

American Government - POLI 2051, Sect 5

Spring 2015

McKinzie Craig Hall
Office Hours: TR) 10:30am-11:30am
and by appointment

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Course Description

This course seeks to introduce students to the basic principals and study of the US government. Beyond simply identifying the rules and branches of government, this course will evaluate how the US government has evolved from the founding to the modern era. We will explore how politics and institutions shapes policy outcomes. Students will also be introduced to how political scientists study both American institutions and political behavior.

Course Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify the institutions of the US government and understand how the foundations for these institutions derive from the US Constitution;
- Describe the basic principals of the US governmental system and how those principals have evolved from the founding into the present day;
- Describe the role of public opinion, electoral politics, and linkage organizations in US government;
- Evaluate policy outputs from the US government and identify how those outputs are influenced by different aspects of the American system of government.

Text Book

Required: O'Connor, Sabato and Yanus, American Government: Roots and Reform [Pearson] (2012)

Course Requirements

Exams

There are 3 exams in this class. Each exam is worth 100 points. It will be a multiple choice exam and must be completed on a scantron. The first exam covers the foundations of American government. The second exam covers the institutions of American government. The third exam covers American political behavior. The first two exams will be given during class time. The third exam is not cumulative but will be given during the final exam time scheduled for this class.

Unless a student makes arrangement to take an exam early, all make up exams will be given during the final exam time for this class. The first 75 minutes of the final exam time will be for the class to take exam 3. The remaining time minutes of the final exam time will be dedicated to make ups for exam 1 and exam 2. If a student does not make up a missed exam during the final exam time, the missed exam will be entered as a 0.

Quizzes

There will be 12 reading quizzes in this class. Each of these quizzes will cover the reading assigned for the course, they will be 5 questions long and will account for 10 points. **The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.**

These quizzes are used for three reasons. First, periodic quizzes will encourage students to read and study the materials as course progresses. Second, these quizzes will help students prepare for exams because the questions on the quizzes will demonstrate core information from each unit. Third, these quizzes will allow the instructor to evaluate student progress and determine if students have adequately understood material as it is presented.

The quizzes will be given on the Moodle page for this class. Students must make sure they are able to log into Moodle on myLSU and locate the POLI 2051 class on their account on the first day of class. When you log into Moodle, download and print the “signature” file in the syllabus section. Read, fill out, and return the form to me by the start of class on Thursday, January 22, 2015 for 2 points extra credit. A student is not excused from taking the quizzes because they cannot log into Moodle. Quizzes will usually be available for 36 to 48 hours, with a specific start and end time/date listed on the syllabus. Students will have 10 minutes to take the quiz on Moodle. Students are encouraged to use their books and their notes. Students who have a university documented disability may make alternate arrangements to take the quizzes but students are responsible for making arrangements with professor prior to the quiz. A student may retake a quiz only if the student has a documented university excused absence that spans the entire time the quiz is available. To makeup a quiz, the student will have to make an appointment with the instructor to take the quiz at the instructor’s office.

Labs

We will have “labs” periodically through the semester to explore that section’s theme(s). The format of the labs will vary. Regardless of the format, all lab assignments will be completed and submitted during class time unless I indicate otherwise. There are no exceptions to this policy. **The lowest lab grade will be dropped.** If you miss a lab due to an excused absence, you will be given an opportunity to make up that assignment. **If you do not have an excused absence for a missed lab, you will not be eligible for making up that assignment and will receive a zero for that lab grade. There are no exceptions to this policy. This means that lab attendance is mandatory.**

Grading

20 percent	100 points	First exam
20 percent	100 points	Second exam
20 percent	100 points	Third exam
20 percent	100 points	Quizzes
20 percent	100 points	Labs
100 percent	500 points	Final grade

Grades will be determined based on the following: **A: 450 points or higher, B: 449 to 400 points, C: 399 to 350 points, D: 349 to 325 points, F: less than 325 points.** All points awarded through out the semester are totaled together to arrive at the final grade. This includes (but may not be limited to) each portion of each exam, the highest quiz grades, all participation points, and the highest lab grades. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I am unable to discuss grades via email or on the phone. Specific grades can only be discussed in person.

Tentative Test Dates

Test 1: Thursday, February 12, 2015

Test 2: Thursday, March 19, 2015

Test 3: Final exam time - Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 10am

Tentative Schedule

Reading assignments are to be completed for class on the date on the syllabus. Students are responsible for entire reading assignment.

R) Jan 15 - Course Intro, READ: Syllabus

T) Jan 20, R) Jan 22 - Foundations, READ: Chapter 1

Quiz 1 - Covers reading due on Tuesday Jan 27, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Jan 22 to be completed by 12pm on Jan 27

T) Jan 27 - Foundations (cont) READ: Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and Federalist 51 (available on Moodle)

Quiz 2 - Covers reading due on Jan 29, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Jan 27 to be completed by 12pm on Jan 29

R) Jan 29 - The Constitution, READ: Chapter 2 and US Constitution (available on Moodle)

Quiz 3 - Covers reading due on Feb 3, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Jan 29 to be completed by 12pm on Feb 3

T) Feb 3 and R) Feb 5 - Federalism, READ: Chapter 3

T) Feb 10 - Review

R) Feb 12 TEST 1 - Foundations of American Government

T) Feb 17 NO CLASS

Quiz 4 - Covers reading due on Feb 19, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Feb 17 to be completed by 12pm on Feb 19

R) Feb 19 and T) Feb 24 - Congress, READ: Chapter 6

Quiz 5 - Covers reading due on Feb 26, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Feb 24 to be completed by 12pm on Feb 26

R) Feb 26, T) Mar 3 - The Presidency and the Bureaucracy, READ: Chapter 7 and 8

Quiz 6 - Covers reading due on Mar 5, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Mar 3 to be completed by 12pm on Mar 5

R) Mar 5 - The Judiciary, READ: Chapter 9

Quiz 7 - Covers reading due on Mar 10, made available on Moodle by 2pm Mar 5 to be completed by 12pm on Mar 10

T) Mar 10, R) Mar 12 Civil Rights and Liberties, READ: Chapter 4 and 5

T) Mar 17 Review

R) Mar 19 TEST 2 - Institutions of American Government

T) Mar 24 - Public Opinion - READ: Chapter 10

Quiz 8 - Covers reading due on Mar 26, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Mar 24 to be completed by 12pm on Mar 26

R) Mar 26 - Parties - READ: Chapter 11

Quiz 9 - Covers reading due on on Mar 31, made available on Moodle by 2pm on Mar 25 to be completed by 12pm on Mar 31

T) Mar 31, R) April 2 - Campaigns and Elections - READ: Chapter 12 and 13

T) April 9, R) April 11 NO CLASS

T) April 14 - News Media - READ: Chapter 14

Quiz 10 - Covers reading due on April 16, made available on Moodle by 2pm on April 14 to be completed by 12pm on April 16

R) April 16 - Interest groups - READ: Chapter 15

Quiz 11 - Covers reading due on April 21, made available on Moodle by 2pm on April 16 to be completed by 12pm on April 21

T) April 21 - Domestic Policy - READ: Chapter 16

Quiz 12 - Covers reading due on April 23, made available on Moodle by 2pm on April 21 to be completed by 12pm on April 23

R) April 23 - Economic Policy - READ: Chapter 17

T) April 28 - Foreign Policy - READ: Chapter 18

R) April 30 - Review

FINAL EXAM TIME May 7 at 10am: TEST 3 - American Political Behavior

Course Materials and Copyright

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

High standards of academic integrity are crucial for the University to fulfill its educational mission. To uphold these standards, procedures have been established to address academic misconduct.

As a guiding principle, the University expects Students to model the principles outlined in the University Commitment to Community, especially as it pertains to accepting responsibility for their actions and holding themselves and others to the highest standards of performance in an academic environment. For example, LSU students are responsible for submitting work for evaluation that reflects their individual performance and should not assume any assignment given by any professor is a group effort or work unless specifically noted on the assignment. In all other cases, students must assume the work is to be done independently. If the student has a question regarding the instructors expectations for individual assignments, projects, tests, or other items submitted for a grade, it is the students responsibility to seek clarification.

Any Student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit Academic Misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions set forth in Section 9.0. (*LSU Code of Student Conduct, Sect 8.1*)

Co-curricular Events Policy

Classes missed due to participation in college-sponsored co-curricular events are considered excused absences provided appropriate procedures are followed. In order for the absence to be excused, the instructor must receive notification before the student misses the class. The activity must be a performance, professional meeting, or contest to be considered an excused absence.

An excused absence allows the student to make up exams or quizzes given during the absence, to reschedule oral presentations, or to make some other equitable arrangement as determined by the faculty and the student. Students must recognize that many classroom and laboratory activities cannot be replicated and that absences may be detrimental to the students performance. It is the responsibility of the student to get notes from the class and to compensate as much as possible for the absence. It is also the students responsibility to work with the instructor in determining a time for make-up assignments.