

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Political Science 2051
Louisiana State University
Fall 2016
Tu Th 12:00-1:20

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to achieve a higher understanding of the political landscape in America. As part of the social sciences LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference. This course will provide a brief summary of American political institutions such as the legislative, judicial, and presidential branches of government. We will also survey other integral parts that make up the American political fabric such as voting and elections, interest groups, and the media at both the federal and state level. However, most of the emphasis in this course will be placed on American politics at the federal level. This is an introductory course that will provide students with an initial review of basic theories, concepts, and analyses in American government. There are many other topics and literature to consider beyond what is covered in this course.

PARTICIPATION

Your success in this course is dependent upon your participation and attendance. You are expected to have read the required materials *before* each class period and you are expected to be prepared to discuss them in a thoughtful and critical manner. Please bring a copy of the required text to each class meeting for reference during discussions. Failure to participate and be prepared will result in grade reductions.

MAKE-UP DATE

It is understandable that students may need to miss class in the case of an emergency or illness. I have therefore provided students the opportunity to make-up any of the quizzes or the midterm exam on December 1st. Please keep in mind that this does not include the final exam. If you do not need to make up a test then you are not required to come to class on this day.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

It is required that all students respect one another while in class. This does not mean we have to agree with what each other has to say or think, but all discussions are to remain civil and polite. Students must also respect the use of technology in the classroom. All cellphone devices

are to remain on silent during the entire class. The use of laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices are to be used for the sole purpose of note-taking or class discussion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Please review the university policies concerning plagiarism and cheating from the Code of Student Conduct handbook:

http://students.lsu.edu/saa/code_10_1

MOODLE

Login to Moodle through your myLSU account to access readings, other course materials, and grades.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Congress: The Electoral Connection, **second edition** by Mayhew

We the People, **Tenth Essentials Edition** by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, and Spitzer

Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement, by Chong

GRADING SCALE

A+ = 97-100

A = 93-96

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = <60

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation = 20%

Quizzes = 30%

Midterm Exam = 20%

Final Exam = 30%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 August 23 August 25	Introduction to American Politics: Part 1 Read Syllabus: Introduction, Class Format, Expectations, and Exams Chapter 1: The Citizen and Government
Week 2 August 30 September 1	Introduction to American Politics: Part 2 Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution Chapter 3: Federalism Chapter 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Week 3 September 6 September 8	The Presidency Chapter 10: The Presidency Mayer (1999) Executive Orders and Presidential Power - Moodle
Week 4 September 13 September 15	The Judiciary Chapter 12: The Federal Courts Huber and Gordon (2004) Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind When It Runs for Office? -Moodle
Week 5 September 20 September 22	Congress: The Electoral Connection Part 1: The Electoral Incentive p. 1-77 Part 2: Processes and Policies p.81-180
Week 6 September 27 September 29	Legislature and Quiz 1 Carey et al. (2006) The Effects of Term Limits on State Legislatures: A New Survey of the 50 States - Moodle Quiz 1
Week 7 October 4 October 6	Public Opinion and Fall Break Chapter 5: Public Opinion <u>No Class – Fall Break</u>
Week 8 October 11 October 13	The Media and Midterm Exam Chapter 6: The Media Midterm Exam

Week 9	Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement
October 18	Chapter 1: Public-Spirited Collective Action
	Chapter 2: All-Or-Nothing Public Goods
October 20	Chapter 3: Selective Social Incentives and Reputational Concerns
	Chapter 4: Narrowly Rational Expressive Benefits
Week 10	Political Participation
October 25	Chapter 7: Political Parties, Participation, and Elections
October 27	McDonald and Popkin (2001) The Myth of the Vanishing Voter
	Moodle
Week 11	Voting and Elections
November 1	Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy - Moodle
November 3	Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy -Moodle
Week 12	Presidential Election and Quiz 2
November 8	2016 Presidential Election
November 10	Quiz 2
Week 13	American Political Psychology and Protests
November 15	Tarrow (1994) <i>Power in Movement</i> , Introduction - Moodle
November 17	Kam (2012) Risk Attitudes and Political Participation - Moodle
Week 14	Thanksgiving
November 22	Shafir (1992) Prospect Theory and Political Analysis: A Psychological Perspective - Moodle
November 24	<u>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</u>
Week 15	Policies and Make-up Date
November 29	Chapter 14: Foreign Policy
	Chapter 13: Domestic Policy
December 1	Make-up Date
Week 16	Finals Week
December 7	Final Exam 3:00-5:00pm