up to a total of a full grade. (In other words, if you turn in an A paper but commit three of the errors below, or any one of them three times, your grade will fall from an A to an A- to a B+ to a B. I’ll stop after one full letter.) An extensive pattern of other errors, at the 300-level, may also result in one further ½ grade deduction. No matter how good your underlying ideas are, a well-argued but poorly-written paper is like showing up at a job talk with a glowing resume but with hair unwashed and in a ripped tee. People are not going to look beneath, and will usually assume you haven’t put sufficient thought into your ideas, if it looks like you skipped the presentation.

- 1) If it comes up, the President’s name is Barack Obama. Not “Barrack Obama.” Not “Barak Obama.” Every year I have poli sci majors who can’t spell his name. Also, my name is Zachary Cook, not “Zachery Cook.” Last, don’t misspell your own name.
- 2) Don’t misspell the names of any of our authors assigned for the course, or any of the class reading titles. Paul Krugman, Stephen Ansolabehere, etc.
- 3) Don’t misspell any word that could have been caught by the quick use of a spellchecker. A widespread pattern of using the wrong word in the wrong place (*their* for *there*, *the Untied States of America*, *the pubic interest*, *loosing* for *losing* – my favorite was the student who once submitted *Silicone Valley*) may see a ½ grade deduction (see above). Any flat misspellings, on the other hand, are automatically a deduction. Make sure you finish your paper in time to use a spellchecker (but remember it won’t always save you from misspelling a text or an author’s name – see #2 above).
- 4) Apostrophes only are used for possession (“Joe’s paper”); they never mean the plural. Some students use them to signify the plural, like *American’s from all over the world have gathered*. This is never right. It is *Americans from all over the world have gathered*.
- 5) I don’t have any requirements about margin size, double vs. single-spacing, page numbering, etc., but I do deduct if the **size** or the **style** of your **font changes** during the paper. This always signals cutting-and-pasting that the student didn’t bother taking the time to correct (and it’s always an easy tell, for me to look for signs of plagiarism!) Also – this one is increasingly common – I have no problem with you quoting long passages from other texts or articles if it is appropriate, but if you leave a “fill” over your text, that just looks amateur hour. Automatic half-letter. Take the time to re-select your entire paper text, at the end, and to unify the font size and style. Finally, [random hyperlinks in the main body of the paper \(usually again bad cutting and pasting\) are unacceptable and merit a deduction.](#)
- 6) Do include a professionally-formatted Works Cited / References page at the end (not part of your 10-20 page paper length). I accept multiple styles – AP, Chicago, just make sure it looks good. (Again, careful with hyperlinks here. Website pages have to be referenced properly; it is never adequate to simply cut-and-paste a URL as your paper citation. DePaul’s Writing Center has information on how to properly cite a website).

LIST OF TERMS TO ID FOR MIDTERM AND FINAL, PSC 328

For each of these terms, you want to write three or four detailed sentences showing that you have a clear understanding of what they mean. Give examples, specific definitions, etc. Some of these terms are from readings, and some will be on D2L lecture notes or handouts.

TERMS TO KNOW FOR THE MIDTERM

1. empirical theory
2. normative theory
3. correlation coefficient
4. omitted variable bias
5. Gini coefficient
6. the Piketty-Saez income inequality findings
7. rent seeking
8. super PACs
9. political 501c4s or “dark money groups”
10. individual contribution limits
11. Gross Ratings Points
12. coordinated expenditure / coordination doctrine
13. the Koch Brothers
14. the chicken-or-the-egg problem of measuring influence
15. political “access”
16. purposive, solidary and material incentives
17. bundling
18. “call time”
19. possibly one term to be added later

TERMS TO KNOW FOR THE FINAL

All of the above terms, plus the following:

20. Gordon Tullock’s puzzle of money and politics
21. the Gilens-Page study of political responsiveness
22. Majoritarian Electoral Democracy vs Economic-Elite Domination
23. the Federal Election Campaign Amendments of 1974
24. *Buckley v. Valeo*
25. independent expenditure
26. issue advocacy
27. the “magic words” doctrine
28. electioneering communication
29. *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*
30. *Austin v. Michigan State Chamber of Commerce*
31. *FEC v. Christian Action Network*
32. *Citizens United v. FEC*
33. possibly one or two terms to be added later