



POL 392

United States Politics: Money, Culture, Power

S1 Day 2016

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor, Lecturer and tutor

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Tuesday 10-12

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp or (6cp in HIST or MHIS or POL units at 200 level including 3cp in POL)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

US politics is today, as in much of its past, dominated by money and the power that money can buy. US cultural life is also preoccupied with money, in ways that profoundly affect the distribution of political power. Proceeding from these premises, this unit explores the relationship between money, culture and power in contemporary US politics. Topics covered include campaign financing, interest groups and the media; the impact of social inequalities of class, race, gender and sexual preference on US politics; the role of religion and political parties in the formulation of dominant political ideas; and the politics surrounding the global financial crisis and its aftermath.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form

You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form

You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency

You will be able to articulate your knowledge of US politics in group discussions

You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Assessment One</u>	20%	Monday 28/03/2016
<u>Assessment Two</u>	40%	Friday, 6/05/2016
<u>Assessment Three</u>	10%	All year
<u>Assessment four</u>	30%	Exam period TBA

Assessment One

Due: **Monday 28/03/2016**

Weighting: **20%**

This piece of assessment will involve answering five questions about the material covered in the unit up till now. The test will be conducted in the first hour of our usual lecture time and location. All students must attend.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment Two

Due: **Friday, 6/05/2016**

Weighting: **40%**

This is a 2000 word essay +/- 10%, with topics drawn from across the unit. To give students plenty of time to think about and prepare their essays, the list of topics will be handed out in

week two of the unit. Extensions will only be granted under the most exceptional of circumstances, and all late work will be penalised at the rate of 1 mark out of 40 for each day late.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form
- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment Three

Due: **All year**

Weighting: **10%**

These marks are for participation in tutorials, not just attendance. Thus students should come to each tutorial ready and willing to contribute. This will be considerably assisted if students come to tutorials having done their reading. Students who miss more than three tutorials will receive a grade of 0/10 for this piece of assessment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to articulate your knowledge of US politics in group discussions
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment four

Due: **Exam period TBA**

Weighting: **30%**

The final, two hour exam will require you to write three short essays, drawn from topics across the entire unit. The emphasis will be on testing your knowledge in particular areas, though clear and concise writing will also be very helpful in demonstrating what you do know.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary

US political sources and present the information in a written form

- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Delivery and Resources

United States Politics: Money, Culture, Power - POL392

Welcome to United States Politics: Money, Culture, Power. US politics is today, as in much of its past, dominated by money and the power that money can buy. US cultural life is also preoccupied with money, in ways that profoundly affect the distribution of political power.

Proceeding from these premises, this unit explores the relationship between money, culture and power in contemporary US politics, paying particular attention this year's Presidential election. Additional topics covered include campaign financing, interest groups and the media; the impact of social inequalities of class, race, gender and sexual preference on US politics; the role of religion and political parties in the formulation of dominant political ideas; and the politics surrounding the global financial crisis and its aftermath. These topics will be covered in a weekly two hour lecture, and a weekly one hour tutorial, which all students must attend. Although recordings of each lecture will be available on ilearn, students are strongly encouraged to attend lectures in person. It has been my experience that students who do not attend the lectures often also neglect to listen to the recordings. So please come along, ask questions in the lectures and tutorials, and make friends with your fellow students.

You will enhance your prospects of doing well in this unit by:

- attending all lectures and listening attentively
- attending all tutorials and making regular verbal contributions
- doing all the required reading and at least some of the supplementary reading (while also taking notes from these readings)
- regularly reading US news and media sources
- Conscientiously preparing for each assessment task

The required reading for this unit is David McKay (2013) *American Politics and Society 8th edn.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

All students must get a copy of this text, which is available from the Macquarie University bookshop. In addition, supplementary readings and links to readings will be provided each week on the ilearn site. Naturally, students are also encouraged to do their own self-directed reading. The more you read, the more you will get out of this unit.

Lecture Outlines and Required Reading

Week One: Introduction: Money, Culture, Power and US Exceptionalism

McKay, Chapters 1 & 2

An enduring feature of American political life is the belief in US exceptionalism – the idea that the United States is a unique polity that embodies liberty and democracy in a way that is or should be a beacon for the rest of the world. In this week, we explore the origins of American exceptionalism, and discuss the ways in which it relates to the organizing themes of this unit - money, culture, power.

Week Two: The American Constitution, Federalism and Privilege

McKay, Chapters 3 & 4

The American Constitution is frequently held up as a hallowed document and one of the keys to American success over the past two centuries. Yet on closer examination it is clear that the Constitution still reflects its 18th century origins in advancing the interests of a very narrow strata of colonial society. In this lecture we examine both the history of the American Constitution and discuss some of its key clauses, with a particular focus on federalism. Students should have closely read the Constitution (a copy of which can be found in the back of their textbook) before this class.

Week Three: Two Parties, One Culture?

McKay, Chapter 5

The American two Party system emerged in the nineteenth century, and endures to this day, though in a very different form. We here discuss the emergence of both the Democratic and the Republican Parties, and look both at the ways that they have changed and the ways that their key constituencies have changed. We end by examining the nature of the two main parties today, and consider the challenges that they face at the upcoming 2016 Presidential and congressional elections. We will be particularly interested in the regularly expressed notion that, despite their differences, both parties ultimately represent the interests of corporate America.

Week Four: Money, Elections and Political Participation

McKay, Chapter 6

For outsiders, the nature of the US federal electoral system can be very confusing. This lecture seeks to systematically demystify the US electoral system. As well as outlining the mechanics of electoral processes for Congress and for the Presidency, we will discuss the key issues confronting the American electoral system today. In particular, we will focus on the vexed question of money in US politics and electoral funding. Can elections and political office be bought?

Week Five: The Media, Celebrity and US Politics

McKay, Chapter 7

This week's lecture will be shortened because of the test in the first hour. In the one hour that we do have, we examine the changing role of the US media in US politics. The emphasis will be on the broader relationship between political media, money and the cult of celebrity that seems to now pervade so many aspects of US cultural and political life. We examine the deeper structural and cultural forces that shape these developments.

Week Six: Congress and Lobbying

McKay, Chapters 8 & 9

The US congress is composed of the House of Representatives and the US Senate. Their respective roles, rights and obligations are outlined in the US Constitution, though in practices these have shifted over time. We discuss these changes, and also examine the extremely important role of lobbying in shaping final legislative outcome. Finally, we begin exploring the vexed issue of the relationship between Congress and the President, using contemporary examples to illustrate some of the key issues, as an entree into the next lecture.

Week Seven: The Imperial Presidency?

McKay, Chapters 10 & 11

The office of President stands at the apex of executive power in US government. Over time, the powers of the Presidency have been significantly enhanced and extended such that scholars frequently refer to the existence of an "imperial Presidency." In this lecture we focus on the nature and effects of this development, consider the Presidencies of Bush and Obama, and discuss the possibilities of the upcoming Presidential election in 2016. Having elected its first Afro-American President in 2008, will the US elect its first female President in 2016, and does it matter?

Week Eight: The Supreme Court and Judicial Politics

McKay, Chapter 15

This week we examine the third pillar of the US system of government – the Supreme Court. In addition to identifying the formal reach of its jurisdiction, we focus on the ways in which the Court has become, or in fact has always been, politicized. We will do this through a closer consideration of some key cases over which the Court has presided, which illustrate the interlocking and mutually constitutive nature of legal authority and political power. We finish by considering the impact that the death of Conservative Supreme Court Judge Antonin Scalia will have on the Court

Week Nine: Interest Groups

McKay, Chapter 14

Politically organized interest groups have a profound influence on the political process in the United States. They are often political agenda-setters, and are often able to bring considerable political pressure to bear on individual politicians (particularly in Congress), in order to realize political outcomes that are advantageous to their constituencies. We explore the nature of political influence in US politics, and illustrate this by considering the role of some key interest groups, including the National Rifle Association (NRA)

Week Ten: The Religious Right and the Politics of Faith

McKay, Chapter 16

Despite the formal, constitutional separation between church and state in the US, religion plays a more important role in US politics than in any other comparable western state. We explore why this is and analyse how it is manifested. We pay particular attention to the influence that the Religious Right has exercised over the contemporary Republican Party.

Week Eleven: Race, Culture, Power

Reading TBA (will be placed on ILearn)

Race and ethnicity have been and remain tremendously important in US political life, as the 2014 killing of and reaction to the police killing of a black teenager in Missouri poignantly demonstrate. The legacies of racially based slavery continue to be felt in the US to this day, while successive waves of immigration have made the US one of the most ethnically diverse societies on earth. Taken together, this has shaped US politics in very important ways. We discuss this, paying particular attention to the growing importance of Latino voters in US political life.

Week Twelve: Social Policy and Welfare

McKay, Chapter 17

The United States has never had a developed welfare state in the way that Western Europe, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand have. The ideology of small government and individual self-reliance retain their overwhelming popular support, which therefore constitutes significant obstacles to the development of welfare initiatives by both federal and state governments. We here examine the politics of welfare in the United States.

Week Thirteen: US Politics in the Wake of the GFC

McKay, Chapter 18

The global financial crisis of 2008/09, whose effects continue to play themselves out today, represented something of a watershed in American economics and politics. It throws light on

many problematic features of US capitalism, and the political institutions that help sustain it. We here use the GFC as a way to help understand some of these issues surrounding US political-economy, before tying the thread of the overall course together in our conclusion.

Beyond the required and recommended reading, students will also find the following resources useful.

Useful Journals

- *Political Science Quarterly*
- *The Nation*
- *Presidential Studies Quarterly*
- *American Historical Review*
- *American Political Science Review*
- *American Journal of Political Science*
- *Diplomatic History*
- *Foreign Affairs*
- *Foreign Policy*
- *International Organization*
- *International Security*
- *International Studies Quarterly*
- *International Studies Review*
- *Journal of Cold War History*
- *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *Journal of Politics*
- *Millennium*
- *Security Studies*
- *Survival*
- *The National Interest*
- *World Politics*

Useful Websites

- <http://www.census.gov/>
- <http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>
- <http://www.electionstudies.org/>
- <http://international.nytimes.com/>
- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>
- <Http://meria.biu.ac.il/research-g/us-policy.html> [Internet Resources on American Foreign Policy]
- <www.gwu.edu/> [see link on 'national security archive']
- <www.opendemocracy.net>
- <www.zmag.org>
- <www.politics1.com>
- <www.americanpolitics.com>
- <www.americanempireproject.com>
- <www.newamericancentury.org>
- <www.datagold.com/empire-ip>
- <www.wilsoncenter.org>
- <www.bbc.co.uk>
- <www.brookings.edu>
- <www.politico.com>

Unit Schedule

Week	Date	Lecture	Tutorial	Assessment
1	29 Feb	Money, Culture, Power and US Exceptionalism	American exceptionalism, liberalism, capitalism, religion	None
2	7 March	The American Constitution, Federalism and Privilege	Republicanism, Federalism, Branches of Government, Separation of Church and State	None
3	14 March	Two Parties, One Culture?	Democratic and Republican Party: Why no Labor Party?	None
4	21 March	Money, Elections and Political Participation	Democracy, electoral system and campaign financing	None

5	28 March	The Media, Celebrity and US Politics	The Media as reflector or projector? Role of Celebrity	In class test, 28/03/2016
6	4 April	Congress and Lobbying	Congress as legislator and policy maker; divided government; role of lobbyists on Capitol Hill	None
7	25 April	ANZAC Day, no lecture	ANZAC Day, no lecture	None
8	2 May	The Supreme Court and Judicial Politics	Judicial politics and judicial activism; Brown versus Board of Educaiton; Roe Versus Wade	Majaor Essay due, Friday 6 May
9	9 May	Interest Groups	Domestic and foreign policy lobbies; political action committees; the national Rifle Association	None
10	16 May	The Religious Right and the Politics of Faith	A Protestant Nation? The Religious Right and Power; Regulating public and private morality	None
11	23 May	Race, Culture, Power	Police racial profiling; legacy of slavery and civil rights struggle; immigration and the rise of latino power	None
12	30 May	Social Policy and Welfare	The ideology of self-reliance and small government; the politics of social security; "welfare mothers"	None
13	6 June	US Politics in the Wake of the GFC	Global financial crisis; regulating Wall Street; the power of capital	None

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form
- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment tasks

- Assessment Two
- Assessment Three
- Assessment four

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- You will be able to articulate your knowledge of US politics in group discussions
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment task

- Assessment Two

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment tasks

- Assessment Two
- Assessment four

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form
- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment tasks

- Assessment One
- Assessment Two
- Assessment Three
- Assessment four

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form
- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will be able to articulate your knowledge of US politics in group discussions
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment tasks

- Assessment One
- Assessment Two
- Assessment Three
- Assessment four

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form
- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in

written and oral form

- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will be able to articulate your knowledge of US politics in group discussions
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment tasks

- Assessment One
- Assessment Two
- Assessment Three
- Assessment four

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- By the end of this unit you will be able to analyse and interpret primary and secondary US political sources and present the information in a written form
- You will be able to distinguish between competing interpretations of key US political issues, and succinctly express the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations in written and oral form
- You will be able to explain the main features of US political institutions such as the Constitution, Federalism, Congress and the Presidency
- You will be able to articulate your knowledge of US politics in group discussions
- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment tasks

- Assessment One
- Assessment Two
- Assessment Three
- Assessment four

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment task

- Assessment Two

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- You will understand the articulation between money, culture and power in US politics

Assessment task

- Assessment Two