

**American Democracy in Changing Times**  
**POLI 100 Section 600**  
**Tuesday 5:00 – 5:50**  
**Phillips 212**

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<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	Colin Case
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<b>Office</b>	Hamilton Hall 303
<b>Office Hours</b>	Monday 3:00 – 4:30 and Thursday 1:30 – 3:00
<b>Office Hours Sign-up</b>	<a href="https://calendly.com/crcase/office-hours">https://calendly.com/crcase/office-hours</a>

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to American politics at the college level that is intended to serve both majors and non-majors. In this course we will discuss the origins of the current governmental system in America and how theories of American government apply to current events and problems the government and citizens face today. We will work toward understanding our complicated and contentious political environment by exploring the system from two perspectives: political institutions, or the structure of the United States' government, and political behavior, or the actions and motivations of political actors — both politicians and the general public.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

The purpose of the recitation is to complement course lectures through active learning, dialogue, and discussion. The goal is to improve your understanding by clarifying and elaborating on material presented in the lectures and readings. The beginning of each class will typically be devoted to questions about material covered in the week's lectures. I will also leave some time to discuss current events in American politics when relevant. The majority of the recitation, however, will be class discussion of assigned readings and/or an activity that allows students to explore the main lecture concepts in new ways, and draw connections between previously presented ideas. You are responsible for reading the assigned readings before class, completing any short assignments, and being prepared to discuss the readings. It is highly encouraged to come to recitation with specific questions or things you found important from the readings.

We will frequently engage in group discussions about course content and current events. American politics is full of “hot topics” that you and your classmates may have strong opinions about. Our aim in this course and recitation section is not to discuss the merits of our beliefs. Rather, we will focus on discussing how theories and concepts apply to current events from an analytical perspective. I encourage you to engage with viewpoints that

differ from your own. I require that you do so in a respectful and productive way. An open environment will allow us to approach the ideas presented in the course as analytical, critical thinkers so that we can form, challenge, and develop theories and evidence about the issues we discuss.

### **Technology Policy**

In recitation, our aim is to engage deeply with the subject matter as well as with each other. This means that we must actively listen to each other and formulate thoughtful responses. As a result, electronic devices (e.g. laptops, tablets, and cell phones) will not be needed, so you should keep them muted or turned off to avoid distracting yourself or your classmates. To come prepared for class, you may either bring a printed copy of the readings, notes on the readings, or both. With that being said, there may be occasional times that we will want to use available electronic devices to reference online resources during in-class activities, but I will let you know when it is appropriate to do so.

### **Mask Policy**

As noted in the University's updated community standards, face masks are still required in all campus buildings. All students, therefore, are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me — as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave and I will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see [carolinatogether.unc.edu](http://carolinatogether.unc.edu).

## **ATTENDANCE**

As listed in the lecture syllabus, 25% of your overall grade will come from recitation. Of this, 25% will be based on your attendance. You are expected to arrive on time to recitation. You will be given a five-minute grace period for lateness. Otherwise, you will be considered absent. If you must miss class for an excused reason (an official university activity, a religious holiday, a verifiable illness, etc.), please contact me in advance of your absence.

You are required to follow the University's community standards as it relates to monitoring your own symptoms. Per the community standards, "Each time prior to coming to campus, all members of the Carolina community should self-assess whether you are experiencing any symptoms using the COVID-19 symptom list (<https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/symptom-monitoring/>) on the Carolina Together website. If you have any of these symptoms, you should stay home. You should not enter any campus building, attend any class or report to work." If you exhibit any of the symptoms on the Covid-19 symptom list, please contact Campus Health immediately. Experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 will count as an excused absence so long as you provide documentation of contact with Campus Health.

We have 14 scheduled meetings this semester, and your attendance grade is based on the assumption that you have attended 12 out of 14. To encourage you to take care of yourself

– and those of us who will be sharing a classroom with you – I will allow you to miss up to two classes without question (hence your grade being based on attending 12 out of 14 recitations). If you miss more than two classes without an a documented excuse, however, each recorded unexcused absence will lead to about an 8% decrease in your attendance grade (1/12).

## **PARTICIPATION**

The remaining 75% of your recitation grade will come from participation in section. Beyond showing up, active participation in recitation is vital for success – both for the class as a whole and for your development as a student. Class participation can take many different forms such as speaking and listening to others during small and large group discussions, raising questions for classmates to consider, or completing occasional brief assignments either before or during class. I will communicate well in advance about these assignments. They will primarily serve the purpose of fostering discussion related to the week’s readings. I expect both quality and quantity with respect to class participation – your participation should illustrate that you are thinking critically about topics we cover and the assigned readings. I also reserve the right to give short, unannounced quizzes or writing exercises that will be factored into your participation grade should the collective participation of the section be faltering.

## **COMMUNICATION**

I am very happy to meet with students outside of class time. Whether it be to discuss concerns about the course, questions about the material, or simply to engage further with the topic, please feel free to come to office hours. I will be holding office hours jointly in-person and over Zoom so that you can attend whichever way you prefer. Please be advised, just as with attending class in person, you must wear a mask when attending office hours in person. I am asking that you sign up for a 15 minute time slot here: <https://calendly.com/crcase/office-hours>. You are always more than welcome to show up to my office hours in person without a meeting, although students with an appointment (either Zoom or in person) will take priority. If you would like to attend office hours using Zoom, you must sign up for an appointment – I cannot guarantee I will see your email during my office hours.

If you are unable to meet during my office hours, which are listed at the top of this syllabus, please email me to set up a time to talk. Office hours are an important resource that should be utilized to improve understanding of materials or ask more personalized questions. Office hours before an exam will be held at regular times and, unless noted by me, no additional office hours will be held – so plan accordingly. Prior to writing assignment due dates, I will be available during office hours to read over paper outlines or talk through ideas and provide feedback. Please do not bring completed papers and, be advised, office hours before paper deadlines may be busy.

Outside of office hours, e-mail is the easiest way to contact me. Please include “Poli 100” in the subject line of the e-mail. I will typically respond to email within 48 hours. If you have extensive questions that require a longer conversation, please come to my office hours. I will frequently send emails through Sakai relating to the course material, upcoming assignments or activities, and general reminders. I expect that you are checking your UNC email regularly to stay on top of these updates.

## **ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

UNC facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. For more information visit <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

## **COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Visit their website <https://caps.unc.edu/> or their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

## **TITLE IX RESOURCES**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu).

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic dishonesty — including cheating, plagiarism, or any instance of taking credit for work that is not your own — will not be tolerated in this course. Any cases of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowable under UNC guidelines, which can be found here: [honor.unc.edu](https://honor.unc.edu).

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

Aug 17	No Recitations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
Aug 24	Concepts and Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Constitution of the United States</i></li> <li>• Richard Stengel, "TIME Cover Story: One Document, Under Siege"</li> </ul>
Aug 31	Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Federalist 10</i></li> <li>• <i>Federalist 51</i></li> </ul>
Sep 7	Federalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Callan and Danny Cevallos, "Marijuana: Is the Party Over?"</li> <li>• David G. Evans and Paul Armentano, "Should Federal Laws Be Enforced Where Marijuana Is Legal?"</li> </ul>
Sep 14	Congress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Prokop, "Gerrymandering, Explained" (article/cards from Vox)</li> <li>• Ezra Klein, "Congressional Dysfunction" (article/cards from Vox)</li> </ul>
Sep 21	Presidency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ezra Klein, "The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency, Explained"</li> </ul>
Sep 28	Presidency & Bureaucracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zachary Karabell, "How Biden Could Wind Down the Imperial Presidency"</li> </ul>
Oct 5	Judiciary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garrett Epps, "The Extreme Partisanship of the Roberts's Supreme Court"</li> <li>• Norm Ornstein, "Why the Supreme Court Needs Term Limits"</li> </ul>
Oct 12	Public Opinion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ezra Klein, "The Single Most Important Fact About American Politics"</li> </ul>
Oct 19	Elections & Public Opinion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dylan Matthews, "One Pollster's explanation for why the polls got it wrong"</li> </ul>
Oct 26	Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garrett Epps, "The Electoral College Wasn't Meant to Overturn Elections"</li> <li>• Christopher DeMuth, "The Electoral College Saved the Election"</li> </ul>
Nov 2	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adam Taylor, "American voter turnout is still lower than most other wealthy nations"</li> </ul>

Nov 9	Participation & Civil Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleve Wootson &amp; Mike DeBonis, “Democrats signal a shift toward accepting voter ID laws”</li> </ul>
Nov 16	Civil Liberties and Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adam Liptak, “In Narrow Decision, Supreme Court Sides With Baker Who Turned Away Gay Couple”</li> <li>• Jonathan Rauch, “How American Politics Went Insane”</li> </ul>
Nov 23	No Recitations – Thanksgiving Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
Nov 30	Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matt Levendusky, “Are Fox and MSNBC polarizing America?”</li> </ul>