

**Prof. Suzanne M. Robbins**

205 Anderson Hall

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Office Hours: W/F 11:45-2:15

**POS 4931-2A84**

Meets: MWF 1040-1130

Location: ZOOM (link on Canvas)

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*We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both. — Justice Louis Brandeis, 1941*

*There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money and I can't remember what the second one is. — Mark Hanna, ~1896*

*Politics has got so expensive that it takes lots of money to even get beat nowadays.—Will Rogers, 1931*

*Money is the mother's milk of politics. — Jesse Unruh, 1966*

*A restriction on the amount of money a person or a group can spend on political communication during a campaign necessarily reduces the quantity of expression by restricting the number of issues discussed, the depth of their exploration, and the size of the audience reached. — Buckley v. Valeo, 1976*

*On the other hand, when some candidates can shout and others only whisper, all depending on the size of their wallets, it offends the values of equal access and fair play we also prize in our democracy. — Paul Taylor, 2005*

*I'm against very wealthy people attempting to or influencing elections. But as long as it's doable I'm going to do it.— Sheldon Adelson, 2012*

*If the broad light of day could be let in upon men's actions, it would purify them as the sun disinfects.— Justice Louis Brandeis, 1891*

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# Money & Politics

## The University of Florida

### Fall 2020

### Course Overview

Harold Lasswell (1936) defined politics as “the struggle who gets what, when, and how.” He noted that the elites held power, in that they made decisions over the distribution of resources and the promotion of desired values. Traditionally, those with resources are part of that elite and those without them or without patronage do not hold power.

This course examines the role of money in U.S. politics, emphasizing the role of economic inequality in America and its effect on political equality. We will examine theories of inequality, apply them to American policy and politics and discuss the consequences for representative democracy.

It's an election year, so we will spend more time on electoral politics. Specifically, we will consider the role of money in American electoral politics, and the Supreme Court's key role in deciding what limits can be placed on campaign financing and what cannot. It also evaluates the political effects of U.S. campaign finance law, as constrained by the Court, in policy areas including incumbency

and competition, corruption, and political equality.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the relationship between political and economic inequality.
- Distinguish between myths and reality of money and politics.
- Distinguish between assumptions and evidence in evaluating arguments.
- Synthesize a diverse literature to make conclusions about money and politics.
- Understand the state of U.S. campaign finance law, as constrained by the Supreme Court, and laws' effect on politics and policies.
- Access and make use of empirical data relating to money and politics.
- Understand the obstacles to reform in the current political/economic current system.

### Reading

Reading before class is absolutely critical. I've chosen many of the readings/texts this semester to encourage discussion as well as inform. You'll read from a wide variety of sources, including academics, journalists, philosophers, and policy analysts. Many readings are not in the text, but can be found on Canvas.

The required texts are:

- Bartels, L.M. 2016. *Unequal Democracy, 2nd Edition*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- La Raja, R.J., and B.F. Schaffner. 2015. *Campaign Finance and Political Polarization*. University of Michigan Press.
- Brown, H. 2016. *Pay to Play Politics*. Praeger Press.
- Mutch, R.E. 2016. *Campaign Finance*. Oxford University Press.
- *We will read many, many, more essays and book chapters, all available via Canvas.*

### How to Succeed in this Class

**Go to class.** The class is organized as a advanced seminar. I will lecture, but we will talk more. Pay attention when I lecture and ask questions. Participate during workshops. You can't do well if you skip class.

Move beyond parroting talking points to using **critical thinking skills**. Ask yourself, “why,” “if this is true, what else must be true,” and “what is this an example of?” Think about implications and **make connections across the reading**.

**Read.** Read the books, articles, and major newspapers. You'll be able to follow the material more easily, participate meaningfully, and learn more.

**Complete** all the assignments on time and don't miss exams.

**Due to privacy concerns, Zoom sessions are NOT recorded.**

## Schedule

### Topics/Reading Plan

For specific readings, please visit the appropriate module in Canvas.

<b>MODULE 1</b> 8/31	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>MODULE 2</b> 9/2– 10/2	<b>Inequality and Politics</b> Defining/Describing Theories/Causes Effects & Implications
<b>MODULE 3</b> 9/23 - 11/13	<b>Money and Elections</b> Campaign Fin. History & Law Spending & Elections Elections 2020 Campaign Finance & Florida
<b>MODULE 4</b> 11/16 - 11/23	<b>Money and Policy</b> Lobbying Budgeting (in brief) Fiscal Policy
<b>MODULE 5</b> 11/30- 12/9	<b>Reform &amp; Consequences</b>

### Writing Assignments

Oct. 6	Essay 1 (Inequality)
Nov. 16	Essay 2 (Campaign Finance)
Dec. 2	Essay 3 (Lobbying/Policy)

Dec. 9 Comparative Paper

### Final Exam

Dec. 18 Final Exam (730-930 am)



## How Students are Evaluated and Graded

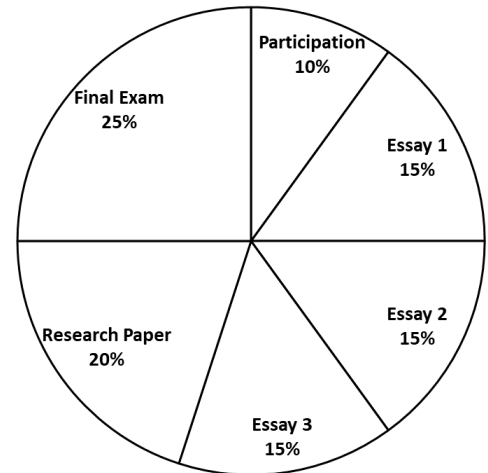
**Exam:** You will take one comprehensive final exam during the final exam period assessing your mastery of the course readings, lectures, and discussions. The essay question(s) will require critical analysis and synthesis. (25%).

**Short Essays:** Three short essays have been designed to help you draw connections across the literature within a module. Specific instructions for each essay will be posted in Canvas. (15% each)

**Participation/Attendance:** Read the assigned readings before class – this is absolutely critical to your success. Raise questions about what you do not understand, question assumptions, demonstrate a firm grasp of the material. Everyone will also self-evaluate their participation twice during the semester. *You must attend class to participate.* (10%)

**Comparative Analysis Paper:** Each student will write a comparative research paper (15-20 pages) on state level campaign finance rules (more on Canvas). (20%)

*More details assignments & grading are on Canvas.*



A	94.0%	C	73.0%
A-	90.0%	C	70.0%
B+	87.0%	D+	67.0%
B	83.0%	D	63.0%
B-	80.0%	D-	60%
C+	77.0%		

Note that 86.97% is less than 87.0%, and is therefore a "B". I only round the final course grade, and only to the nearest 10th.

*Have a question? More information is on Canvas!*

## Policies and Other Requirements (full fine print on Canvas)

- **Office hours:** To protect your federally-protected privacy rights, I cannot discuss your grade(s) over the phone, or in front of class/ZOOM. Please stop by my ZOOM office hours. If you must email, email from within the Canvas system or from your UFL email account.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is required. Excessive absences could result in a failing grade. The Undergraduate Catalog Regulations found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences>.
- **Make up Work:** Late essays and papers will be penalized 5% per day. Makeup exams will be offered only in documented emergencies. You must notify me in writing in advance or within 24 hours of the exam. Makeup exams must be completed within one week of the original.
- **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu> at semester's end.
- **Disability Services:** Please give me your accommodation letter in the first two weeks of the semester. For more information contact DRC at 352-392-8565, or <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.
- **Plagiarism/Cheating:** NOT tolerated. If you are caught, you will fail that assignment.
- *This class is taught synchronously (live) via zoom as if we were in Anderson Hall. Be in class, prepared as if that were the case. Now that we are "online", there are more university policies than I can fit here. More information regarding course policies are on Canvas. General undergraduate policies are in the Student Catalog: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/Pages/academic-regulations.aspx>.*