

POLI 2051 Section 1– Introduction to American Government		
Summer 2014 M-F 9:50-10:50 116 Prescott Hall		
Instructor- L. Cassandra Black	Office: 325 Stubbs Hall	Office Hours: by appointment
Email: lblac17@lsu.edu OR appgrad7282@gmail.com		

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the fundamentals of the United States government and its politics. In addition, this course will also attempt to sharpen your skills in critically evaluating and considering issues in U.S. politics. The course will be concerned with the foundations of the U.S. government (the constitution and federalism) and the ideals of democracy (civil liberties and civil rights), political institutions (public opinion, the news media, interest groups, parties, elections) and U.S. government institutions (congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the courts).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

General Education courses are required to ensure that...*“LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of factors associated with global interdependence, including economic, political, psychological, cultural and linguistic forces.”* This course contributes to this goal by providing students with a basic understanding of American government, from inception through current times. My personal goal, as an instructor, is to provide a safe, productive, and professional environment in which individual thought is able to flourish. By the end of this course, you should have a good understanding of the principles, functions, structures and processes of the American political system, as well as how to critique and analyze these.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be two exams; one midterm and one final. The midterm will survey your knowledge on material covered up to that point. The final exam will survey your knowledge on material covered from the midterm through the last day of classes. Each exam will be worth 100 points and will consist of a combination at multiple choice, short answer and essay. In addition, there will be 6 random quizzes on the reading material throughout the semester, totaling 25 points. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. You will also be required to write a final paper for the course, worth 50 points. More information on this paper will be provided later. Finally, participation and attendance is required. 25 points of your final grade will be based on attendance.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

TOTAL of 300 POINTS -Midterm Exam (100) + Final Exam (100) + Quizzes (25) + Final Paper (50) + Attendance (25):

270 – 300 (90%)	A
240 – 269 (80%)	B
210 – 239 (70%)	C
180 – 209 (60%)	D
Below 179	F

POLICIES

1. If a student engages in any form of academic dishonesty this will be reported to the Dean of Students. LSU’s policy on plagiarism is the following: “Plagiarism is defined to include any use of another's work and submitting that work as one's own. This means not only copying passages of writing or direct quotations but also paraphrasing or using structure or ideas without citation.”

If you use material from a source (either one assigned from this class or something you've retrieved through outside research), you must cite it. Please review the University's guidelines on plagiarism and academic integrity at <http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/> and <http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm> and on academic dishonesty at [http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/\\$Content/Code+of+Conduct?OpenDocument#5.1](http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/$Content/Code+of+Conduct?OpenDocument#5.1) or <https://paws002.lsu.edu>

2. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester if you are registered with disability services and need accommodation. You can find more information at <http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/ods.nsf/index>.
3. Be on time. Do the readings before class. I will assume you have read the assigned materials and are ready to participate. Attendance is expected. We'll cover topics that are not in the book and this material will be fair game on quizzes and exams. It is always in your best interest to attend class and be prepared. Any makeup exams or assignments will be allowed only in the case of university excused absences-documentation must be provided. Please do not engage in disruptive behavior (e.g. cell phones, side conversations etc.) during class.
4. About me: I am currently a fifth year PhD. Candidate in American Political Science. You may call me Cassie if you prefer- I am not a doctor yet. I received my BS in Psychology (concentration: music performance, minor: business) and my MA in Experimental Psychology from Appalachian State University; my research primarily uses psychological theories to explain political behavior. I am only in my office during office hours; however, I am always willing to make an appointment or discuss anything but grades through email... a virtual open door policy, if you will. Keep in mind that I have been and am still a student; be honest and communicate with me if you have any concerns and I will do everything in my power to address them appropriately.

REQUIRED READING

O'Connor, Sabato and Yanus. (2014). Essentials of American Government: Roots and Reform ISBN- 978-0-205-88399-8 OR 0-205-88399-0. (Called "Essentials" in the syllabus.) This is available in the LSU bookstore. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THIS TEXT, IT IS VERY UNLIKELY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PASS THIS COURSE.

All other materials will be provided on Moodle. You are required to read the articles/text assigned on a date PRIOR to coming to class and you should be ready to discuss it, ask questions or take a quiz on the material.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1-

Monday 6/9: Introduction to American Politics

Tuesday 6/10: American Government: Roots, Context and Culture CHAPTER 1

Wednesday 6/11: Chapter 1

Thursday 6/12: The Constitution CHAPTER 2

The Constitution (on mypoliscilab)

Friday 6/13: Chapter 2

Week 2-

Monday 6/16: The Federal System

CHAPTER 3

Tuesday 6/17: Chapter 3

Wednesday 6/18: Civil Liberties	CHAPTER 4
Thursday 6/19: Civil Rights	CHAPTER 5
Friday 6/20: Catch up on civil liberties and rights	

Week 3-

Monday 6/23: Congress	CHAPTER 6
Tuesday 6/24: Chapter 6	
Wednesday 6/25: The Presidency	CHAPTER 7
Thursday 6/26: Chapter 7	
Friday 6/27: The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy	CHAPTER 8

Week 4-

Monday 6/30: Chapter 8
 Tuesday 7/1: MIDTERM REVIEW
 Wednesday 7/2: MIDTERM (Chapters 1-8)
 Thursday 7/3: NO CLASS
 Friday 7/4: Independence Day NO CLASS

Week 5-

Monday 7/7: The Judiciary	CHAPTER 9
Tuesday 7/8: Chapter 9	
Wednesday 7/9: Public Opinion and News Media	CHAPTER 10
Thursday 7/10: Chapter 10	
Friday 7/11: Chapter 10	

Week 6-

Monday 7/14: Political Parties and Interest Groups	CHAPTER 11
Tuesday 7/15: Chapter 11	
Wednesday 7/16: Chapter 11	
Thursday 7/17: Campaigns, Elections and Voting	CHAPTER 12
Friday 7/18: Chapter 12	

Week 7-

Monday 7/21: Social and Economic Policy	CHAPTER 13
Tuesday 7/22: Chapter 13	
Wednesday 7/23: Foreign and Defense Policy	CHAPTER 14
Thursday 7/24: Chapter 14	
Friday 7/25: Catch up-----PAPERS DUE BY MIDNIGHT	

Week 8-

Monday 7/28: FINAL EXAM REVIEW

 Thursday 7/31: FINAL EXAM 1:30-3:30 (Chapters 9-14)

*Information on this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or through your LSU email; it is your responsibility to be aware of these changes and turn in work (etc.) at the appropriate time.