**POLS409**: **CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POLITICS** (3.00 Credits)

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Çiçekdağ



This course will deal with the contemporary American domestic and foreign politics. It will examine the US economic policy, domestic policy, health policy, technology, energy policy, globalization, foreign policy objectives and provide relevant case studies.

Students will be given opportunities to follow the US local politics of their choice and track the political activities of a member of the US Congress and write and present a term paper of their choice on American politics (in lieu of the midterm) and take a final examination.

Students are expected to read the assigned articles in advance, take quizzes, discuss key points in class and articulate additional ideas. Reading assignments are one article per weekday and two articles over the weekend.

At the end of the course there will be a mock US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations meeting. Students will put themselves in the shoes of US senators, discuss pros and cons of an important bill and vote on it.

Student Requirements:

* Grade breakdown:

Final : 30%

Term paper: 30%

Quizzes: 20%

Attendance, Class Contribution and US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Meeting Performance: 20%

* Track a US politician: [www.govtrack.org](http://www.govtrack.org)
* Read assignments before class
* Keep up with news from US
* Present paper

Term Paper:

* Pick a current controversial political topic in USA
* Importance, background, relevant court cases, at least two points of view, your politician’s view, your own view
* Examples:

Gun control, Health Care, Terrorism

Abortion, GLBTQ Rights, Euthanasia

Affirmative Action, Women’s rights, Marijuana

Tax policy, Energy, Campaign Reform

Immigration, Environment, Area Studies

* Present in class

Week 1 (July 16)

Pop Quiz (How much do you know about America?)

Lessons From the Past:

Meg Jacobs, “*Desperate Times, Desperate Measures, The Lessons of the New Deal*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

John A. Lawrence, “*Cleaning House, Watergate and the Limits of Reform*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Week 2 (July 19)

Walter Russell Mead, “*The End of the Wilsonian Era, Why Liberal Internationalism Failed*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Post-Trump Politics:

Oren Cass, “*A New Conservatism, Freeing the Right from Free Market Orthodoxy*”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Holiday Readings:

Fareed Zakaria, “*The Self-Destruction of American Power*”, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2019.

Timothy Snyder, “The American *Abyss*”, New York Times, Jan. 9, 2021.

Katherine M. Gehl and Michael E. Porter, “*Fixing US Politics, What Business Can -and Must Do to Revitalize Democracy*”, Harvard Business Review, July/August 2020.

Week 3 (July 26, 28, 30)

Post-Trump Politics:

Jonathan Kirshner, “*Gone Not Forgotten, Trump’s Long Shadow and the End of American Credibility*”, March/April 2021.

Pippa Norris, “*Voters Against Democracy, The Roots of Autocratic Resurgence*”, May/June 2021.

Jessica T. Mathews, “*Present at the Re-creation? US Foreign Policy Must Be Remade, Not Restored*”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Samantha Power, “*The Can-Do Power, America’s Advantage and Biden’s Chance*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Week 4 (August 2, 4, 6)

The Home Front and Foreign Policy:

Reuben E. Brigety II, “*The Fractured Power, How to Overcome Tribalism*”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, “*The Home Front, Why an Internationalist Foreign Policy Needs a Stronger Domestic Foundation*”, Foreign Affairs, May7June 2021.

Health Policy

Ashish Jha, “*System Failure, America Needs a Global Health Policy for the Pandemic Age*”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Week 5 (August 9, 11, 13)

Economic Policy

Zephyr Teachout, “*Monopoly Versus Democracy, How to End a Gilded Age*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Shannon K. O’Neil, “*Protection Without Protectionism, Getting Industrial Policy Right*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Jason Furman, “*The Crisis Opportunity, What It Will Take to Build Back a Better Economy*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Adam S. Posen, “*The Price of Nostalgia, America’s Self-Defeating Economic Retreat*”, Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021.

Week 6 (August 16, 18, 20)

James H. Stock, “*The Rate Debate, Rethinking Economics in the Age of Cheap Money*”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Technology

Francis Fukuyama, Barak Richman and Ashish Goel, “*How to Save Democracy From Technology, Ending Big Tech’s Information Monopoly*”, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2021.

Christopher Darby and Sarah Seawall, “*The Innovation Wars, America’s Eroding Technological Advantage*”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

US Military

Michéle A. Flournoy, “America’s Military Risks Losing Its Edge, How to Transform the Pentagon for a Competitive Era”, Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021.

Week 7 (August 23, 25, 27)

US Military

Risa Brooks, Jim Golby and Heidi Urben, “Crisis of Command, America’s Broken Civil-Military Relationship Imperils National Security”, Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021.

America’s Global Role

Robert Kagan, “A Superpower, Like It or Not, Why Americans Must Accept Their Global Role”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Gideon Rose, “Foreign Policy for Pragmatists, How Biden Can Learn From History in Real Time”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Promoting Democracy or Gunboat Diplomacy

Yascha Mounk, “Democracy on the Defense, Turning Back the Authoritarian Tide”, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021.

Week 8 (August 30, September 1, 3)

Globalization

Harold James, “Globalization’s Coming Golden Age, Why Crisis Ends in Connection”, Foreign Affairs, May/June 2021.

China Policy

Kevin Rudd, “Short of War, How to Keep US-Chinese Confrontation From Ending in Calamity”, Foreign Affairs”, March/April 2021.

US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Meeting (TBA)

Final Exam TBA