Teaching Portfolio
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Statement of Teaching Philosophy

My wide-ranging teaching experience is united by a fascination with the ways that groups, or “we”s, shape identity, generate social obligations, and produce sources of meaning for individuals in politics. A central part of my teaching is an effort to get students to think outside themselves and the groups in which they are embedded. I design my classes to include multiple means of analysis, both from practical politics (e.g. ideologies, parties, religions) and scholarly methods (e.g. institutional, statistical, legal, moral) so that students must work through different interpretations of facts in order to understand the wider context of political phenomena. A key goal is to guide students away from two knowledge-limiting attitudes. On the one hand, students learn not to have a dismissive attitude about ways of thinking different from those with which they are familiar and to respect the analytical power of various scholarly methods and perspectives. On the other hand, students avoid being bound by a single academic methodology (e.g. being merely legal, or moral, or statistical in their analysis) or political perspective (e.g. a political ideology or partisan loyalty) and thus become aware of different lenses through which reality can be viewed. My goal is for students to be able to see the underlying logic of various ways of thinking, the insights these ways of thinking reveal, and to be critical of them. I strive to equip my students to be well-rounded political scientists and engaged citizens capable of meaningful dialogue with others. This focus on “we”ness emphasizes an advantage I have as a Political Philosopher who also studies American Politics. I believe that this focus allows students to grapple productively with the reality that there is no purely objective human means of knowing social phenomena.

The first and most basic step to understanding a viewpoint, method, or phenomenon is to get a clear articulation of facts, ways of reasoning, and definitions of concepts. In my classes I always work from a carefully constructed outline to explore a reading or topic. For example, in a class on ideologies my students read Locke’s “Letter Concerning Toleration” during our unit on Liberalism. In one class period we focused on several crucial passages and distilled Locke’s argument down to 4 steps. Then, in the next class period, we explored some of the implications Locke draws from his arguments and noted some possible critiques of these ideas. I’m always diligent in getting the key definitions of crucial words (noted in class as “keywords”), such as toleration or coercion or freedom, spelled out with detailed explanations and I take care to organize class time in a logical and coherent way. Many of my students have expressed appreciation for this care in presentation. For example, one student wrote in the final evaluations: “Makes hard concepts easy to understand and takes each step of the logic to get there.” While care and logic may seem dry, I exert a great deal of effort to make the material engaging. My students frequently note my enthusiasm in evaluations and one student added an unsolicited addendum to an in-class writing assignment that read, “It is so refreshing to have a professor who cares and truly wants to teach us!”

While careful presentation is the foundation of my teaching, discussion and debate among students about actual political phenomena is constantly provoked and enhanced by the “we” centered class structures. Students are invited to discuss topics, policies, and events from the various methods and ways of thinking offered in the class and this helps avoid class discussions that center on mere opinion. Multiple “we”s allows for a dynamic debate between developed
methods and ways of thinking. The students in my Presidency courses started nearly every class with a discussion of current events that centered on one or two news articles about President Obama or some other element of the Executive that I e-mailed to the students the day before class. Students were able to use what they had read and learned to analyze current politics. At times the Presidency class (particularly the first time I taught it when I had fewer students) was more of a seminar. As the students talked, they were teaching one another various “we” perspectives (both methods from the class and their practical viewpoints) and the insights these revealed. These frequent discussions also let the students participate in the reality of finding insights through the use of different ways of thinking. Students also enjoyed my frequent use of illustrative videos. For example, in my class on ideologies I used a TEDx talk from a supermodel on how her career was possible due to genetic luck rather than hard work to illustrate Rawls’s arguments on equality.

Research and discussion papers are a central method of evaluation in my classes. Papers are crucial in that I ask students to be conscious of the “we” viewpoints and methods they use in formulating their thesis and to defend their thesis from well articulated counterarguments from other views. The extended use and consideration of different “we” perspectives that these exercises require reveal whether students have a comprehensive grasp of the material. To help students with this difficult task, I either require or strongly encouraged students to send me drafts of their papers or outlines and annotated bibliographies. While students seem to dislike these requirements, the improvement in their papers is often substantial and many students do appreciate the outcome of this process. For example, in an evaluation one student wrote, “The feedback and regular consultation of the research paper was amazing.” I also use ID and essay exams to test my students’ overall engagement with the course materials. Often, my exams test students on their ability to think from various perspectives such as offering an argument and counterargument in an essay. I take great care in these assessment methods and my students frequently note that they feel my exams and grading are fair in evaluations.

My teaching has been sculpted by my interactions with students, by comments and evaluations, and by studying teaching methods. The most important instruction I have received on teaching has come from Professor Marjorie Hershey. In her courses and support groups on pedagogy I learned various techniques for constructing lectures, crafting exams, leading discussions, and dealing with various other aspects of university teaching. I also have had the opportunity to observe excellent teachers while serving as a TA and I have appropriated techniques I believe are effective. For example, in Judy Failer’s class I observed some techniques for developing classroom discussion and appropriated some of them to stimulate discussion in my own classes. As a result of my continued efforts, my department awarded me their Associate Instructor of the Year award in 2012 and they have nominated me twice for a university wide award for teaching. These awards highlight my accomplishments and ongoing drive for excellence.

In the future I plan to offer classes on Congress, Constitutional Law, and modern political philosophy. I have also been developing class activities such as formal in-class debates between groups of students and discussion paper assignments so that students will be prepared to lead discussions on current events using class methods and developed “we” perspectives. I plan to implement these elements in my “Introduction to American Politics” class that I have been invited to teach at Butler University Fall semester of 2015.
Summary of Teaching Experience

Courses Taught as Instructor of Record:

-Y200: Current American Ideologies: Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, and Libertarianism
This course explored the roots of current American politics and conflict by studying modern and contemporary political philosophy. I assigned substantial readings from canonical authors and then used these readings to elucidate the thinking behind contemporary politics. The class was designed to present various ways of thinking in the strongest light and then put them into dialogue with one another. Students were required in various papers and exams to exhibit both understanding of each way of thinking and critiques or disagreements between the ideologies.

Role: Instructor of Record
Enrollment: 20
Date: Spring Semester 2013

-Y211: Introduction to Law
This course had three parts. First, it set out the basic history and philosophy of law. Second, it offered various interpretations or ways understanding what “the Rule of Law” is. Third, it examined the application of these legal theories and the result of the history of law to American Constitutional law. The course required students to read excerpts from an array of philosophers on the meaning of law and to interpret various US Supreme Court cases in light of these theories. This course was an intense eight week summer course and I was asked to instruct this course only a few weeks before the term began. Despite these challenges, and the fact that this was my first course as the instructor, it went well and my evaluations for the class were quite strong.

Role: Instructor of Record
Enrollment: 13
Date: Summer Term 2011

-Y249: Religion, Politics and Policy
For this class my students engaged with four different views on how religion and politics should relate to one another. The students read several canonical philosophers such as Rawls, Rousseau, Luther, and Calvin as well as various American authors on the subject (such as John Witherspoon and James Madison). The course then focused on the history of religion and politics in America with emphasis on major events, such as the role of religion in the Civil War, and various Presidents. The class concluded with a unit on the current issues of religion and politics in America such as Civil Rights and Prayer in schools. The course helped students to grapple with the conflicting and diverse role religion has and does play in American politics and asked them to consider the implications of how religion and politics should interact.

Role: Instructor of Record
Enrollment: 20
Date: Spring Semester 2012

-Y318: The American Presidency (Taught Twice)
This course focused on the modern Presidency. The class was set up to encourage students to think using various modes of analysis (legal, institutional, power, and psychological) to get at different aspects of the Presidency and think about the facts they were learning from multiple
perspectives. Using these methods, the students examined various parts of the modern Presidency such as public opinion and media, elections, and various features of the bureaucracy. In the last unit, the students examined each of the modern Presidents, FDR to Obama, using these materials. The course assignments required students to self-consciously use the different modes of analysis and think about phenomena from the different perspectives. This class also included a substantial research project that I guided by requiring various preliminary steps such as outlines and proposals. In the Spring iteration of the class, I invited and was delighted to have Robert Lehman (speech writer for Al Gore during his time in the White House) visit and speak to the class.

Role: Instructor of Record
Enrollment: Fall 30; Spring 48
Date: Fall Semester 2013 and Spring Semester 2014

PO131: Introduction to American Politics (At Butler University)
While my teaching experience has occurred primarily at IU, a large research university, for the Fall semester of 2015 I have been invited to teach at a liberal arts college (Butler University). In this course, I am focusing on helping students develop a basic toolkit for political analysis using political science concepts such as collective action, rational choice, ideologies, and a basic introduction to statistics. This course is centered on students learning to apply the methods through several short writing projects, in class discussion, and formal debates among groups of students. Students will leave the course both prepared for more advanced political science and with the ability to engage in meaningful political analysis and discourse.

Courses served as a Teaching Assistant:
- Y103: Introduction to American Politics
  In this course I led three discussion sections each week that included about 30 students per section.
  Role: Taught Discussion Sections, Assistant to Professor Bianco (Teaching Sections, Grading, Keeping Notes, Administrative Duties)
  Enrollment: 344 (Enrollment in my Sections: 90)
  Date: Spring Semester 2009

- Y200: The Politics of What’s for Dinner
  I was the sole TA for this course, an assignment that is usually shared by at least 2 TAs. Despite this overload, Prof. Barbour felt that my work was exemplary.
  Role: Assistant to Professor Barbour (Grading, Administrative Duties)
  Enrollment: 112
  Date: Fall Semester 2010

- Y200: Elections 2008
  Role: Assistant to Professor Carmines (Grading, Leading Review Session)
  Enrollment: 71
  Date: Fall Semester 2008

- Y301: Parties and Interest Groups (twice)
  Role: Assistant to Professor Hershey (Grading, Administrative Duties)
  Enrollment: 142/133
  Date: Spring Semester 2010/2011

- Y313: Environmental Politics
  Role: Assistant to Professor Hershey (Grading, Administrative Duties)
  Enrollment: 111
  Date: Fall Semester 2011

- Y379: Ethics and Public Policy
  Role: Assistant to Professor Failer (Grading, Administrative Duties, leading review sessions)
  Enrollment: 85
  Date: Fall Semester 2012

- Y381: Classical Political Thought
  I guest lectured twice during this class when Professor Craiutu was out of town. I lectured on the purpose and meaning of political theory and on Marcus Aurelius.
  Role: Assistant to Professor Craiutu (Grading, Administrative Duties), Guest Lecturer
  Enrollment: 56
  Date: Fall Semester 2009
## Student Evaluations

**Quantitative Responses:**
Throughout my teaching career I have been gratified to receive excellent ratings from students. The overall tone of my student evaluations is extremely positive in every course I have taught. In the quantitative section I have consistently received scores well above 3.0 (they are rated on a 4-point scale where 3 equals “Agree” and 4 equals “Strongly Agree”) in nearly all categories of evaluation. This can also be seen in the high percentage of students who agreed (marked “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”) with the statements on the course evaluations. These scores reflect my strong commitment to the success of my students and the quality of their experience in my classes. Additionally, in the one course I have taught twice (Y318) a general trend of improvement is evident.

**Summary Table of Quantitative Scores:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Y200 4-point Scores</th>
<th>Y211 4-point Scores</th>
<th>Y249 4-point Scores</th>
<th>Y318 %Agree (Fall)</th>
<th>Y318 %Agree (Spring)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Global Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, Quality of Course is Outstanding</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, Instructor is Outstanding</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instructor Characteristics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organized Course Well</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well Prepared for Class</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explained Material Clearly</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic about Teaching</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stimulates Thinking</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable on Course Topics</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.70</td>
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<td>Treats Students with Respect</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regularly Available for Consultation</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair and Impartial</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.80</td>
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<td>Makes Students Feel Comfortable to Ask Questions</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><strong>Course Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know what is expected of me in the course</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, readings excellent</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>Course Assignments Help in Learning Subjects</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grading Procedures Fair</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learned a lot in the Course</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>83</td>
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**Evaluation Procedures:**
Student evaluations at IU are carried out at the end of each semester using a set of survey questions that are quantitatively scored on a four-point scale and a space to write comments. A student volunteer administers, collects, and returns the forms to the secretaries in the department office. The results are not released to instructors until several weeks into the next semester and instructors are not present while the evaluations take place.

**Commentary and Analysis of Quantitative Scores:**
The vast majority of my students agree or strongly agree that I am an outstanding instructor according to the global instructor quality question. The high overall course quality and organization of course items are of interest since I was relatively free to design the courses as I thought best. Students recognize that I make teaching a priority and work diligently to make a classroom experience where the materials are explained clearly, they are free to ask questions, and where they will be respected and encouraged as scholars. This can be seen from my ratings in the scores on preparation for class, students feeling free to ask questions, explaining materials clearly, and being regularly available for consultation. I also strive to create a safe atmosphere where students can learn freely which is seen in the nearly universal feeling that I treat students with respect. Students also recognize my enthusiasm for teaching and these scores are consistently at or near 4.

Regarding the mechanics of my courses, it is notable that students appreciate the quality of the readings I assign, despite the fact that I regularly use weighty and highly theoretical texts. While I still use some textbooks, I have come to respect my students’ abilities to grapple with scholarly or canonical texts and have increasingly included them in my syllabi. Students consistently have found my grading procedures and handing of students to be fair and unbiased. This means that even many students receiving grades lower than an “A” in my classes can see the care I take to be open and impartial in my expectations for assignments.

Finally, while my teaching experience has primarily consisted in creating and administering new classes, I have taught my upper level course on the American Presidency twice. The two sets of data reveal that my use of student feedback and commitment to making efforts to improve my courses. Some of the scores are high for both courses such as the agreement with “Well Prepared for Class” and “Treats Students With Respect,” which is nearly unanimous for both courses. For others, such as the global instructor and course quality scores, a noticeable improvement from 72% agreement to 85% and 82% agreement occurs. This reveals that I am not static in my teaching methods and course construction. I am actively seeking ways to improve and, as these scores demonstrate, my efforts are effective.

In sum, my students have consistently regarded my teaching as achieving a high level of excellence and I have striven to use the comments and ratings from my students to focus my efforts to improve.
Qualitative Responses:

For each of my classes my students could write any comments they wished on the back of their evaluation sheets. Overall, these comments have been quite positive and constructive. What follows are some samples of the comments I received from different students.

In every class students mention my enthusiasm and energy in the classroom and that this made them excited to learn, participate, and engage with the course. Another recurring theme is the clarity of my class presentations and ability to make even difficult material accessible and understandable. Assignments and readings also figure in a number of comments. While students sometimes mention their difficulty, they also discuss how much they learned and how much effort I put into helping them succeed. Along these lines, my openness and helpfulness to students is a common motif. Finally, students also noted my skill at instigating and guiding discussions and how free they felt to participate.

Y200: American Political Ideologies

Commentary on Y200: This course went extremely well and the student responses reflect this. I was given permission to essentially develop any course I wanted and I was quite pleased that the students found it so helpful despite the heavy load of canonical readings I assigned (Locke, Rawls, Burke, Marx, Cohen, Hayek and Nozick). While some students found this challenging, many appreciated them and even one student who found them difficult said not to change them. Overall, I am quite gratified that the comments from this course are so overwhelmingly and enthusiastically positive.

- Very enthusiastic. Makes hard concepts easy to understand and takes each step of the logic to get there. Available for help and is very helpful in general. The briefs were very helpful. Forced me to review and familiarize myself further with the material!

- He knows a lot about each subject and gets very excited about teaching it. He’s also good at explaining things. Readings are long and dry, but that can’t be helped.

- Very enthusiastic about job. Give the man a raise. You were good about explaining material.

- Prof. Krumm explained the material extremely well! He always reviewed also which really helped me. He was great!

- The instructor did a great job in developing this course. The briefs helped to solidify understanding and clarified course topics. The instructor did a great job of balancing different ideologies and giving them appropriate time. The exams were fair in assessing knowledge.

- I thought the readings for each ideology were very well selected. The instructor did a very good job at facilitating class discussion. Class discussion and relating topics to present day situations helped a lot with the material.

- The instructor did a great job of presenting the material.

- He was well prepared to teach the class and did it at a solid pace. He explained most of the materials within the class too.
-Well-organized course and I learned a lot. Listening to political speeches is way more interesting and complex to me now. I have a totally new understanding of political labels.

Y211: Introduction to Law

Commentary on Y211: Despite the fact that I was teaching for the first time, my enthusiasm and clear communication of concepts featured prominently in the comments. Additionally, the quality of assignments and my fairness in administration of grades figure prominently.

-What I enjoyed most from this course was the enthusiasm of the instructor. He really made one want to learn.

-I liked the level of interest the teacher had for the subject. Made me more interested. I also liked that he made us think about the answers.

-Very knowledgeable on course topics, very helpful in office hours.

-Presented all views equally. Very organized and fair grading procedures.

-The best part about this class was the more philosophical material and the first paper. The first paper was fun to write and wrestle with.

Y249: Religion and Politics

Commentary on Y249: In this class I began by introducing four contrasting views of the proper relation of politics and religion (using Calvin, Luther, Rousseau, and Rawls). The students appreciated that this gave them multiple angles of interpretation and evaluation of the various empirical and historical phenomena we then examined throughout the rest of the course. Of particularly note is that the students appreciated how this course design stimulated their critical thinking.

-I thought the instructor did a good job of trying to stimulate our critical thinking regarding the subject.

-I learned the most from how the instructor set up the claims for an argument, and then tried to disprove the very same argument, which kept things fair. I liked the class more than what I could have expected.

-The readings were really helpful and easy to understand (most of the time). The readings helped but the lectures were very good at explaining what the readings meant. Educational and interesting.

-It was a good class. I learned a lot. I’m glad I took it.

Y318: American Presidency (Fall and Spring sessions)

Commentary on Y318: Teaching this class was new in two ways. First, since it was a major level course the quality of student increased. I expanded my use of discussions and I felt that this frequently led to a close engagement of ideas among the students. Second, I also had the opportunity to teach the same course twice. This allowed me to refine my approach in the Spring which led to what I believe, and the student evaluations indicate, an improved class. In both
classes I guided students on an extended research paper through various assignments throughout the semester and made myself available to help them. As these comments indicate, many students appreciated the help and guidance in improving their writing and research skills.

-The feedback and regular consultation of the research paper was amazing. I couldn’t have produced the paper I did without your help. Also, I love the class structure. The highlighting of keywords before class helps me when studying for exams. I enjoyed class discussions.

-Fantastic teacher and even better person… Really enjoyed the class and learned a lot. Love your demeanor and personality.

-He made classes interesting, explained information clearly, and was passionate.

-His charisma + enthusiasm was nice. I enjoyed him as a professor. Loved the course!

-His energy and excitement over the topic translated to his lectures well. Overall, great instructor.

-Prof. is always open to questions and ready to clarify.

-Facilitated class discussion very well. Very open to other points of view.

-The instructor is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Also, he is very approachable.

-Very enthusiastic and gives good lectures.

-The study guides are helpful + the lectures are interesting. Instructor cares about the class + students.

-Nicely stimulated class discussions

-Very enthusiastic about the topic and always willing to meet outside of class to discuss exam topics or paper. He also explained things very clearly. Having no polisci background, I was able to understand the material.

-I enjoyed the use of current articles as a method of applying themes in class.

-The class was really interesting and the instructor made it fun. Instructor was very clear and always available for questions. Instructor should teach more classes.

-His lectures were very clear and he didn’t try to fool students on the exams. Everything was clear.

-Professor Krumm is great. He stimulates thinking, makes me want to talk in class, and is passionate about teaching. He is also very funny.
Faculty Observations:

Professor Marjorie Hershey has observed my teaching and wrote the following:

I have worked extensively with Mitchell on teaching. He served as my associate instructor in three different courses over a period of two years. He was a member of my year-long, introductory graduate teaching seminar (Y550: Teaching in Political Science I, Understanding and Negotiating the Teaching Environment; and Teaching in Political Science II, Becoming a More Effective Instructor), and has also taken part for two semesters in an advanced seminar for grad students who are currently teaching their own courses. I have had the pleasure of observing his teaching on several occasions, ranging from lectures to discussion-leading. He and I have talked about a variety of issues in teaching and learning. So I feel very confident in my judgment of his teaching skills.

Mitchell is, quite simply, an excellent teacher, at the level of a faculty member who has had considerable experience and training in instruction, and one of the best graduate instructors I’ve worked with. He has been the instructor of record for four departmental courses, all in highly controversial fields – political ideologies, religion in politics, law, and the American presidency – and he has done a superb job in all four, with enrollments ranging from 85 students to 13. In the first two of these courses in particular, he dealt with sets of students with widely ranging philosophies and preferences. It is difficult in such courses to help students find the way to an analytical understanding of a writer’s work or a concept, especially when many students have learned to take strongly partial views of these issues in their own families and communities. But Mitchell has remarkable ability to show his students that it is possible to explore alternative perspectives, to argue for views they don’t personally hold, and in short to move from opinion to analysis.

I have observed Mitchell lecture and lead discussion on four separate occasions over a two-year period. He is a very clear lecturer. He explains a concept well, presents examples to demonstrate its features, and is careful to conclude by summarizing the main points, so that students know where they are in the logic of his presentation. In leading discussion, he is eager to draw out students’ ideas. He encourages productive discussion, rather than discussion for the purpose of letting students hear their own voices (which would be a bit like carrying coals to Newcastle). Instead, he demonstrates to students the ways in which their points help to forward the main ideas being considered in the day’s class. I was especially impressed with his ability to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect in discussing ideas that can sometimes prove volatile.

Mitchell’s syllabi are a model for any instructor. They offer clear evidence of a very well thought-out, logical presentation of a set of ideas. He has often given me drafts of his midterm and final exams, which are excellent examples of fair, creative essay tests. And I have had ample evidence of his skill as a grader in my own classes. He has the ability to get to the heart of a student’s essay and to make sensible suggestions for improvement without resorting to over-broad generalizations or snippy comments.

Mitchell expects a lot from his students, but he is also very willing to work individually with them to meet his expectations. As an Associate Instructor in my classes, he took the time to
explain to students why they had achieved the grade he had given them, and I heard from several students that they found his advice invaluable in preparing the next paper or the next exam.

I have also been delighted with his enthusiasm for helping less experienced AIs adapt to teaching their own courses. I meet with all the AIs who are instructors of record each week, to share good ideas and to evaluate the challenges they are facing. Mitchell has been very active in these meetings in sharing his own experiences, graciously suggesting ways to overcome other instructors’ difficulties, and encouraging the newer AIs to experiment with instructional techniques and evaluate the outcomes. For these among other reasons, he received the department’s Outstanding AI Award in 2012 and has become the department’s nominee for the university-wide Lieber AI Award for 2014.

I hope that his hard work and success becomes a model for other students.

Marjorie Randon Hershey
Professor of Political Science and Philanthropic Studies
Abbreviated Course Syllabi and Materials:

Commentary on included materials:

The following are various course materials from the courses in which I was the instructor of record. These materials highlight several aspects about my teaching.

First and foremost, these materials reveal a commitment to the success of my students. I begin with specific goals and learning objectives both for the course as a whole and each unit and day of class. I strive to be clear both in the class overall and in assignments what skills, ideas, and facts students should learn and then make a deliberate effort to achieve those goals.

Second, they reveal the high expectations I have for my students. I assign substantial reading loads that often feature canonical literature. Similarly, I have high expectations in terms of assignments and I take great care in making sure my students are engaged with course materials. The exam and review sheet also help illustrate how thorough these expectations are.

Third, I am careful and clear in my course organization. I strive to give a coherent structure and progression to the topics covered in class. I also provide students with clear expectations for readings and topics to be covered each day. This clarity is also seen in my in-depth assignments and questions for exams and instructions for how to write ID answers.

In sum, I am committed to my students’ success and I believe these materials illustrate this.

Included Materials:
A. Y200: The Theory Behind Current American Ideologies
   - Abbreviated Syllabus (p. 15)
   - Abbreviated Study Guide (p. 19)

B. Y211: Introduction to Law
   - Course Description (p. 21)

C. Y249: Religion and American Politics
   - Course Description (p. 21)

D. Y318: The American Presidency (Spring iteration)
   - Abbreviated Syllabus (p. 22)
   - Abbreviated Study Guide (p. 25)

E. PO131: Introduction to American Politics (Butler University)
   - Abbreviated Syllabus (p. 27)

Complete syllabi, sample assignments, samples of student work, and other materials are available upon request. (mdkrumm@indiana.edu)
Y200: The Theory Behind Current American Ideologies, Spring 2013

In addition to highlighting my commitment to student success, this syllabus also highlights my commitment to helping students see ideas and issues from various perspectives.

I. Aims of the Course:
It is quite common when listening to political news, commentary, or speeches to hear the words “Liberal”, “Conservative”, “Libertarian” and “Socialist” but what does it mean to be or call something or someone by one of these names? What are the basic ideas and theories that inform these ways of thinking? Where are they in conflict and where do they find agreement? How is modern politics and discourse shaped by the ideas they represent? This course will take up these questions by examining several figures who are generally regarded as central in defining these ideologies. By examining the thought and arguments that inform our modern political ideologies this course aims to equip students to better understand the deeper points of argument within modern American politics, to be able to engage in critical thought on each view, and to be better able to engage in political debate. In order to achieve these goals, this class will frequently note and discuss current events and political statements.

The course will consist of examining two key thinkers from each school of thought. Generally, first will be one of the foundational writers and the second a more contemporary incarnation of the ideology. Additionally, the course will take up analysis of current political debates and thought and how it relates to these ideologies. In addition to regular readings and class participation, each student will be required to write one paper, three one page briefs, and take two exams.

II. Requirements:
You will write one paper, take a midterm and final exam, write three briefs, complete class readings before the class time under which they are listed and participate in class discussions.

Texts:


Written Assignments:

-Written Briefs: You will write 3 briefs. The first two are due February 18 and April 1 respectively. The third is due *either* April 15 or April 22 depending on which you choose to write.
Three times during the semester you will need to write a brief defining “Liberalism”, “Conservatism”, “Libertarianism” or “Socialism” and provide a brief description of the elements of your definition. These briefs should NOT attempt to offer arguments in favor or against the ideology. You should simply offer a definition (in your own words) and a couple of paragraphs explaining the definition. These assignments are an opportunity for you to reflect on what we mean by these commonly used terms, not to assess their merit. These briefs should be 1 page in length. When you are writing a brief on a particular ideology it MUST be turned in on the due date immediately following the last class specifically on that ideology. In other words, the brief on Liberalism must be turned in on February 18, the brief on Conservatism on April 1, and the final brief following the date when we finish talking about that ideology in class (you get to choose which of the last two you prefer to write about).

- Paper: Due April 24
This paper has the following prompt: “Which ideology do you find most compelling and why?” You should use arguments and ideas from the readings and class discussions to define your favored ideology and argue for it. You should also consider some of the possible weaknesses of your chosen position presented by the arguments of the other ideologies and respond to them. Additionally, you should not simply offer a mere opinion. Instead, this paper is an opportunity for you to think through and argue for a considered ideological position. This paper should be 5-7 pages in length.

Paper Formats (also applies to Briefs):
While much of paper formatting is unimportant to me (as long as it is professional and consistent), the following rules should be observed: 1. All quotations and any ideas from another source should be acknowledged in some way (i.e. footnotes, endnotes, in-text citations etc.). In short, no plagiarism will be tolerated and presenting information without a source is nearly always a form of plagiarism. 2. Font should be 12 point, Times New Roman, Double Spaced. 3. Document margins should be one inch on all sides. 4. A bibliography should be included.

Paper Advice:
You should start working on the paper at least a couple of weeks before it is due. Starting only a few days before the paper is due is an almost sure way to earn a low or failing grade. This topic demands careful thought and working through difficult issues. Also, you should take advantage of my office hours. I am happy to help and offer encouragement and constructive criticism of ideas, outlines or drafts during my office hours. In the past, students who have taken advantage of this time have scored much higher on their final papers. You should also consider using the Writing Tutorial Service (see the “A Couple Extra Notes” section).

Midterm and Final: February 20 and April 29
The exams will consist of short answer identifications and an essay. The IDs will be worth 60% of the exam grade and the Essay 40%. You will be given a review sheet a few days before each exam. While the final will be comprehensive, it will focus on material from the second half of the course.

Attendance:
Attendance will be taken in some way (sometimes though a sign up sheet and sometimes through a brief in-class written assignment) 12 times during the semester. If you are absent more than twice when attendance is taken your grade will be reduced accordingly.

Class Participation:
Meaningful participation (asking questions, engaging in discussions, coming to office hours) in the class may result in extra credit being assigned. This extra credit is completely under the instructor’s discretion and judgment.

IV. Calendar of Readings and Class Subjects:

January 7
What is Politics? What is Political Theory and why does it matter for Contemporary Politics?
How to write a Paper; How to take notes; How to read a text; Review of the Syllabus
What is an Ideology? Why can’t we just define ideology in terms of Political Parties? Why do ideologies make political debate so difficult (the problem of worldviews)?
Overview of Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, and Libertarianism

Readings: The Syllabus

January 9
Introduction to Locke and his context; Critical Assumptions About Individuals; Locke’s Arguments from the “State of Nature”; Rights as Fundamental to Man (Note: What is “Property” for Locke?)

Readings: 1) Locke’s Second Treatise of Government chapters 1-5 (p. 100-121);
2) Recommended “Introduction: Reading Locke Today” by Ian Shapiro (p. ix-xv)

January 14
The Definition of Liberty (or Freedom) and Equality; What is consent, why is it important and what counts as consent?

Readings: Locke’s Second Treatise of Government chapters 6-8 (p. 122-154); 2) Recommended “John Locke on Women and the Family” by Ruth Grant (p. 286-308) on Liberal Feminism

January 16
The Ends and Means of a Liberal State; Rule of Law, Role and Limits of Democracy, the Role and Extent of the Executive power

Readings: 1) Locke’s Second Treatise of Government chapters 9-14 (p. 154-175); 2) Recommended “John Locke’s Democratic Theory” by Ian Shapiro (p. 309-340)

January 21
No Class! Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 23
Civil Breakdown: Tyranny, Revolution, Dissolving a Government, Conquest, Usurpation

Readings: 1) Locke’s Second Treatise of Government chapters 15-19 (p. 176-209); 2) *Recommended* “Measuring Locke’s Shadow” by John Dunn (p. 257-285) on the nature of Locke’s liberalism and his relation to the history of liberalism

**January 28**
Locke on Religious Toleration; Toleration beyond Religion and as a Basic Political Value

Readings: 1) Locke’s Letter Concerning Toleration, entire (p. 215-254)

**January 30**
Introduction to Rawls and Modern Liberalism, The Basic Ideas

Readings: 1) Rawls’s Justice as Fairness Part I (p. 1-38)

**February 4**
Justice as Fairness

Readings: 1) Rawls’s Justice as Fairness Part II (p. 39-79)

**February 6**
The Argument from the “Original Position”

Readings: 1) Rawls’s Justice as Fairness Part III (p. 80-134)

**February 11**
Liberal Institutions and Politics

Readings: 1) Rawls’s Justice as Fairness Part IV (p. 135-179)

**February 13**
The Question of Stability or the Possibility of a fully Liberal Regime

Readings: 1) Rawls’s Justice as Fairness Part V (p. 180-202)

**February 18**
Review for Midterm

-First Brief Due
Y200 Abbreviated Study Guide

This (abbreviated) review sheet highlights the high expectations I have for my students in understanding course materials. I required the students to be able to articulate and discuss the arguments and ideas from the readings and class in considerable depth.

Instructions/Advice
This sheet includes all of the terms that will be considered “fair game” to be Identification words on the exam. On the exam you will be expected to provide one or two paragraphs on 6 terms (there will be a choice of among at least 8) that does two things. First, it will define the term. Second, it will articulate why the term is significant for the course. Each term has multiple significances but it is better to clearly discuss one significance rather than mentioning several. The following are ways to discover or think about a terms significance. A. How does this term relate to or explain another key term in the course? B. How does this term fit into and help us understand a key argument that we have covered in the course? C. What would be lost from our understanding of the theories/arguments that use this term if the idea it represents were missing? D. How does this term reveal a similarity or difference between the authors we have studied? E. How does this term help us answer one of the four basic questions that Ideologies seek to answer (knowledge, reality, institutions, boundaries)? The best answers will not only mention a definition and significance but will also offer some explanation and perhaps an appropriate example. In short, full credit requires that you not only reveal that you know the definition and significance but that you also understand why the term holds the significance that it does.

Constitution
Circumstances
Conservation
Inheritance
Nobles
Practical Rights
Prejudice
Abstraction
Localism
Established Religion
Tradition
Providence

II. Study Questions For Essays
These questions are meant to help you review some of the more important arguments we have discussed in class. For the exam, you will have a choice of two or three prompts that will be drawn from these questions.

1. Conservatives place a great deal of emphasis on an established constitution. What exactly is a constitution and why should it be revered? Where does it come from? According to conservatives, should one seek to achieve a perfect or ideal realization of justice or freedom by
fundamentally altering a constitution? Why or why not? What principles or attitudes should temper improvements to a social order according to conservatives? Who owns or constitutes the constitution? What obligations does this ownership entail for those currently living under a constitution?

2. Sometimes political theorists ask whether it is better to have the best laws or the best rulers. Why does Burke argue you should seek the best rulers? What kinds of qualities does Burke argue make for good rulers? Why do rulers who are from the general public and democratically chosen lack these qualities? What is the means to getting good rulers? Which value does this largely ignore that liberals and socialists see as crucial? Who, according to Burke, benefits from ignoring this value in selecting rulers? Should rulers be “delegates” or “trustees” when they represent people according to conservatives (and what is the difference)?

3. Burke famously argues that we are first taught to be part of society and most attached to our local “platoons”. Why does this idea suggest that a person needs local attachments to be motivated to care for larger society? At least two other reasons are given by Burke to focus on local political institutions as much as possible. First, why does prudence indicate that it is better to try new policy ideas locally than nationally? Second, where are people’s affections centered? At what level of policy then will people be more responsive to the outcomes of policies?

4. In contrast to liberals, where do conservatives argue that rights come from? How do we know what rights we have? What danger do conservatives see in setting an abstract set of rights up as the standard by which to judge if a state is just and should be respected or undermined? How does one evaluate if a right and the specific understanding/application of that right is good for a state?

5. Burke argues that there are two major limits on reason. What are they? Why do these limits lead conservatives to argue that reason should not be the central source of political knowledge? Why are Prejudices a better way, according to conservatives, for us to know what to do socially and politically in most cases?

6. Religion plays a key role of conservatives. Burke argues that religion does three crucial things. First, what does religion do for the morality of people? Second, why and it what ways does a religious view of the world benefit society and politics? Third, what does religion do to people’s passions? Despite this central role for religion, most conservatives would argue that they are not promoting a theocracy. What about our practical experience lead to a trust in tradition? Why, even if no particular religion is right or gets all of the details right, should one adopt a “Practical Faith”? What about being Human, according to conservatives, makes this necessary?
Course Description for Y211: Introduction to Law

The “Rule of Law” is promoted widely and proclaimed loudly by many world leaders and is widely revered through the maxim desiring the “rule of law rather than the rule of man”. On his website President Obama states: “Through judicial training and exchange programs, human-rights training for police officers, technical assistance to governments, and including labor rights and other standards in our trade agreements, the U.S. works to promote and enshrine the rule of law abroad.” Similarly, the World Bank states: “Economic growth, political modernization, the protection of human rights, and other worthy objectives are all believed to hinge, at least in part, on ‘the rule of law’.” And of course, all visitors to the Supreme Court are greeted with “Equality Under Law” above the main entrance to the court building. However, the concept is nearly always vague and ill defined. Widely diverging nations claim to adhere to the rule of law (even being claimed by Hitler during his reign). Additionally, many contemporary commentators claim that the rule of law is in decline (or even lost) in western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Such vagueness makes promotion of the rule of law difficult since it is not clear what should be promoted. Additionally, many have questioned whether the rule of law is actually beneficial and worth preserving or promoting resulting in political and legal movements against it.

This class will attempt to address these concerns and give students a foundation through which they can analyze these issues by examining the history of this concept, several of the most important writings on the rule of law, and the current realization (or lack-there-of) in American governance. Specifically students should come away from the class with the ability to address questions like: what is law? What is the “Rule of Law”? Does the “Rule of Law” promote freedom or is law in conflict with freedom? What is the history of this concept? Is the United States currently a government under the Rule of Law? Is the Rule of Law inherently or universally good? This class will also serve as an introduction to the U.S. legal system and law. Several important Supreme Court cases will be analyzed in conjunction with the presentation of the current political debate concerning the Rule of Law.

Course Description for Y249: Religion and American Politics

Americans have generally been a deeply religious people with high numbers practicing a form of religion. However, there have been a number of different understandings throughout every era of European-American history concerning the proper role of religion in the United States. The absence of a single theory of the relation of religion and politics has led to many debates within, between, and outside religious groups. Additionally, the role of religion in actual politics has been varied throughout American history. Religion has been and is affiliated with widely divergent strands of American politics leaving it as one of the most difficult and yet fascinating political forces to study.

This class will examine two basic questions. First, what role has religion played and what role does it currently play in American politics? Second, what role should religion play within politics? The goal of this class is to push you to challenge whatever you already hold on the role of religion and politics and help you better think through your position with systematic consideration of the implications and the facts of past and present political realities.
This abbreviated syllabus highlights my commitment to student success. Please note the clarity of goals, expectations, and skills to be developed in the course.

I. Aims of the Course:
This course examines the Presidency in the United States. The goal is to present four (Legal, Institutional, Power, and Psychological) dimensions of analysis by which to understand the Presidency and then apply these to the various aspects of the Presidency. The Presidency is unique in that the individual personalities who take up the office define the institution and its history in dramatic ways. In short, to understand the Presidency, one must also study individual Presidents. There will be four parts to the class. First, the process of nominating and electing a President will be examined. Then, the various aspects and roles of the modern Presidency will be examined. Third, the relationship of the Executive to the other institutions in Washington (Congress and the Courts in particular) will be reviewed. Finally, the character, actions, and psychology of the individuals who are Presidents will be discussed with a focus on how these individuals’ traits and actions impact the institution of the Presidency as a whole. The class aims to equip students to have a theoretical understanding of the Presidency and be able to apply that understanding to specific Presidents, particularly recent ones. The course will require students to attend class, do readings, take three exams, and write a research paper on a particular President. Additionally, current events and news articles will frequently be used in class discussion.

II. Requirements:
This class will be primarily lecture based but involve many moments of discussion. Students will be expected to attend class, do the readings on or before the day they are listed in the syllabus, take three exams, and write a research paper.

Required Texts:

Paper:
Each student will write a 10 page research paper analyzing some aspect of one of the modern Presidents (defined as FDR to the present). This paper should use the methods of analysis and topics discussed in class to examine some aspects of the chosen President’s actions in office. Each paper should focus on a few key areas, actions, or policies and should develop a specific thesis about the President being examined. Students will need to conduct credible academic research using reputable sources (such as Journals, academic books, and reputable news sites). These papers will be due in three stages during the term.
A. An outline of the paper you intend to write (at least as you conceive of it now)
DUE: March 13
B. An Annotated Bibliography with a 1-2 sentence summary of each source
DUE: April 17
C. A Final Draft
DUE: April 24

Paper Format:
The following rules should be observed:  1. All quotations and any ideas from another source should be acknowledged in some way (i.e. footnotes, endnotes, in-text citations etc.). In short, no plagiarism will be tolerated and presenting information without a source is nearly always a form of plagiarism.  2. Font should be 12 point, Times New Roman, Double Spaced.  3. Document margins should be one inch on all sides.  4. A bibliography should be included.  5. Be sure to include page numbers.

Advice:
You should start working on each part of the paper at least a couple of weeks before it is due. Starting only a few days before it is due is an almost sure way to earn a low or failing grade. Also, you should take advantage of my office hours. I am happy to help and offer encouragement and constructive criticism of ideas, outlines or drafts during my office hours. In the past, students who have taken advantage of this time have scored much higher on their final papers. You should also consider using the Writing Tutorial Service (see the “A Couple Extra Notes” section).

Exams:
The exams will consist of short answer identifications and an essay. The IDs will be worth 60% of the exam grade and the Essay 40%. You will be given a review sheet a few days before each exam. Each exam will focus on the part of the course just covered, though the later two exams will assume some understanding of the previous parts.

Attendance:
Attendance will be taken in some way (sometimes though a sign up sheet and sometimes through a brief in-class written assignment) 12 times during the semester. If you are absent more than twice when attendance is taken your grade will be reduced accordingly. Also, if you are present for more than 10 attendance days, you will receive 1 point of extra credit per day (so you can earn 2% extra credit in the course if you are always present in class).

Class Participation:
Meaningful participation (asking questions, engaging in discussions, coming to office hours) in the class may result in extra credit being assigned. This extra credit is completely under the instructor’s discretion and judgment.

IV. Calendar of Readings and Class Subjects:

January 14:
Review of the class and syllabus; What is it that Political Scientists do and how do they analyze the Presidency?

Readings: This Syllabus
January 16:
An overview of the Modern Presidency; 4 Approaches to Studying the Presidency (Legal, Institutional, Power, Psychological); Think about the mode(s) of analysis you want to employ in your papers.

Readings: Edwards and Wayne chapter 1

January 21:
What was the “Original Intent” for the President? Why did the Founders give us a President? What is the basic tension between effectiveness and dominance or tyranny? How did they feel they had resolved it? Should the President be a “director of change” or a “facilitator of chance” primarily?

Readings: Federalist Papers 67, 69, 70, 71 on Oncourse

Part 1: Electing the President

January 23:
The Selection of Candidates for the Presidency; Who runs and why? What are the Legal Rules?


January 28:
The Primary Process: How do the parties select their Nominees? What role do different institutions and rules play in shaping the outcomes?


January 30:
The General Election: What are the legal rules and institutions? What Strategies do candidates use? What do Campaigns Involve?
The Electoral College: How did we get it, how does it work, and what have been the results of this system? A clear example of how important legal rules can be in shaping outcomes!

Readings: 1) Federalist Paper 68 on Oncourse; 2) Edwards and Wayne chapter 3
Y318 Abbreviated Study Guide

This (abbreviated) review sheet highlights my commitment to student success and ensuring that students are focused on developing the skills outlined in the courses goals. In particular, note the explanations for thinking through terms by using concepts and methods being taught in the class. Similarly, note that my exam questions help guide students through several aspects of an area of the course.

Instructions/Advice This sheet includes all of the terms that will be considered “fair game” to be Identification terms on the exam. On the exam you will be expected to provide one or two paragraphs on 6 terms (there will be a choice of among at least 8) that does two things. First, it will define the term. Second, it will articulate why the term is significant for the course (why did we talk about it in this class?).

Each term has multiple significances but it is better to clearly discuss one significance rather than mentioning several. The following are ways to discover or think about a term’s significance. A. How does this term relate to or explain another key term in the course? B. How does this term fit into and help us understand a general topic (e.g. one listed in the syllabus as a topic) that we have covered in the course (e.g. how does a specific term fit into the narrative of campaign finance)? C. What would be lost from our understanding of the Presidency if the idea/reality this term represents were missing or not known? D. Consider the four modes of analysis (Legal, Institutional, Power, Psychological). What is a conclusion/argument you could draw from the idea/reality this term represents using one of these modes? E. Compare how this term might lead to different conclusions (though perhaps not mutually exclusive) either due to using different modes of analysis or from within the same mode.

The best answers will not only mention a definition and significance but will also offer some explanation and perhaps an appropriate example. In short, full credit requires that you not only reveal that you know the definition and significance but that you also understand why the term holds the significance that it does.

Public Opinion
Polling Data
Public Expectations
Presidential Approval
Public Opinion on Issues
President’s Persuasive Task
Status and Authority
Direct Opinion Leadership
Presidential Framing
Public Relations

II. Study Questions For Essays These questions are meant to help you review some of the more important ideas we have discussed in class. For the exam, you will have a choice of two or three prompts that will be drawn from these questions. In addition to these questions, the essay on the exam may ask you think about the facts and offer an interpretation of them based on one of the modes of analysis.
1. Describe at least three of the four aspects we discussed about the nature of public opinion. Note at least two ways that Presidents can measure/know public opinion and what are some of the limits to these methods? Review three methods that President’s use to attempt to influence public opinion and the media. Given the nature of public opinion that you just summarized, how effective are these efforts and why is that the case? Why is Presidential influence of public opinion and their standing in terms of approval in the public so important to presidents? In other words, what happens to their power when they fail to persuade the public and why does this happen?

2. It has nearly become cliché to say that the power of the President is the power to persuade. But what does this mean? Why is so much presidential power dependent on persuasion? What is the persuasive task of the president? What are the primary means that allow President’s to be so persuasive? How does this relate to those in the President’s staff and the Executive Branch more generally? How does it relate to Public Opinion? In speechwriting, what are three limits to what a President can use to persuade the public?

3. Institutional analysis is a quite helpful method when trying to understand the capabilities and limits of the modern presidency in implementing policy. Consider the growth of the Executive Branch in terms of personnel, money, and role in Federal politics. Review the basic incentives of civil servants and leaders of the various agencies and departments within the Executive Branch. What are the basic incentives that President’s have regarding what they want from the rest of the Executive Branch? Besides potential tensions caused by different incentives, how does the structure and expansion of the bureaucracy and the rules for how such growing institutions operate hinder the implementation of the wishes of Presidents (e.g. SOPs)? Given what you have written, note at least one way the President’s power is limited by the bureaucracy. Note at least one way the President’s power is increased by the bureaucracy.

6. What is Prerogative and why did the Founders argue that it is important? What is the danger of prerogative? Describe the President’s Treaty Making authority and it’s limits. How have President’s gotten around this limit? What is a Foreign Policy Doctrine? Briefly outline the Doctrine of a former President. Briefly describe some aspects of the Obama doctrine and compare this to the other doctrine just described. Note at least two key Constitutional provisions that give the President authority over the armed forces and the extent of this authority. Describe at least one example of an attempt to check this authority (power) and evaluate whether it has been successful.

7. Consider the incentives of congress people. What is their basic driving incentive? Describe two rules that allow Congress to share power with or have power over the President regarding any area (Domestic, Economic, Foreign) of policy. Given these shared powers, describe at least one strategy that the President must use in relation to congress in order to get a desired outcome and why this strategy is necessary given the power relations and rules just described. Describe what polarization is and at least two reasons that polarization in Congress is increasing. What role does polarization have in how these rules of Presidential/Congressional relations are applied and effect policy outcomes? Note at least one recent example from Obama’s presidency that has exemplified the effects of polarization in Congress in relations with the Executive.
This syllabus highlights the most recent developments in my course design. It incorporates discussion papers to prepare students to lead class discussions and formal in-class debates between groups of students. This course also highlights my preparation to teach in a student centered liberal arts environment with many involved elements designed to develop students’ ability to think and dialogue meaningfully with others.

I. Aims of the Course:
Often politics can appear baffling. You might have wondered why a politician or groups of politicians behave as they do (e.g. suddenly switching positions on a key issue). Likewise, the institutional structures of U.S. government are quite confusing (e.g. the structure and process of the Federal Courts). Additionally, the news media often talks about “public opinion” but rarely in a way that enlightens us as to how people form and change opinions or how this collective opinion is measured and properly interpreted. The media itself, and other groups outside the formal “institutional” government such as interest groups and political parties, presents us with additional players and forces in the political process that add to the complexity. On a slightly different note, American politics has recently become more polarized between people claiming to be (or accusing others of being) liberal, conservative, socialist, and libertarian. What do these terms mean and what are the theoretical ideas and arguments that lead people to hold these views? In short, why do people think the way they do? Given all of these questions and complex aspects of American politics, being baffled and confused is reasonable! However, this course aims to make American politics clear and understandable.

The goal of this course is threefold. First, this course aims to give students a set of basic analytical tools and frameworks that can be used to make sense of American politics. Second, this course aims to introduce students to the essential insights from political science about how American politics functions. Third, this course aims to introduce students to the skill and art of meaningful political dialogue and debate. This third skill is aimed at helping students cut through the often overheated and misunderstood rhetoric that is pervasive in American politics so that they can both understand and engage with those who hold worldviews and positions that differ from their own.

II. Requirements:
This class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Students will be expected to attend class, do the readings on or before the day they are listed in the syllabus, take two exams, write 5 one to two-page discussion briefs, prepare for and participate in an in-class debate.

Required Texts:

These books are available at the university bookstore and are on reserve at the library. All other texts will be provided on Moodle or distributed in class.

All texts listed under the class dates are required except when they are prefaced with “Recommended.” These recommended texts may be helpful (particularly if you are interested in the topic or are discussing it in your briefs or debate topic) but I will not expect you to be familiar with them for the exams.

-E-mailed News and Current Events Articles: Twice during the week (usually Friday and Monday) I will e-mail one or two relevant news articles or opinion columns on issues and current events. You are encouraged to use these to write your Discussion Briefs and often these articles will aid in understanding the application of class ideas to political realities. In short, these articles are also required reading for the course and are “fair game” on exams.

**Discussion Briefs:**
Each student will write 5 one to two page discussion briefs during the semester. These briefs will use one of the methods of analysis from the toolkit given in this course (statistical, rational choice, institutional, collective action, policy principle, history, and worldview/ideology) to analyze a recent or current event in American politics. You may turn in no more than 1 on a given class day. These briefs involve four steps.

First, you should select a piece of quality journalism or political writing on a recent event or issue in American politics. You are welcome to use the discussion articles that I will send out twice a week to write your briefs. However, you are also welcome to use articles and quality opinion pieces from reputable sources (e.g. The New York Times, Time Magazine, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The New Republic, National Review, Politico, The Daily Beast, The American Conservative, NPR, and any other source you ask me about and I approve). In short, you are free to write on virtually any topic using any reputable article or opinion piece published within the last year, though it will be easier to write on topics already covered in the class.

Second, you will analyze the article using one of the methods of analysis in the class. For example, the brief could examine how the article correctly or incorrectly uses statistics. Or, the brief could note the rules and incentives in a particular institution and how these structures (or even focusing on one) are leading to or have led to a particular outcome. In short, you will need to select an appropriate method of analysis (and there generally will be more than one that could be fruitfully used) and analyze the current event or issue or the nature of the article itself using this method. You should state in the brief which method you are using. Also, you should use a variety of methods and article topics for your briefs.

Third, you will write one to two pages that do three things. First, it will summarize the article under consideration. Second, it will explain your analysis using the method of analysis used. Third, it will comment on what the article got right or wrong (given your method of analysis) and
possibly propose an additional conclusion or insight that the article does not reveal but the
method of analysis suggests. (Hint: Finding errors of analysis or seeing additional applications
or insights are essential for getting more than 8.5/10 points)

Fourth, students will be given the opportunity to summarize and share their brief at the start of
the class when they turn it in. The class will then have an opportunity to (constructively) discuss
the issue and analysis.

Exams:
The exams will consist of short answer identifications and an essay. The IDs will be worth 60%
of the exam grade and the Essay 40%. You will be given a review sheet a few days before each
exam. Each exam will focus on the half of the course just covered, though the final exam will
assume understanding of the previous parts.

In-Class Debates
Each student will be required to participate in an in-class debate. The debates will follow a
standard format. Students will work in groups of 2-4. On the first day of class you will turn in
your top three ordered preferences on the debate topics/sides and you will be assigned a debate
group within the second week of class (I’ll do my best to assign people to their top picks). Each
team will be expected to meet at least twice before their debate to divide up tasks (research and
speaking responsibilities) and compare notes. Teams should meet for the first time at least one
week prior to the class in which they will debate. Each team must also prepare a joint 3-5 page
summary of the main arguments and evidence they intend to use for the debate (with a
bibliography of sources). Each group will jointly turn in only one summary paper.

Each debate will use this format:
Affirmative (affirming the statement that is the topic of debate): 5 minute opening
Negative (opposing the statement that is the topic of debate): 7 minute opening
Affirmative: 4 minute rebuttal
Negative: 5 minute rebuttal
Affirmative: 3 minute rebuttal
Negative: 2 minute closing remarks
Affirmative: 2 minute closing remarks

Each team can decide who will give each speech and they can divide the time within a speech
among multiple members if they want. Each team will also be given 1 minute to prepare before
each rebuttal speech.

After each debate, the students in the audience will vote for the team they believe won the debate
and the winning team will receive 2 points of extra credit in the class.

Grades for the debates will be determined as follows:
1. Quality of the presentation during debate (coherence of ideas, use of researched factual
evidence, and thoughtful responses to the arguments of the opposing side): 40%
2. Summary Paper (number and quality of sources of evidence, coherence and thoughtfulness of
arguments): 40%
3. Peer Evaluations (these will be completed anonymously by all students and these grades will not be released until the end of the course): 20%

The following are the Debate Topic Statements and the dates on which the debate will occur:

1. An “Equal Rights Amendment” should be passed to ensure that women receive equal treatment by the laws and policies of the United States. (October 14)

2. The U.S. Senate should eliminate the Filibuster. (October 28)

3. Supreme Court Justices should have a limited time of appointment (put another way, the Justices should no longer be appointed for life). (November 11)

4. Restrictions and regulations for campaign finance should be greatly increased.

**IV. Calendar of Readings and Class Subjects:**
Since this class meets once a week for an extended period of time, I plan to usually divide class sessions into two (sometimes 3) distinct lessons and sections separated by 5-10 minute breaks.

**August 26**
A. Topics: Introductions, Who am I and who are you (and what do you hope to get out of the course)? What is Politics and Government (and why should I care about them)? What is “Political Science” and what does a political scientist do? What is the difference between analysis and a considered view vs. a political opinion? What will I learn in this course (what will I know and be able to do by the time we are done)? Review of the Syllabus and plan for the course, get debate group information

**Analytical Tools Part 1:**
B. Topics: Ideological Analysis
What are ideologies and how do they work in politics? How do ideologies relate to political science? Note that political science seeks to avoid being ideologically driven, so we are seeking to understand rather than advocate or undermine. In short, this is a brief interlude into Political Theory (a branch of political science that studies political philosophy). How do ideologies relate to political parties and other institutions? What is the difference between an “ideological analysis” and holding an ideological “opinion”? How can ideologies be helpful and how can they be problematic for politics? How do these relate to the rest of the other methods of analysis we will use in this course? Ideologies are related to the “Rationality Principle” (one of the key sources of reasons for thinking and behaving politically). Review of the 4 main ideologies in American politics

C. Two Ideologies: Libertarianism and Socialism (Or what are Bernie Sanders and Ron and Rand Paul all about?)
Readings: Recommended: Hayek, “Freedom and Coercion” (online); Cohen, *Why not Socialism?* (excerpt online)
September 2
A. Topics: What is Liberalism?
Readings: Paul Starr, “Why Liberalism Works” (online); John Locke, “Second Treatise of Government” (excerpts online); President Obama’s Inaugural Address (online)
Recommended: Richard Rorty, “American National Pride: Whitman and Dewy” in Achieving Our Country (online)

B. Topics: What is Conservatism?
Readings: Yuval Levin, “The Roots of a Reforming Conservatism” (online)
Recommended: Russell Kirk, chapters 1,2, and 13 of The Conservative Mind (online)

September 9
Analytical Tools Part 2:
A. Rationality Principle, Institutional Principle


September 16
Analytical Tools Part 3:
A. Data and Evidence in Political Science; How to Understand, Interpret, and Discern Statistics part 1

B. How to Understand, Interpret, and Discern Statistics part 2
Readings: Darrell Huff, How to Lie with Statistics, entire

September 23
A. What is the Declaration of Independence, what does it say, why does it matter? How and why did we get the Constitution? What ideals, incentives, and circumstances led to the Constitution?
Readings: Lowi, et al. p. 32-47; Declaration of Independence (A3 in our textbook)
Recommended: The Articles of Confederation (A7 in our textbook)

B. What does the Constitution say? What rules/institutions does it prescribe? In what ways did the Constitutions realize and in what way did it go against or adjust the ideals of the Declaration and American Revolution of 1776? Who were the Anti-Federalists and what were their arguments? What do these arguments reveal to us about the Constitution? What did James Madison and the other Federalists say the Constitution was supposed to do (what was their political theory)?
Readings: Lowi, et al. p. 48-70; The Constitution of the United States (A13 in our textbook); Amendments to the Constitution (A24 in our textbook); Federalist Papers 10 and 51 (A34 in our textbook)
September 30
A. Federalism: The relation of the States and the National Government (and how this works today)
Readings: Lowi, et al. p. 72-92

B. Separation of Powers: The relation of the Branches within the National Government (and how this works today)
Readings: Lowi, et al. p. 93-102

October 7
A. The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties; What are “rights” anyway? What is the “Rule of Law” and how does law work? How did we get the BOR? What do the various rights mean?

B. What do the rights in the BOR mean (continued)? How are these rights contested and controversial today?
Readings: Lowi, et al. p. 104-144

October 14
A. Civil Rights: The Struggle and Politics of Civil Rights
Readings: Lowi, et al. p. 146-184

B. Debate 1: An “Equal Rights Amendment” should be passed to ensure that women receive equal treatment by the laws and policies of the United States.

October 21
A. Review for Exam

B. Midterm Exam