



POL 392

United States Politics: Money, Culture, Power

S2 Day 2017

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	5
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	11
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	12
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	13

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General Information

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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

Co-badged with OUA unit POIX 392

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	Hurdle	Due
Assessment One	20%	Yes	Tuesday 22/08/2017
Assessment Two	40%	Yes	Tuesday 26/09/2017
Assessment Three	10%	Yes	All year
Assessment four	30%	Yes	Exam period TBA

Assessment One

Due: **Tuesday 22/08/2017**

Weighting: **20%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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: **Tuesday 26/09/2017**

Weighting: **40%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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 to last 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 two weekly one hour lectures, 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

Lecture Outlines and Required Reading (Please note, I have not included all readings here, nor all bibliographical details. Additional readings will be added as we proceed, which will be put on the ilearn site, and you can find all bibliographical details there)

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

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.

Readings: No required reading for this week

Week Two: The American Constitution, Federalism and Privilege

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.

Readings:

Stephen M. Griffin (2017) *Trump, Trust and the Future of the Constitutional Order*

Robert Dahl (2001) *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*

Week Three: Two Parties, One Culture?

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 will be particularly interested in the regularly expressed notion that, despite their differences, both parties ultimately represent the interests of corporate America. We end by exploring what the 2016 US Presidential election result might mean for both Republicans and Democrats.

Readings: Matthew C. MacWilliams (2017) *Who Decides When the Party Doesn't? Authoritarian Voters and the Rise of Trump*

Alan Ware (2016) *Donald Trump's Hijacking of the Republican Party in Historical Perspective*

Timothy Shenk (2017) *The Next Democratic Party*

Week Four: Money, Elections and Interest Groups

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?

Readings:

Thomas Stratmann (2017) *Campaign Finance: A Review and an Assessment of the State of the Literature*

Adam R. Brown (2013) *Does Money Buy Votes?*

Week Five: Congress and Lobbying

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 from the Trump Presidency to illustrate some of the key issues.

Reading:

Frank Baumgartner et al. (2014) *Money, Priorities and Stalemate: How Lobbying Affects Public Policy*.

Week Six: Political Emotions in the Age of Post truth Politics

In the first of two lectures by an international visiting scholar, we begin exploring the ways in which human emotions are collectivized and deployed for political purposes. We will be paying particular attention to the ways that emotions like fear, anger, humiliation, hate and love are used instrumentally by politicians to mobilize supporters, as Trump so successfully did in the Republican primaries and the subsequent Presidential election.

Reading: TBA

Week Seven: Political Emotions, Media and Celebrity in the Age of Trump

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 and social 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.

Reading: TBA

Week Eight: The Imperial Presidency?

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 an imperial Presidency and creeping fascism under Trump.

Reading:

Donald R. Wolfensberger (2002) *The Return of the Imperial Presidency?*

Jane Caplan (2017) *What the History of Fascism can tell us about Donald Trump's Rise*

Henry Giroux (2016) *Donald Trump and Neo-Fascism in America.*

Week Nine: The Religious Right and the Politics of Faith

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, and ask how their values can be reconciled with a Trump Presidency.

Reading:

Kimberly Conger (2010) *A Matter of Context: Christian Right Influence in US State Republican Parties*

Angelina R. Wilson (2012) *"Where Liberty Reigns and God is Supreme": The Christian Right and the Tea Party Movement*

Week Ten: Race, Culture, Power

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.

Reading:

Hana E. Brown (2010) *Racialized Conflict and Policy Spillover Effects: The Role of Race in the Contemporary U.S.*

Reanne Frank (2010) *Latino Immigrants and the US Racial Order: How and where do they Fit?*

Week Eleven: Race, Politics and the Criminal Justice System

Since the early 1970s, the politics of law and order has become a pervasive US preoccupation. This has been manifested in spiraling rates of incarceration, and a militarization of US policing. The weight of this shift has fallen disproportionately on African Americans. This week we examine why.

Reading:

Loic Wacquant (2014) *Class, Race and Hyperincarceration in Revanchist America*

Lisa L. Miller (2010) *The Invisible Black Victim: How American Federalism Perpetuates Racial Inequality in Criminal Justice*

Week Twelve: Social Policy and Welfare

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, linking it back to themes covered in the previous week.

Reading: TBA

Week Thirteen: US Politics in the Wake of the GFC

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.

Reading: TBA

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	1 August	Money, Culture, Power and US Exceptionalism	American exceptionalism, liberalism, capitalism, religion	None
2	8 August	The American Constitution, Federalism and Privilege	Republicanism, Federalism, Branches of Government, Separation of Church and State	None
3	15 Aug	Two Parties, One Culture?	Democratic and Republican Party, Changes under Trump	None
4	22 Aug	Money, Elections and Interest Groups	Democracy, electoral system and campaign financing	In class test
5	29 Aug	Congress and Lobbying	Congress as Legislator and Policy maker, divided government, Trump and Congress	None
6	5 Sept	Political Emotion in the Age of Post-Truth Politics	Emotions and Politics, post truth politics and fake news	None
7	12 Sept	Political Emotions, Media and Celebrity in the Age of Trump	Political emotions and celebrity, social media and politics	Major essay due 26 September

8	3 Oct	The Imperial Presidency?	The Executive and Congress, Trump and Creeping Fascism?	Major Essay due, 26 September
9	10 Oct	The Religious Right and the Politics of Faith	A Protestant Nation? The Religious Right and Power; Regulating public and private morality	None
10	17 Oct	Race, Culture, Power	Race and US History, growth of Latino power	None
11	24 Oct	Race, Politics and the Criminal Justice System	Police racial profiling, Mass incarceration, militarization of policing	None
12	31 Oct	Social Policy and Welfare	The ideology of self-reliance and small government; the politics of social security; "welfare mothers"	None
13	7 Nov	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

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.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 (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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