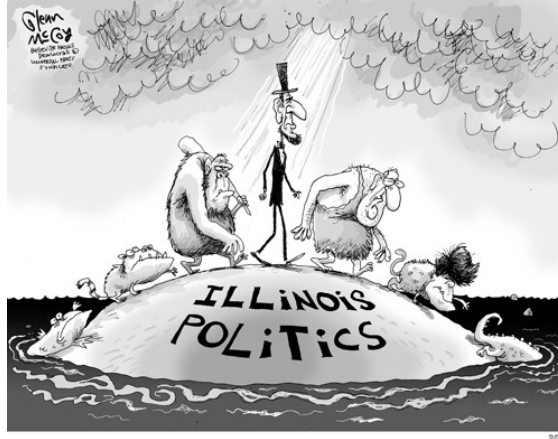


Illinois State Politics: The Ridiculous and the Sublime
POLS 202
Spring 2022

SYLLABUS



Instructor: Chris Mooney
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Course Description

In January 2020, Illinois politics and government had been in a 20-year spiral—downward. Budget deficits as far as the eye could see, archaic tax structure, regional disputes, Madigan vs. Rauner, four of our last nine governors having served time in the Federal penitentiary, state debt at almost junk bond status, prisons overflowing, veterans dying in the state facilities, political campaigns awash with money and negativity, etc. And as a result, some folks argued that people and businesses were fleeing the state for greener pastures. It was just a ball of confusion.

And then came the COVID pandemic. Furthermore, in what is perhaps more important to Illinois politics, the historically long-serving Illinois State House Speaker Michael Madigan resigned. Plus, in 2021, legislative redistricting once again shook up the political landscape in the state, as it does every decade.

What is the state of Illinois government and politics today? Are we still the economic engine of Midwest, or just the weak sister? How has the state’s response to the pandemic been influenced by our politics, and how has it shaped those politics? What are the implications for

Illinois of the state's changing demographics revealed in the 2020 census? How has a new generation of state leaders performed during this stressful period?

These are some of the questions that we will explore this semester. Some of Illinois's problems are common among the states, and some are unique to Illinois. Some are due to large cultural and economic factors, and some are due to the idiosyncrasies of the individuals involved in the process. Some we will be able to understand pretty clearly, and some are just a mess.

This semester, we will undertake a critical analysis of the various institutions and players in Illinois politics and government. To provide an opportunity for a sophisticated understanding of this complex problem, we will pursue three lines of attack:

- What does political science have to say about this? We will examine political science theory and research on each topic to help us understand the broader meaning.
- What do other states do? How are other states' politics and government the same as, or different from, Illinois? Taking a comparative approach on many of these topics suggests where Illinois could make some improvements, and perhaps how.
- What are the historical trends? Are things getting worse or better? Can this give us clues about the causes of our problems or how to fix them? This historical approach, like the comparative and political science approaches, allows us to put our current situation into a context that allows for better understanding.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Describe various political and policy problems that Illinois is currently facing.
- Explain some of the reasons for the existence of these problems.
- Discuss and assess critically the quality of advocates' various suggestions about how to "fix" Illinois.
- Analyze a political argument regarding institutional change in Illinois government by assessing its strengths and weaknesses, developing an alternative point(s) of view, and supporting your conclusion regarding that argument.
- Evaluate news media content in a critical and sophisticated manner.
- Understand Illinois government and politics well enough to remain current through the media going forward.
- Analyze and explain the behavior of an Illinois state legislator.

Class Format

Class sessions will consist of a mix of me lecturing, class discussion, and guest lecturers. In order to get the most out of each class and the course as a whole, you should:

1. Read and view (in the case of videos) the assigned materials before class,
2. Attend class ready to engage the material,
3. Participate in classroom discussions, and
4. Read the assigned materials again after class.

Course Readings and Resources

You need to read the assigned material BEFORE COMING TO CLASS. This will help you immensely in the course. The main textbooks for this course are:

- Nowlan, James D., Samuel K. Gove, and Richard J. Winkel, Jr. 2010. *Illinois Politics: A Citizen's Guide*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Nowlan, James D., and J. Thomas Johnson. 2014. *Fixing Illinois: Politics and Policy in the Prairie State*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Long, Ray. 2022. *The House That Madigan Built: The Record Run of Illinois's Velvet Hammer*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

In addition, you MAY find it helpful to read the appropriate chapters in the following book as the semester progresses:

- Donovan, Todd, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney. 2014. *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform*, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Cengage. (earlier editions are fine)

The Nowlan et al. books and the Donovan et al. book can be purchased used for a very reasonable price, either on Amazon or at the UIC bookstore. I priced out the three of them on Amazon on December 19, and the total cost was \$17.59 (before shipping and buying the 3rd edition of Donovan et al.) The Ray Long book on Madigan is still pending release. Ray is working on getting us access to that in advance—and he is due to speak to the class about Madigan on February 21 (approximately). Stay tuned.

We will read approximately 1-2 chapters per week from the two Nowlan books, along with various news articles, etc., as assigned, which will be posted on the class' Blackboard site.

Also, there will be a couple of videos that you need to view BEFORE CLASS. The syllabus and Blackboard have the links to these during the weeks they are assigned.

In addition to reading these textbooks, you should get into the habit of reading the news on Illinois state government daily. Here are some good sources:

- Three newspapers that do a pretty good job of tracking state government news are:
 - State Journal-Register (<http://www.sj-r.com/>): Springfield's SJ-R has the best overall newspaper coverage of state government in the state—Springfield is a company town.
 - Chicago Tribune (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/>): The Tribune does a good job, but it will have fewer Illinois state government stories overall. It has recently been bought by yet another venture capitalist, so quality will continue to decrease.
 - Chicago Sun-Times (<https://chicago.suntimes.com/>): The Sun-Times has always been a bit of a mess, and it is trying to figure out a way forward by hooking up with WBEZ-FM. They still have some good journalism.
- Illinois Public Radio (www.nprillinois.org): IPR is based out of WUIS-FM in Springfield, where it is the local NPR station. They have two full-time statehouse reporters and feed state government stories to all NPR stations around the state. In

particular, listen to “State Week in Review” (Fridays 6:30-7:00pm, Saturdays 6:30-7:00am, and via podcast) for in-depth commentary and analysis by statehouse reporters.

- Capitol Fax (<http://thecapitolfaxblog.com/>) is a long-standing blog and top-notch portal for other Illinois state government and politics news and commentary. Very up-to-date and detailed; mostly focused on the governor, the General Assembly, and elections, and it is very insider-oriented.

Guest lecturers:

Throughout the semester, we will have several guest lecturers speak about their areas of expertise on Illinois politics. I do this to try to bring some of the theoretical discussion to life—and to help you get to know some of the people in the know. Take advantage...

Three important points to remember on these speakers:

- First, these speakers’ information will be incorporated closely into the course and the evaluation materials. For example, pop quizzes will focus on these speakers, as well as the text and the news. Thus, make sure that you attend these talks.
- Second, these speakers are expending considerable time and effort to help you out, so a) definitely attend these events, b) be respectful of these speakers at all times, even if you disagree with and/or challenge them (which is excellent to do, but respectfully), and c) engage with the speaker—in particular, you should ask questions in class of them.
- Finally, these speakers are very busy, often with hectic and changing schedules. This means that a) I won’t be able to schedule them more than a couple of weeks in advance in most cases (so they are not on the syllabus), b) they may not be able to come to class on the day that is perfect for our topic schedule, and c) they may occasionally cancel at the last minute. All this is to say that we need to be patient with these folks who are volunteering their time.

Graded Assignments

You will complete a variety of graded work for this course. I evaluate students in various ways both to facilitate learning and to provide a fair and valid assessment of each student’s performance in the course. Here are the activities on which you will be graded, along with the proportion of the final course grade for which each assignment accounts:

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|--|-------------|
| ● Attendance and participation | 10% |
| ● Unannounced pop quizzes (approximately 10, randomly given) | 15% |
| ● Research paper | |
| ○ Short assignments (eight weekly, January 26-March 30) | 15% |
| ○ Final paper (due April 20) | 25% |
| ● Mid-term exam (March 2) | 15% |
| ● Final exam (TBA) | 20% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

Attendance and informed participation (10% of the final course grade): To get the most out of this course, you should attend class every Monday and Wednesday and participate in our

discussions. Your participation should be informed by your reading/viewing of the assigned course material, including the news media.

Unannounced pop quizzes (15% of the final course grade): Approximately 10 times during the semester, we will start class with an unannounced, very short (3-5 questions) quiz. These quizzes will focus on three aspects of the course: the assigned readings, our guest speakers, and current Illinois political news. These multiple choice quizzes will be relatively easy IF YOU READ THE ASSIGNED MATERIAL BEFORE CLASS, KEEP UP-TO-DATE ON ILLINOIS POLITICS NEWS, AND HAVE ATTENDED THE RELEVANT GUEST LECTURES. No make-up quizzes will be allowed if you miss class, but I will throw out your two lowest scores on these when calculating your overall quiz score, in case you miss class unavoidably.

Weekly Short Assignments (15% of the final course grade): From January 26 to March 30, you will turn in a short assignment each week (see handout). These assignments are focused on gathering information for your final research paper.

Research Paper (25% of the final course grade): This paper will be a unique analysis of the activities and district of a current member of the Illinois General Assembly (see handout). Maximum of 10 pages of text, double-spaced, 12-point font.

Mid-term (15% of the final course grade) and final (20% of the final course grade) exams: These in-class exams will cover both the readings and the material presented in class. They will consist of short answer and essay questions.

General Course Policies

Here are some general policies regarding this class.

Feedback and Grading Papers

My general practice is to hand back your papers and exams by one week after they are turned in to me. Submit your written work to me in a Word file via email for quickest response.

Social Justice Statement

UIC is committed to social justice. I heartily share this commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. In particular, we will engage with some pretty controversial material from time to time, so we all need to be professional. In discussion, critique ideas, not people. Any suggestions as to how to enhance such an environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Accommodating People with Disabilities

UIC and I are committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, you should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) who will provide instructions for me. Please do this as early in the semester as possible for maximum accommodation. Contact DRC at (312) 413-2183 (voice) or (312) 413- 0123 (TDD) for further information.

Academic Integrity

UIC and I are dedicated to learning and research, and hence we are committed to truth and accuracy. Integrity and intellectual honesty in scholarship and scientific investigation are, therefore, of paramount importance. These standards require intellectual honesty in conducting research, writing up research results, and relations with colleagues. UIC has specific definitions of misconduct (such as plagiarism, falsification of data, etc.), procedures used for investigation of charges, and the consequences of that conduct. Students are governed by the Student Disciplinary Policy (<https://dos.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/262/2018/10/DOS-Student-Disciplinary-Policy-2018-2019-FINAL.pdf>). **I strongly encourage you to read pp.11-12 of that Policy for more specific information about academic integrity.**

Course Schedule

NOTE: “NGW” refers to the main text: Nowlan, Gove, and Winkel, *Illinois Politics*. “NJ” refers to Nowlan and Johnson, *Fixing Illinois* (both are described above). Other assigned readings and videos can be retrieved from the class’s Blackboard site.

NOTE ALSO: I may add a few more short readings and websites throughout the semester. If so, they will be posted on the class’ Blackboard site, and I’ll mention them in class.

NOTE AGAIN: I will be scheduling some speakers who will have tight schedules, so there will likely be some juggling of the schedule throughout the semester. I will keep you fully abreast of any such changes in class and via email.

Week 1 (January 10-12): Illinois Politics and Government—WTF?

Readings:

- Daniel C. Vock. 2018. “Who Ruined Illinois?” *Governing* (May).
- NGW, chapter 1

NO CLASS: JANUARY 17 (MLK Day)

Week 2 (January 19): Background: Culture, History, and Economics

Readings:

- NJ, chapter 1
- Dampier, Cindy. 2019. “Meet the People Working to Kick Chicago out of Illinois.” *Chicago Tribune* (August 1).
- McClelland, Edward. 2021. “Illinois Suburbs Are Leading the Democratic Agenda.” *Chicago Magazine* (September 17).
- McClelland, Edward. 2018. “How Donald Trump and Chuy Garcia Broke the Chicago Machine,” *Politico* (June 17).

- Reyes, Cecelia, and Goeff Hing. 2016. "Election Analysis: On the Edge of Illinois' Urban-Rural Divide." *Chicago Tribune* (November 17).

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: JANUARY 26**

Week 3 (January 24-26): Political Participation and Parties

Readings:

- Krol, Eric. 2021. "Future of the Democratic Party in Illinois: Internal Bickering, Keeping, Keeping Grasp on Power." *Center for Illinois Politics* (October 17).
- Krol, Eric. 2021. "Future of the Illinois Republican Party: Many Challenges, a Bit of Hope." *Center for Illinois Politics* (September 12).
- NGW, pp. 24-31

Video:

- <https://www.cityclub-chicago.org/video/1298/the-future-of-the-republican-party-in-illinois>

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: FEBRUARY 2**

Week 4 (January 31-February 2): Interest Groups and Lobbying

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 32-36
- Rigney, Brendan. 2020. "Illinois' Lobbying Rules: Among the Loosest in the Nation?" *Center for Illinois Politics* (January 19).
- Horta, Wagner Acerbi, and Brendan Rigney. 2019. "Turning the Lights on: ComEd's Lobbying, and Spending Practices in Recent Decades." *Center for Illinois Politics* (November 10).
- Illinois Secretary of State, Index Department, "State Lobbyist List" (just skim and peruse—don't read the whole thing)
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce, "101st General Assembly, 2019-2020 Ratings"
- American Conservative Union, "2020 Illinois General Assembly members' ratings"

Recommended:

- Mooney, Christopher Z., and Barbara Van Dyke-Brown. 2003. *Lobbying Illinois*. (Springfield, IL: IPA).

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE: FEBRUARY 9**

Week 5 (February 7-9): Elections

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 3
- Moore, Brenden. 2021. "What an Illinois Redistricting Expert Thinks of the Democrat's New Map." *The (Bloomington) Pantagraph* (September 8).

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE: FEBRUARY 16**

Week 6 (February 14-16): The Illinois General Assembly as an Institution

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 5
- NJ, pp.132-134
- McKinney, Dave. 2017. "The Man Behind the Fiscal Fiasco in Illinois." Reuter (February 8).

Video: http://iga.in.gov/information/archives/2017/video/committee_education_0400/ (SELECT THE HEARING FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 8:30AM) from the drop down menu entitled "Search for a meeting..." This is an Indiana legislative hearing, but the ILGA doesn't video tape its committee hearings.

Recommended:

- Pensoneau, Taylor. 2006. *Powerhouse: Arrington from Illinois*. (Baltimore, MD: Heritage Special Edition), pp. 161-346.

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE: FEBRUARY 23**

Week 7 (February 21-23): Being a State Legislator

Readings:

- NGW, pp. 90-92; 105-107.
- Long, Ray. 2022. *The House That Madigan Built: The Record Run of Illinois's Velvet Hammer*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. (read the first chapter before class, at least)
- Petrella, Dan, Ray Long, and Jamie Munks. 2019. "Report Finds Bullying and Fear Pervasive in State Capitol under House Speaker Michael Madigan, Who Takes Responsibility 'For Not Doing Enough'." *Chicago Tribune* (August 20)

Recommended:

- Hickey, Margaret A. 2019. "Illinois House of Representatives, Office of the Speaker: Investigations, Analysis & Recommendations Regarding Workplace Culture." Schiff Hardin LLP (August).
- Lester, Kerry. 2018. *No, My Place*.

Week 8 (February 28-March 2): Legislative Life and Redistricting

Readings:

- TBA

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #6 DUE: MARCH 9**

Week 9 (March 7-9): Midterm exam and review

- March 7—midterm exam review and ILGA wrap up
- March 9— MIDTERM EXAM

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #7 DUE: MARCH 16**

Week 10 (March 14-16): The Governorship (part 1)

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 6
- Mooney, Christopher Z. 2018. “Superrich Rookie Candidates: Are the Superrich Really Different from You and Me?” *Crain’s Chicago Business* (August)
- Read about Illinois’ statewide constitutional officers on this website (follow the links for the individual officers’ websites): <https://www.illinois.gov/government/executive-branch.html> .

NO CLASS: March 21-23 (spring break)

*****SHORT ASSIGNMENT #8 DUE: MARCH 30**

Week 11 (March 28-30): The Governorship (part 2)

Readings:

- **TBA**
- Sun-Times Staff. 2018. “Pritzker Won More Votes Than Any Gov Candidate since ‘Big Jim’ Thompson in 1976.” *Chicago Sun-Times*. (December 5)

Week 12 (April 4-6): The Bureaucracy

Readings:

- NGW, pp.122-125, 134-138
- NJ, pp.117-124
- Geiger, Kim. 2018. “U.S. Supreme Court Gives Rauner Major Victory over Labor, in Ruling That Could Undercut Public Worker Unions Nationwide.” *Chicago Tribune* (June 27)
- Semuels, Alana. 2018. “Is This the End of Public-Sector Unions in America?” *The Atlantic* (June 27).

Week 13 (April 11-13): The Courts

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 7
- Merrion, Paul. 2014. “Pension Reform Dealt Blow by Illinois Supreme Court.” *Crain’s Chicago Business* (July 2).

Video:

- Kanerva v. Weems 2013 ILSC oral arguments:
http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Media/On_Demand_2013.asp (search for “Kanerva” on this page, and then click on the video icon)

*****FINAL PAPER DUE: APRIL 20**

Week 14 (April 18-20): Taxes and Spending

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 10
- NJ, chapter 2
- Moser, Whet. 2018. "Illinois Voters: Confused about How to Fix the State, As Usual." *Chicago Magazine*. (March 9)
- Kass, Amanda. 2017. "Why Illinois's Non-Budget Is Actually the Worst Budget Ever." *Chicago Magazine*. (May 30)

Week 15 (April 25-27):

- **April 25: Political Corruption in Illinois**

Readings:

- NJ, chapter 8
- Simpson, Dick, Thomas J. Gradel, Marco Rosaire Rossi, and Katherine Taylor. 2018. "Continuing Corruption in Illinois." Anti-Corruption Report Number 10. Political Science Department, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Recommended:

- Gradel, Thomas J., and Dick Simpson. 2015. *Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press).

- **April 27: The Future of Illinois Government?**

Readings:

- NGW, chapter 1

FINAL EXAM: tba