**PS201 Syllabus '19**

**Introduction to American Politics & Government**

***Instructor:***  ***Doug Clark******Office:***  SSH-206 (Main Campus)     ***Hours:***  Noon/1:00, T/R (or by appointment) ***Telephone:*** 541-990-1298  ***E-Mail:***  [clarkd@linnbenton.edu](mailto:doug.clark@linnbenton.edu) 

         "The American Revolution was the dramatic product of Enlightenment philosophy         and our Founders were Enlightenment disciples. The values they championed,         fought for, and died for were Enlightenment values."                    **Brian Kahn**

         "As a country, we have declined from an era of middle-class prosperity and         middle-class power from the 1940s to the 1970s to an era of vast fortunes and        mass economic insecurity....instead of a high-visibility, outside political power         game of mass movements and public participation, we now have a low-visibility,        inside power game dominated by the lobbyists for the American financial and political        elite......powerlessness breeds cynicism and passivism......no countervailing power        matches the political clout of business. Our democracy has become starkly unequal."                                                                                                                                                                     **Hedrick Smith**

**Purpose and Description of the Course:**

* This is a course about **politics:** the conflict and struggle among groups and individuals over how life chances and costs and benefits are distributed among us.
* This is a course about **American politics**:  the particular methods and values that shape how people engage in the struggle as a result of the historical circumstances of the development of the United States---its culture, society, and production system.
* This is a course about **government in the United States**:  the institutions, processes, and rules by which the political struggle is managed and won.
* And finally, this is a course about **ideology**: values, priorities and strategies---the stuff we argue over---the conflicting answers to questions such as "who should get what?" "how shall we decide?" "what should be our priorities?"

These topics are the usual stuff of a college course in US politics.  But these are not usual times, so we must particularly address the growing concern for the preservation and practice of our democracy. This is a time of deep division in our society.....division growing out of a dangerous economic inequality, the immobilization of governance in the face of political partisanship, and a hateful political culture shot through with identity politics. These characteristics of contemporary America lend themselves to an authoritarian politics expressed in impulses of resentment and revenge. Our country appears on the growing list of 'illiberal' democracies where empathy and compromise are replaced by misogyny, zenophobia, and nativism. Our purpose then must be to employ the spirit and tools of the Enlightenment in the manner of the Founders, and 'address the mess we've gotten ourselves into.'

          "I am loathe to close. We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies.  
         Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection...."                                                                                      ***Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural, 1861  
  
TEXT and READINGS:***                                                                                            
AMERICAN DIFFERENCE, 2nd edition, by Poloni-Staudinger & WolfGIVE US THE BALLOT, by Ari BermanAdditional readings are listed at the [Readings and Assignments](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=8383) link.

**News and Information:** Here in the current Orwellian age of news and fact corruption, I will recommend several reliable and useful sources for your regular visitation: [New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/) and [PBS Nightly Newshour](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/).   In addition, go ahead and let your curiosity run wild and consider a variety of **left** perspectives at [*Common Dreams,*](http://www.commondreams.org/)  and a variety of **right** perspectives at the [Red Flag List](http://www.redflagnews.com/top-100-conservative/). Remember! None of your sources are telling the whole story or have the truth. Reliable! Useful! Yes! Sources that help you listen in and participate in the discussions about the issues of our times. That's what we want.

         "The Puritans believed that the care for material goods should be worn like a cloak,          lightly. But, fate decreed that the cloak would become an iron cage."   **Max Weber**

**Methods of Instruction and Evaluation:** This is an introductory college class.  I do not assume that you have prior knowledge of the subject. I start with the assumption that you want to be a **free** individual in a **just** society and that you have an appetite for **knowledge** and insight into the culture and society that has shaped who you are to this point. A variety of methods will be used in our study: there will be occasional lectures but most of our class time will be taken up with discussions, seminars, and workshops.  This is a challenging course so missing a class meeting is extremely costly. Please plan on attending all class meetings and completing the assigned reading on time. Remember! This is not a correspondence course. You need to be in class, always.

**Grades** will be calculated as follows:  
  
**6** in-class Quizzes @ 15 points each =  90 points  
**4** [Reading/Writing Exercises](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=8228) @ 25 points each = 100 points  
**3** [Policy Papers](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=5600) @ 50 points each =  150 points  
Take-Home Final Exam = 35 points  
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375 possible points--------A = 90%, B = 80%, C = 70%, etc.

**Late Assignments:**  All of the written assignments are take-homes.They should be turned in on time.  I will not accept papers that are more than three (3) class meetings late.  Within this time-frame, late papers will lose 40% of their value.  Inquiries will not be accepted after their due date.  I will try to return on-time papers within two class meetings.  For late papers, I make no promises. If your attendance is good and your papers on time, you may re-write papers to improve your grade. There will be a number of opportunities to earn bonus points which may make up for points lost. Of course, there will be no penalty if you are late due to circumstances beyond your control.

           "There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow men--true             nobility is being superior to your former self."     **anonymous**

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Other pages in this section: [Best Commentary](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7133) | [Civil Rights Editorials](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2745) | [Coalitions/Interest Groups](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=3530) | [Congress](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6023) | [Economy](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4072) | [Edsall](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6824) | [Education Politics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6670) | [Environment/Storage](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7726) | [FIXES](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4762) | [Foreign Policy Issues](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7503) | [Global Order](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4746) | [Globalization Politics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6559) | [Guns](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4119) | [Health Politics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2369) | [Human Rights](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2744) | [Ideas and Propositions](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=3773) | [IDENTITIES](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2733) | [Immigration](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4070) | [Labor](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6151) | [Middle East](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4665) | [Nat/Pop Politics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=8382) | [Policy Papers](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=5600) | [Political Science and History Courses](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=16) | [POTUS/Trumpism](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6236) | [PS201 American Politics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6278) | [PS201 Democracy Challenged: Inequality](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6871) | [PS201 Democracy Challenged: The Gerrymander](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7639) | [PS201 Fixes Workshop](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=3948) | [PS201 Political Problem Discussions](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6924) | [PS201 Reading/Assignments 1](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=8383) | [PS201 Reading/Assignments 2](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=8312) | [PS201 State of the Nation](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7892) | [PS201, Inquiries](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=1985) | [PS204 Comparisons/Europe](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2727) | [PS204 Discussion Papers](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6434) | [PS204 Final Paper: Country Status Report](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6848) | [PS204 Research Dialogue #1](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7360) | [PS204 Research Dialogue #2](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=10283) | [PS205 Calendar/Readings/Assignments](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6757) | [PS205 International Relations](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2655) | [PS205 Resources](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=1182) | [PS205 Security Workshops](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4018) | [PS205 Syllabus 2017](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2658) | [PS205 Take Home Final](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6893) | [PS375 Policy Topics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7055) | [PS375 Video and Documents](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7069) | [PS375/Storage](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6268) | [PS375H Final Paper](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7720) | [PS375H Syllabus '19](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2035) | [PS375H, Civil Rights/Public Policies](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2579) | [PS375H, SCOTUS](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=7034) | [Public Policy Storage](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4047) | [Public/Private](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2933) | [Racial Politics](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6678) | [Reading/Writing (R/W)](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=8228) | [Resistance](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=3772) | [Storage: National Security](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=6867) | [Terrorism](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=3315) | [Theory/History of Ideas](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=5497) | [Video](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=1416) | [Vietnam at 50](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=2208) | [Voting and Elections](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=3896) | [WW I/Red Centenary](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/clarkd/web.cfm?pgID=4306)