**Political Science 329 Syllabus**

**Seminar in American Politics: Democracy’s Challenges and Rebirth**

**Professor Dick Simpson -- Spring 2022**

This course seeks to study the problems facing American Democracy today at both the national and local level. It considers empirical evidence of the actual situation and the current practices.

We will read and discuss a wide variety of materials structured around the chapters of my new book **Democracy’s Rebirth: The View from Chicago** to be published by the University of Illinois Press in March 2022. Those chapters will be made available on the course Black Board site.

For the course, we will read and discuss 6 books including the **Democracy’s Rebirth** manuscript. This is a senior seminar with a writing the discipline requirement.

Students will be assigned to report in class on different books to begin each week’s discussion and will write their papers on topics covered in the chapters from **Democracy’s Rebirth** or similar challenges at the local or national level.

Books for the course are available at the UIC Bookstore.

My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday at 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. or by appointment. Class meetings and

**Week Topic Readings**

1/11 – 1/13 What is representative democracy? **Democracy’s Rebirth,** Foreword, The rise and fall of democracy Chapters 1 & 2

1/18-1/20 The Trump Presidency and the **Divided We Stand**, Chapters 1-3. 2020 Election

1/25-1/27 The 2020 Election and Its Meaning **Divided We Stand**, Chapters 4-5

2/1-2/3 Keeping the Republic **Divided We Stand**, Chapter 6

2/8-2/10 Racial and Income Inequality Stephen Caliendo, **Inequality in America** (Introduction – Chapter 4)

**Democracy’s Rebirth**, Chapter 3

2/15-2-17 Inequality in Different Areas of Life Caliendo, Chapters 5-9

2/22-2/24 Elite Effect on Public Policy Page and Gilens, **Democracy in**

**America?** pp. 1-180

**3/1 Midterm Exam**

**3/3** Elite Influence (continued) Page and Gilens, pp. 181-269

Instructions for Research Paper

3/8-3/10 Money in Campaigns **Democracy’s Rebirth**, Chapter 4

3/15- 3/37 Nonparticipation and Polarization **Democracy’s Rebirth**, Chapter 5 & 6

3/21-3/25 Spring Break

3/29 -3/31 Corruption in Illinois **Gradel and Simpson, Corrupt Illinois**

(Chapters 1-5)

4/5–4/7Ending Corruption **Gradel and Simpson, Corrupt Illinois**

(Chapters 6-11)

**Democracy’s Rebirth,** Chapter 7

4/12-4/14 Institutional Corruption Lawrence, **America, Compromised**

(all)

4/29-4/21 Structural Problems and Crises Simpson manuscript, Chapters 8 & 9

4/26-4/28 Deliberative Democracy Simpson manuscript, Chapter 10 & 11

Grades for the course will be partially determined by the Mid-Term essay exam which will consist of five questions to be answered by short paragraph essays. It will count for 25% of your grade There will be no final exam. Your grade will primarily depend upon a research paper which will be 20-25 pages in length. Each paper will focus on a challenge to American democracy. It will be an original essay. Instructions for the paper will be provided in the 4th week of class. You will pick a topic and turn in a paper outline by the 6th week.

You will do a first draft of the paper due the 10th week of class and will turn in a final draft by Monday of Final Week on May 2.