The primary goal of this course is to familiarize the student with American political history and development. The class will focus on the development of American political issues and institutions from the late 18th century through the 19th century. Throughout the semester, we will focus on topics including: the failure of the Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention, the creation of American political parties, slavery, the Civil War and the development of House and Senate rules. Particular attention will be given to how these events influence policy-making in contemporary American politics.
Institutions Are Important

How they are designed, how and why they evolved...

- We will spend a great deal of time talking about evolution.

Readings

The following books are required and are available at the Campus Bookstore:


Students will not only be expected to have done the reading assignments, but should also be aware of relevant news stories. As such, I recommend reading a daily newspaper—such as the New York Times and/or the Washington Post—or at least checking cnn.com. Other political blogs that students may find useful include FiveThirtyEight, Political Wire, The Monkey Cage, The Upshot, Vox and the Drudge Report.

News

A new Gallup poll finds just 19% of registered voters think most members of Congress deserve re-election—on pace to be the lowest such “re-elect” sentiment in a midterm election year since the question was first asked in 1992.

A new poll shows a clear racial divide among Americans on whether they believe that the shooting of Michael Brown "raises important issues about race." According to a Pew Research Center poll released Monday, 80 percent of African-American adults answered that the case is raising important issues while a plurality, 47 percent, said the topic is receiving too much attention.

Former Sen. James Jeffords (I-VT) has died at 80, the Burlington Free Press reports. "Jeffords was regarded as a maverick in Washington even before he split from the Republican Party in 2001, declaring the party’s rightward shift and criticism what he saw as President George W. Bush’s political intransigence on a number of issues... Jeffords' decision to become an independent in 2001 rocked the nation by giving control of the Senate to the Democrats, costing his Republican colleagues their committee chairmanships."
Readings

Some optional books you might want to consider purchasing can be found on http://www.amazon.com.


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Readings

Additional readings will be posted on the course website. Many of these readings will be highly technical in nature. As such, students are not expected to understand all aspects of each paper. However, they will be held accountable for a basic understanding of the paper’s theory and applications.

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Grades

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

- Class Attendance/Participation (10% of final grade): One of the goals for this class is for students to become comfortable discussing congressional institutions, issues, events and research. Hence, class periods will be part lecture and part discussion. Students should be prepared to discuss the reading for the day with their classmates. Students will be given one point for attending the class, and an additional point for adequate participation. The lowest two attendance/participation grades will be dropped. A student's participation grade may also include several small quizzes or assignments.
Exams

• Midterm Exams (40% of final grade): Two midterm exams will be given on Thursday, September 25th and Tuesday, October 28th. These exams will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. The midterm examinations will be non-cumulative. If a student is unable to take the exam on the scheduled date, they should contact the course instructor beforehand. A missed exam will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If you are excused from an exam, your final exam will be weighted accordingly.

• Final Exam (20% of final grade): The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16th from 8:00 to 11:00 am and will be held in Baldwin 301. Like the midterms, it will feature a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions. The final exam will be non-cumulative.

DO NOT MISS AN EXAM DATE!

The Test - Matching

1. Tet Offensive______ a) The 1984 Detroit Tigers
2. Alan Trammell______ b) Vietnam War
3. Huey Lewis______ c) force and balance
The Test – Multiple Choice

1. The Equal Rights Amendment
   a) was never passed by Congress
   b) was passed by Congress but not ratified by enough states to become law
   c) was passed by Congress and ratified by enough states to become law
   d) was written in response to the Supreme Court’s 1924 ruling in Hogan v. Savage

2. Which founding father was mentioned in class for attempting to outlaw slavery?
   a) George Washington
   b) Alexander Hamilton
   c) Steve Perry
   d) Ben Franklin

The Test – Short Answer

1. Imagine the semester has just ended. You and some buddies have decided to blow-off some steam and can think of no better way to do so than to reenact the Constitutional Convention. You randomly draw the role of James Madison. What are some of your key proposals for a new Constitution? How do you convince your fellow historical recreationists that adopting your proposals is the right way to go? What evidence do you cite in arguing that the Articles of Confederation are deficient?

Paper

- Research Paper (30% of final grade): Students will be expected to complete a research design proposal. The paper should be a maximum of 15 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, Chicago style citations). Students will be allowed to choose the topic of their paper, provided it is related to American Political Development. The instructor will be available during office hours for consultation. The paper should be written with minimal grammatical errors, feature a review of the relevant scholarly literature, a well-developed theory, and a detailed discussion of a potential test of that theory. A more detailed discussion of the paper will be posted on the course website. The paper is due Thursday, December 4th at 5:00pm. E-mailed papers will not be accepted. Papers will be docked a full letter grade for each day they are late.

Final course grades will be assigned as follows: 100-93 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 60-69 = D, and 60-0. Extra credit assignments will not be given in this course.
Classroom/Section Behavior

Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cell phone usage, excessive talking and derogatory or offensive comments made during discussion. Students will be held responsible for all material discussed or assigned.

Classroom Behavior

Politics is complicated.

Be respectful of opposing viewpoints.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Will not be tolerated. Further information regarding academic honesty can be found at http://www.uga.edu/honesty/.

[INSERT ANGRY WIKIPEDIA RANT HERE]
Tentative Lecture Schedule – Key Dates

August 19–Course Overview/Syllabus
August 21–What is American Political Development/Institutions Review
August 26–Path Dependency
August 28–No class
September 2–The Founding (American Creation)
September 4–Pivotal Voters

Conclusion

Questions? Concerns? Angry rants?
Have a great day.