**Understanding the 2016 Election**

**Political Science 204**

Professor: Julie Novkov

E-mail:  jnovkov@albany.edu

Downtown Office: Milne 306 Uptown Office: Humanities B16

Downtown Office Phone: 442-5279 Uptown Office Phone: 442-3112

Downtown Office Hours: by appointment Uptown Office Hours: 9-12 M

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will engage students in a critical consideration of the election of 2016 and the presidency of Donald Trump. Using the tools and concepts of political science, we will explore together three big questions: 1) What factors contributed to the electoral outcomes on November 8, 2016? 2) How are major policy issues likely to play out in the Trump administration? and 3) Where do we go from here in terms of federalism, dissent, and the changes that the election will create?

The focus of the course will be on the election and the Trump presidency, but it will also incorporate learning about how political science considers politics across several dimensions and issue areas. Several different members of the Political Science Department will contribute lectures. Students who voted for any candidate at all – or for no candidate – are welcomed and encouraged to enroll, and some class sessions will require you to work together with people who made different choices than you did in the election. The classroom will be a space for all of us to consider and grapple with the implications of this historically significant event. The most important goal of the course is for students to think about what democracy in the United States means in our time, and how we as civic participants can build and maintain democratic culture here and/or elsewhere.

**REQUIREMENTS**

*Is this class right for me?* This course has both reading and writing requirements. You will be expected to complete all of the reading and to attend all of the class sessions. We will have many discussions in the class, but you’ll be expected to participate in these discussions in an informed manner, and the writing assignments will demand engagement with and analysis of the readings. Of course you’re expected to have an opinion about things, but you’ll also be expected to base your opinion in facts and developed theories.

Students must attend class and participate in class discussions. Constructive, informed, respectful participation that contributes directly to conversations about the course material will raise borderline grades; lack of participation or consistently disruptive participation may result in lower grades. Class participation and attendance will constitute 10% of your grade. The baseline grade for class participation is a B, so a student who does not miss class but never participates in discussions can expect to get a B for this component of the course. You will be expected to keep up with the reading throughout the term. You will not be able to do well on the assignments without both attending classes and doing the reading. Some weeks do have heavier reading loads than others, but note that you will encouraged to skim some of the readings – these readings will be identified in advance!

Students will also be expected to complete four short writing assignments in the form of journal entries, some of which you will have the opportunity to revise. We will do a few reflective exercises in groups in the classroom. You will also work over the course of the semester to research and take action on some political concern of your choosing; at the end of the term, you will be graded on your entire Doing Politics project. Unlike many undergraduate classes, this class will not have any in-class examinations. Instead, in addition to the short papers, you’ll complete a take-home final examination at the end of the term that asks you to pull together and reflect on all that you’ve learned in the semester.

The allocation of weight for your various obligations is as follows:

Journal entries (collected twice) 10%

Political engagement project 30%

Final journal 20%

Attendance and participation 10%

Final exam 30%

#### POLICIES

*Students with disabilities*. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the professor soon. Please request that Disabilities Resource Center send a letter verifying your disability.

*Extensions for papers*. Extensions for papers will only be permitted under compelling circumstances and if the extension is requested in advance. Any student who does not turn in their paper on time and has not contacted the professor in advance will lose a half grade per day for every day the paper is late unless the student can provide a University-approved excuse.

*Class attendance*. You will be expected to attend class. Each student is permitted to miss two days of class per term with no questions asked and no penalties or reductions in their class participation grade. Any classes missed beyond those two will be taken into account in determining your class participation grade, regardless of the reason.

*Regrading of materials*. You may request regrading of materials. If you wish to make such a request, contact the professor for a copy of the regrading policy. You will be asked to provide a written explanation of why you wish to have the assignment regraded.

*Plagiarism or cheating*. This one’s simple: don’t do it. Don’t even think about doing it. Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s words or ideas without giving the original author credit by citing that person. If you use someone else’s language directly, you must use quotation marks. If you rely on another person’s ideas in creating your argument, you must provide a citation even if you are not using that person’s words. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me *before* you submit the assignment for grading. If you plagiarize or cheat in this class, the **BEST** outcome you can hope to achieve is a failing grade from me, in addition to any mandatory university sanctions. Plagiarism or cheating, even if unintentional, will result in a failing grade for the assignment at the *very minimum*.

**MATERIALS**

All materials will be available on Blackboard. Particularly interested students are encouraged to read Arlie Hochschild’s *Strangers in their Own Land* and Katherine Cramer’s *The Politics of Resentment* in their entireties and to read posts of interest on the Washington Post’s Monkey Cage blog.

**SYLLABUS**

**PART ONE: THE ELECTION**

January 23 What Happened on November 7, 2016?

* Randy Yeip, “Tallying Up the Faithless Electors”
* CNN Politics, “Presidential Results”
* RealClear Politics, “Live Results”
* John Judis, “Why Trump Won – And Clinton Lost – And What it Could Mean for the Country and the Parties”
* Theda Skocpol, “Response to John Judis”
* Nancy Fraser, “The End of Progressive Neo-Liberalism”

January 30 Gender, Race, and Ethnicity as Factors in the Campaign

* [Julia Azari](http://journals.sagepub.com/author/Azari%2C+Julia) and [Marc J. Hetherington](http://journals.sagepub.com/author/Hetherington%2C+Marc+J), “Back to the Future? What the Politics of the Late Nineteenth Century Can Tell Us about the 2016 Election”
* Rebekah Tromble and Dirk Hovy, “These 6 Charts Show How Much Sexism Hillary Clinton Faces on Twitter”
* Alec Tyson and Shiva Maniam, “Behind Trump’s Victory: Divisions by Race, Gender, Education”
* Mark Lilla, “The End of Identity Liberalism”
* Richard Alba, “The U.S. Is Becoming More Racially Diverse”
* Johanna Birnir, Christian Davenport, and Erika Forsberg, “Is Diversity Inherently Dangerous?”

DOING POLITICS #1 DUE: IDENTIFY YOUR ISSUE(S)

February 6 The Fair Value of Political Liberty (Guest: Professor Peter Breiner)

* John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*
* Emily Badger, Quoctrung Bui, and Adam Pearce, "The Election Highlighted a Growing Rural-Urban Split"
* Emily Badger, "As American as Apple-Pie: The Rural Vote's Disproportionate Slice of Power"
* Steven Johnson, "Why the Blue States are the Real 'Tea Party'"

FIRST JOURNAL ENTRY DUE

February 13 Election Law (Guest: Professor Stephan Stohler)

* National Constitution Center. 2016. "We the People Podcast: Voting Rights in the Courts." Available at: http://blog.constitutioncenter.org/2016/08/podcast-voting-rights-in-the-courts/
* Ari Berman. 2016. "There Are 868 Fewer Places to Vote in 2016," The Nation. Nov. 4th.
* Lott, John R. Jr. 2016. "Voter Fraud Is Not a Myth," National Review. Nov. 8th.
* Crawford v. Marion County Election Board, 553 U.S. 181 (2008) (edited version)

February 20 The ReDistricting Game (in class activity and discussion)

* This class session will feature in-class activities based on the redistricting game, available at <http://www.redistrictinggame.org/game.php>

**PART TWO: CONTEXT AND IMPLICATIONS**

February 27 Executive Authority and Separation of Powers

* Thomas Cleary, “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing: The Unilateral Executive and the Separation of Powers”
* *Youngstown Sheet and Tube v. Sawyer* (Jackson concurrence)
* Andrew Rudalevige, “Congress Wants to Rein in Presidential Power. Will Trump Sign On?”

DOING POLITICS #2 DUE: EXPLORE THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

March 6 Immigration (Guest: Professor Rey Koslowski)

* Dan Tichenor and Marc Rosenblum, “Poles Apart: The Politics of Illegal Immigration in America”

SECOND JOURNAL ENTRY DUE

March 13 NO CLASS

March 20 Economic Issues (Guest: Professor Sally Friedman)

* CQ Press, “Wealth and Inequality”

DOING POLITICS #3 DUE: EXPLORE THE ACTIVIST LANDSCAPE

March 27 Foreign Policy and The Ethics of Political Violence (Guests: Professors Chris Clary and Victor Asal)

* Gabriel Lenz, *Follow the Leader*
* Alex Horton, “*Breaking Bad*’s Moral Lesson to Civilians”
* Richard Wolin, “Are Suicide Bombings Morally Defensible?”
* Ted Honderich, “Are Suicide-Bombings Morally Defensible? A Reply to Richard Wolin”

April 3 Class Divides and Populism

* J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy* (excerpts)
* Katherine Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment* (excerpts)
* Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in their Own Land* (excerpts)

DOING POLITICS #4 DUE: EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

April 10 Populism in American Politics: A Broader Lens (Guest: Professor Peter Breiner)

* Thomas Frank, *What’s the Matter With Kansas?* (excerpts)
* Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy* (excerpts)
* Peter Breiner, “Ideologies of American Populism”

DOING POLITICS #5: DECIDE ON A PLAN

April 17 NO CLASS

**PART THREE: THE BIG PICTURE AND THE FUTURE**

April 24 Comparative Populism (Guests: Professors Zsofi Barta, Niloufer Siddiqui, and Meredith Weiss)

* Madiha Tahir, “I’ll Be Your Mirror”  
  Samanth Subramanian, “India’s Anti-Corruption Crusader Enters Politics”
* Nicole Curato, “Flirting with Authoritarian Fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the New Terms of Philippine Populism”
* Devin Stewart and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “The Global Populist Surge Is More than Just a Western Story – Just Look at Asia”
* Adrian Chen, “When a Populist Demagogue Takes Power”

DOING POLITICS #6 DUE: SUBMIT DRAFT LETTER/ACTION PLAN

May 1 Federalism and the Reversal of States’ Rights Arguments

* Emily Zackin, *Looking for Rights in All the Wrong Places* (excerpts)
* Jeffrey Rosen, “States’ Rights for the New Left”
* Sabrina Tavernise and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Abortion Foes, Emboldened by Trump, Promise ‘Onslaught’ of Tough Restrictions”

May 8 Movements

* Steven Teles, *The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement* (excerpts)
* Alison Gash, *Below the Radar* (excerpts)
* Angel Padilla, Billy Fleming, Caroline Kavit, Ezra Levin, Gonzalo Martínez de Vedia, Indivar Dutta-Gupta, Jennay Ghowrwal, Jeremy Haile, Leah Greenberg, Mary Humphreys, Matt Traldi, Sara Clough, and Sarah Dohl, “Indivisible: A Practical Guide for Resisting the Trump Agenda”
* Bryant William Sculos and Sean Noah Walsh, “The Counterrevolutionary Campus”

DOING POLITICS #7 DUE: SUBMIT FINAL LETTER/ACTION REPORT

Take-home final distributed in class

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 11:59 PM ON THURSDAY MAY 18