

The Politics of Scandal Fall, 2005

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Course Description: The basic structure of the course will be to discuss political scandals from a variety of perspectives and then consider specific scandals through the lens of the previous week's discussion. Since scandals can play a major role in the evolution of both the government and the governed, we will look at these scandals from the perspectives of the politicians, the citizens, history, and the impact of the scandals on democratic governance.

The structure of the course will be to consider the broader theoretical perspective initially and then examine a particular event using that perspective. These perspectives will encompass differing aspect of the social sciences, including sociology, history, and two different paradigms in political science, institutional and behavioral. It is through these lenses that the class will gain a deeper understanding not just of the impact of scandal but of the nature of political science and how political science inter-relates to other disciplines.

Readings:

We will use three books in the course as well as readings on reserve in the library. The overall reading load will be approximately 100 pages per week, although that will vary somewhat depending on the topic at hand.

Olson (2003). *Watergate: The Presidential Scandal That Shook America*.

Schultz (1999) *Presidential Scandals*.

Sabato, Stencel, & Lichter (2001). *Peepshow: Media and Politics in an Age of Scandal*.

E-mail: I use e-mail regularly to contact my classes, so you need to get into the habit of checking yours. You will receive reminders about exam dates, assignments, and other information I believe will be of value to you. I will also post assignments on my web pages on occasion. When I do so, I will inform you by e-mail. You cannot receive e-mail from me unless you are registered for the class, so please verify your registration status in the course.

Course Requirements: There are a wide variety of assignments in the course. The variety is intended to provide you with several opportunities to demonstrate your skills. The assignments are as follows:

Assignments	Percentage
Research Paper	40%
Class Participation	20%
Writing Assignments	30%
Class Presentation	10%

The Research Paper: The research project will be the culmination of your work in the course. It should be at least 10 pages long typed with a complete bibliography. The paper assignment is to examine, in detail, a political scandal of your choosing. It can be a national scandal or a local one. The paper must consider the scandal through the four perspectives we will use, social, institutional, historical, and political. The paper will be assessed based on overall writing competency, appropriateness of the topic, and the ability to apply the theoretical perspectives to the case effectively.

Writing Assignments: For three of the four scandals we will examine in detail, you will be asked to write a short (2-3 page) paper responding to one of a set of questions to be handed out in class. You can choose which three scandals on which you want to write. Each reaction paper will count for 10% of your grade and will be evaluated based on overall ability to understand and synthesize the impact of the scandal within the framework of the course.

Class Discussion: Class discussion is critical for the success of the course. While some class periods will be lecture-based, at least 50% of the course time will be spent in discussion of the various issues at hand as well as connecting the current topic to others and to current events. It is critically important that all students come to class prepared to discuss the readings for each meeting.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class, but no formal attendance will be taken. Be warned, however, that failure to attend will impact your grade. In addition, a substantial portion of the exams will be based on material covered ONLY in the classroom. Consistent failure to attend will lower your grade dramatically. You are responsible for ALL information covered in lecture, including changes in the reading assignments, changes in test dates, and in-class homework assignments.

Students With Disabilities: Any student who has a disability that will in any way impede his or her completion of the course needs to speak to the instructor as soon as possible about alternative arrangements. All possible arrangements will be made to accommodate students in need of assistance.

Cheating and Plagiarism: These are serious offenses, and any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be punished to the fullest extent of the university code. This should seem obvious, but it must be made clear. Cheating is defined as attempting to improve your grade through any method considered unethical by the university, including copying another student's test, bringing crib sheets for exams, writing notes on your hands or on the brim of your baseball cap, etc.

Plagiarism is defined as claiming any other author's intellectual work as your own. This can include copying parts of another written work and not giving the original author credit for it; using summaries of work written by others and claiming it as your own, etc. Plagiarism is NOT limited to copying another author's work word-for-word. If you use the author's IDEAS without giving the author credit for them, you are just as guilty as if you had Xeroxed the statements and put yourself down as author.

STANDARDS FOR GRADING

Geoff Peterson

A: designates work of extra-ordinarily high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; arguments are clearly organized with supporting ideas.

B: designates work of high quality; reflects a clearly organized but less than comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; presents organized arguments that are supported by ideas.

C: Designates work which meets the minimal requirements of the assignment; written work reflects adequate organization and development of ideas, but arguments are communicated in a superficial or simplistic manner.

D: Designates work of poor quality which meets the minimum requirements of the assignment, but demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that the student has not read assignments thoroughly.

F: Designates work of poor quality that does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment or task; fails to reflect an understanding of the issues at hand; fails to present organized arguments or fails to adequately support arguments with ideas; or which is not handed in on time.

Topical Calendar

OL--Olson

SC--Schultz

SLS--Sabato, Stencel, & Lichter

R--Reserve

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Defining Political Scandal	SLS Ch. 1, S Ch. 1, R-Garment Intro, Markovits Intro
Week 2	How Scandals Can Change Society	SLS Ch. 2-3
Week 3-4	Case Study: Clinton Scandals	SC pp. 430-458, SLS 4-5
Week 5	The Impact on Democracy	R-Andolina: Public Opinion The Paradox of Clinton
Week 5-6	Case Study: The Profumo Affair (Film: Scandal)	R-Gastner: Sex, Spies and Scandal
Week 7	The Impact on Voters	OL ch. 1-4, SC pp. 369-384
Week 8-9	Case Study: Watergate (Film: All the President's Men)	OL ch. 5-9
Week 10	Scandals and 20/20 Hindsight	SC pp. 250-269
Week 11-12	Case Study: Teapot Dome	SC pp. 271-282, http://www.brook.edu/gs/ic/teapotdome/teapotdome.htm
Week 13	Why Do We Care?	SLS ch. 6, R-TBA
Week 14-15	Presentations of Case Studies	