

**Political Science 2051  
American Government  
Spring 2019**

**Professor:**

Nathan Mateer  
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**Class Time and Location:**

MWF 8:30-9:20 am 116 Lockett Hall

**Office Hours:**

M, 12:30-2:00  
T, 10:00-12:00, and by appointment  
217 Stubbs Hall

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of American government and politics and to improve your skills in evaluating and analyzing issues in American politics. Our focus will be on how the American system of government came to exist and its subsequent development. The course will be organized into four main sections. The first describes the foundations of the American system including the constitution, political culture, federalism, and civil rights/liberties. The second will cover the American political institutions including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The third section turns to the democratic aspects of our political system, focusing on public opinion, elections, political parties, and interest groups. The final section deals with issues of public policy, including economic policy, social policy, and foreign policy.

According to a LSU catalogue, "General education courses are not hurdles to be overcome; rather, they are means by which students learn to think, describe, interpret, and analyze the world. Their primary aim is to educate rather than train, and to instill a desire for life-long learning." As a general education elective in the social sciences, this course is designed to prepare students to meet the following competency requirements: "LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global independence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic differences."

**Required Texts:**

- *American Government: Power and Purpose (14<sup>th</sup> Edition)* – By: Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, Ansolabehere
  - NOTE: Please obtain the **Full Edition (with policy chapters)**, and **NOT** the Brief or Core editions
- All additional readings will be posted on Moodle

**Course Requirements:**

There will be four non-cumulative exams. Exams will include multiple choice and essay questions. Each will cover lecture and reading material. There will be one assigned paper. Details about the topic and other requirements will be provided at a later time. Dates for the exams and paper are listed in the course outline below.

Class attendance is expected. Students should read the assigned material prior to the class meeting in order to participate and engage in the course. To ensure students come to class prepared, there will be quizzes given at my discretion. Sometimes, missing class is unpreventable. I will drop 1 quiz grade for every 5 quizzes given. Students will also be given a participation grade that will be composed of regular attendance, in-class participation, and not-engaging in disruptive behavior, such as cell phone use, arriving late, or leaving class early without clearing this with me prior. This is designed to encourage class participation and engagement with the material.

**Grading Policy:**

- Exams = 60% (15% x 4 tests)
- Paper = 15%
- Quizzes = 15%
- Participation = 10%

**Extra Credit:**

There will be a few opportunities to receive extra credit throughout the semester. This will come in the form of attending a lecture of my choosing outside of class hours and writing a single-page (double spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font) response to the issues raised. This will replace a quiz grade.

**Grading Scale:**

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 87-89.00	C+ = 77-77.99	D+ = 67-69.99
A = 93-96.99	B = 83-86.99	C = 73-76.99	D = 63-66.99
A- = 90-92.99	B- = 80-82.99	C- = 70-72.99	D- = 60-62.99
			F = 0-59.99

**Students with Disabilities:**

For students who have special needs or require accommodations, that student must ensure that they register with the Office of Disability Services and tell me of their situation as early in the semester as possible, so arrangements can be made to meet their needs.

**Academic Honesty:**

Academic misconduct is defined by the Code of Student Conduct. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the LSU policy on academic misconduct, particularly regarding plagiarism. The LSU Code of Student Conduct can be found on the website for the LSU Dean of Students:

<https://www.lsu.edu/saa/students/codeofconduct.php>

Academic misconduct is a serious violation of university policy. This can come in the form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, classroom disruptions, or phone use. Academic misconduct will in no way be tolerated in this course and charges of such will be turned over to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary action. This class has a zero-tolerance policy about plagiarism. In order to avoid this, please make sure to cite accurately and appropriately your sources. If a student is unsure of the proper ways to do this, they should contact me rather than taking the risk.

## Course Outline and Readings

### PART ONE

- 1/9 Syllabus and Introduction
- 1/11 Chapter 1 (pp. 1-6)  
Chapter 2 (pp. 30-38)  
Articles of Confederation (A7-A12)
- 1/14 Chapter 2 (pp. 38-57)  
U.S. Constitution (A13-A23)
- 1/16 Kammen (Moodle)  
Wood (Moodle)  
Beard (Moodle)
- 1/18 Chapter 2 (pp. 57-69)  
Bill of Rights (A23-33)  
Federalist No. 10 (A34-A39)  
Letters from a Federal Farmer No. 2 (Moodle)
- 1/21 NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 1/23 Chapter 3 (pp. 72-92)  
Federalist No. 46 (Moodle)
- 1/25 Chapter 3 (pp. 92-100)  
Federalist No. 51 (A39-42)  
Peterson (Moodle)
- 1/28 Chapter 4 (pp. 102-129)
- 1/30 Chapter 4 (pp. 130-143)  
Lincoln (Moodle)
- 2/1 Chapter 5 (pp. 144-164)  
Martin Luther King, Jr. (Moodle)
- 2/4 Chapter 5 (pp. 164-180)
- 2/6 TEST #1

### PART TWO

- 2/8 Chapter 6 (pp. 182-202)  
Hibbing and Theis-Morse (Moodle)

2/11	Chapter 6 (pp. 202-237)
2/13	Chapter 7 (pp. 240-261)
2/15	Chapter 7 (pp. 261-288)
2/18	Chapter 8 (pp. 290-326)
2/20	Woodrow Wilson (Moodle) James Q. Wilson (Moodle) Wedel (Moodle) Cato Handbook for Policy Makers (Moodle)
2/22	Chapter 9 (pp. 328-351)
2/25	Chapter 9 (pp. 351-374)
2/27	Federalist No. 78 (Moodle) Scalia (Moodle) Breyer (Moodle)
3/1	TEST #2
<b><u>PART THREE</u></b>	
3/4-6	NO CLASS - Mardi Gras Break
3/8	Chapter 10 (pp. 376-399)
3/11	Chapter 10 (pp. 399-424)
3/13	Chapter 11 (pp. 426-455)
3/15	Chapter 11 (pp. 455-488)
3/18	V.O. Key, Jr. (Moodle) Louis Menand (Moodle) William Galston (Moodle)
3/20	Chapter 12 (pp. 490-514)
3/22	Chapter 12 (pp. 515-537)
3/25	Chapter 13 (pp. 538-576)
3/27	Chapter 14 (pp. 578-596) Prior (Moodle)

**3/29** Chapter 14 (pp. 596-608)  
Starr (Moodle)  
Fallows (Moodle)

**4/1** TEST #3

**PART FOUR**

**4/3** Chapter 15 (pp. 610-643)

**4/5** Chapter 15 (pp. 643-650)  
Timothy Noah (Moodle)  
Richard Epstein (Moodle)

**4/8** Chapter 16 (pp. 652-671)

**4/10** Chapter 16 (pp. 671-676)  
Franklin Roosevelt (Moodle)  
Herbert Hoover (Moodle)

**4/12** Chapter 17 (pp. 678-707)

**PAPER DUE**

**4/15-19** NO CLASS - Spring Break

**4/22** Micah Zenko and Michael A. Cohen (Moodle)  
Paul D. Miller (Moodle)

**4/24** Catch-up/Review Day

**4/26** Test #4

**\*This is a tentative schedule. All readings and classes are subject to change.**