

POLS 4060

Problems in Democratic Theory

FALL 2020

Course Description: Major issues in theoretical discussions of democracy, such as the nature of democratic government, its purposes, its justification, its limitations, and the conditions necessary for its maintenance.

Prerequisite: POLS 1101, POLS 1105H, or POLS 1101e
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:35 - 10:50

Robert Grafstein

Office Hours: by appointment (conducted via email, phone, or Zoom)

bobgraf@uga.edu

770-570-8756

In actual democracies, a majority of voters have below-average incomes and therefore have an apparent incentive to use government to redistribute wealth and income to themselves. A central problem in democratic theory is to determine why, nonetheless, there is great variation in the degree of redistribution that takes place. The United States, for example, does substantially less to reduce inequality than do many Western European countries. At the conclusion of this course, you will understand leading explanations for this difference between Europe and the U.S. and the often unappreciated ways in which government policies actually increase inequality.

These required books are available from the University Bookstore::

Alberto Alesina and Edward L. Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe* [AG]

Brink Lindsey and Steven M. Teles, *The Captured Economy* [LT]

The following is a guide to the assignments. Note that the course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. *Classes will be held synchronously using Zoom. Therefore, you will need a device allowing you to access our class meetings. If you have not received an invitation to the Zoom meetings for this course, please email the instructor.*

. *U.S. vs. Europe*

August 20: Introduction

August 25: AG, Chapters 1 & 2

II. *U.S. vs. Europe: Economic Explanations*

September 1: AG, Chapter 3

III. *U.S. vs. Europe: Political Explanations*

September 10: James Madison, Note to His Speech on the Right of Suffrage

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch16s26.htm>

James Madison, Federalist #10

<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

September 15: AG, Chapter 4

September 22: AG, Chapter 5

IV. *U.S. vs. Europe: Race*

September 29: AG, Chapter 6

V. *U.S. vs. Europe: Ideology*

October 6: AG, Chapters 7 & 8

October 13: First Exam (exam will be administered through the POLS 4060 course link on eLC)

October 15: Exam returned and discussed

VI. *Government as a Source of Inequality*

October 20: LT, Chapters 1-2

October 27: LT, Chapter 3

November 5: LT, Chapter 4

November 10: LT, Chapter 5

November 12: LT, Chapter 6

November 24: LT, Chapter 7

December 1: LT, Chapter 8

December 3: Conclusion

December 4: PAPER DUE (by 5:00 PM)

December 17, 8:00 - 9:30 AM: Final (exam will be administered through the POLS 4060 course link on eLC)

Paper

Find a mix of three - five articles, newspaper columns, newspaper stories, or blog posts, or a book, that discuss government policies and political debates related to the issue of income inequality. In what ways do your selections confirm or disconfirm the claims and hypotheses developed by AG or LT (i.e., one of the books, but not both)? Obviously, if a selection neither confirms or disconfirms, it's a bad selection and you should pick another one. Similarly, if the selection is very superficial or just a rant, your discussion will be superficial as well (which is not a good thing). The paper is not a book report: you should focus on connecting your additional readings back to AG or LT, not on summarizing them. The paper must be typed and should run 4-5 double-spaced pages. You should provide full citations for all readings you reference. With the exception of books, **your selections must have been printed or posted this semester**. They should not have been authored by anyone assigned for the class.

The paper must be a *Word* document and should run 4-5 double-spaced pages. Everything quoted or otherwise used should be properly cited in the paper, including the author(s), title, publisher for books, journal name and volume number for articles, or web address for net documents, and page numbers. **Any paper submitted late, but by December 7, 2020, will lose 10 points. Any paper later than that will be treated as though the assignment were not completed. Please email your paper as a *Word* attachment using the subject line "POLS 4060 paper." The filename should include your name.**

Treat this paper like an exam: its purpose is to allow you another opportunity, in another format, to demonstrate your understanding of the class material.

Grades

Your grade for the term will be based on a weighted average of the grades on your first exam (35%), second exam (40%), and your paper (25%). The exams are not cumulative. Your numerical course average will be adjusted upward by 0 to 3 points based on the quality of your class participation.

The final calculation of your course grade is based on:

$92 \leq \mathbf{A} \leq 100$; $90 \leq \mathbf{A-} < 92$; $87 \leq \mathbf{B+} < 90$; $82 \leq \mathbf{B} < 87$; $80 \leq \mathbf{B-} < 82$;
 $77 \leq \mathbf{C+} < 80$; $70 \leq \mathbf{C} < 77$; $68 \leq \mathbf{C-} < 70$; $60 \leq \mathbf{D} < 68$; $\mathbf{F} < 60$.

No make-ups will be given unless a legitimate excuse for absence is presented and accepted prior to the exam.

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty": "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will

not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi. If there is any doubt in your mind concerning the application of some regulation, you should see me. Otherwise assume the broadest interpretation of dishonesty.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu/>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
 - UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
 - If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
 - Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.
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