Political Science 2051 American Government Fall 2016

Course Description

This course is designed to both acquaint you with the fundamentals of American government and politics and to improve your skills in evaluating and analyzing issues in American politics. The class will be organized into four main sections. The first describes the foundations of our American system including the constitution, political culture, federalism, and civil rights/liberties. The second is devoted to the American political institutions including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The third section will deal with the democratic aspects of our political system, such as public opinion and elections. This section will also delve into the inner workings of political parties and interest groups. The last section deals with issues of public policy, including economic policy, social policy and foreign policy.

Professor:

John Boersma jboers1@lsu.edu

Office Hours:

M, 9:30-11:00 T, 12:30-2:30, and by appointment 332 Stubbs Hall

Class Time and Location:

MWF 8:30-9:20 am 324 Hodges Hall

General Education Credit:

General education credit for the social sciences will be earned by students in this course, since our study aims at a number of the goals of the general education program at LSU. 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." In the social sciences, the learning outcome sought is the following: "LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference." From our initial study of the American founding, through our consideration of American institutions, constitutional design, and public policy, we keep an eye on the global dimension of the political issues we consider. While our focus for much of the course is the American regime, we look as well at the global impacts of the American system of governance.

Note: Scantrons and Blue Books will be required on test days.

Course Materials:

The following books are required, and are (or will soon be) available in the bookstore. Please obtain these specific editions so that we can all work from the same translations and/or page numbers. The books are listed in the order in which we will study them. Additional articles are available through the Moodle website, either in pdf, internet link, or as a word document.

- American Government: Power and Purpose (13th Edition) By: Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, Ansolabehere
 - NOTE: Please obtain the **Full Edition (with policy chapters)**, and **NOT** the Brief or Core editions
- The Enduring Debate By: David Canon, John Coleman, and Kenneth Mayer
- Any additional readings will be available on Moodle

Grading out of 500 pts

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: 59>below

- Four non-cumulative exams on the dates assigned 75 pts each/ total 300 pts
 - Exams will include **multiple choice** and **essay questions**, each will cover lecture material and textbook readings.
- Two papers that will be between 5 and 7 pages in length 100 pts/ total 200 pts
- In addition, I will sporadically take class attendance, for which you are able to attain bonus points.
- Course Total: 500 points

Course Outline

Part One

8/22	Syllabus and Introdu	Syllabus and Introduction to Politics and Government		
8/24 5 Principles/History				
	AG:	7-23 (skim)		
	AG:	32 - 44		
	Enduring Debate:	Charles Beard, "An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution"		
	Enduring Debate:	Michael Kammen "The Nature of American Constitutionalism"		
8/26	Constitution			
	AG:	Constitution (Appendix: A13 – A23)		
	AG:	44-54		
8/29	Political Culture			
	AG:	63-68		
	Moodle:	Ernest P. Young, "Introduction: The Role of Liberalism in American Politics"		
	Enduring Debate:	Gordon Wood, "The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787"		
	Moodle:	Tocqueville, "Of Individualism in Democratic Countries"		
	Moodle:	Tocqueville, "On the Use That the Americans Make of Association in Civil Life"		
8/31	Ratification: Federal	ists, Antifederalists and the Threat of Tyranny		
0/01		ists, Antheactailists and the finear of Fylanny		
	AG:	56-62;		
	Moodle:	Letters from a Federal Farmer no. 2		
	AG:	Federalist no. 10 (Appendix: A34-A39)		
	AG: AG:	Bill of Rights (Appendix: A24-A33) 62-69		
09/2	Amending the Const	Amending the Constitution/Federalism		
	AG:	72-79		
	Enduring Debate:	James Madison, "Federalist 46"		

09/7	Federalism	
	AG:	79-93
09/9	Federalism; Separation of Powers	
	Enduring Debate: Enduring Debate:	Paul Peterson, "The Price of Federalism" George J. Annas "Jumping Frogs, Endangered Toads, and California's Medical-Marijuana Law"
09/12	2 Separation of Powers	
	AG: AG: Moodle:	93-103 Federalist 51 (Appendix A39 - A42) William Marshall, "Eleven Reasons Why Presidential Power Inevitably Expands and Why it Matters"
09/14	Civil Liberties	
	AG:	104-145
09/16	Civil Rights	
	AG:	146-184
09/19	Test	

<u>Part Two</u>

09/21	Congress: Represen	Congress: Representation; Problems of Legislative Organization		
	AG: Enduring Debate:	186-209 John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theis-Morse, "Too Much of a Good Thing: More Representatives is Not Necessarily Better"		
09/23	Congress: The Organ	nization of Congress; How a Bill Becomes a Law		
	AG:	209-231		
09/26	Congress: How Con	Congress: How Congress Decides; Additional Powers		
	AG:	231-245		

		Enduring Debate: Enduring Debate:	Cato Handbook, "Corporate Welfare and Earmarks" Brian Fiel, "Inhofe: Earmarks Are Good for Us"	
09/28	Preside	Presidency: Constitutional Basis and Powers		
		AG:	248-269	
09/30	Preside	sidency: Presidential Government and Power		
		AG:	269-300	
10/3	Executiv	ve Bureaucracy		
		AG:	302-339	
10/5	Executiv	Executive Bureaucracy: Privatization?		
		*****PAPER ONE DUE	****	
		Enduring Debate:	Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration"	
		Enduring Debate:	James Q. Wilson, "Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It"	
		Enduring Debate:	Jenine R. Wendel, "Federalist No. 70: Where Does the Public Begin and End?"	
		Enduring Debate:	Cato Handbook for Policy Makers, "Privatization"	
10/10	Judicial	Branch		
		AG:	342-367	
10/12	Judicial	Branch		
		AG:	367-390	
10/14	Judicial	Judicial Branch: Constitutional Interpretation		
		Enduring Debate:	Antonin Scalia, "Constitutional Interpretation the Old- Fashioned Way"	
		Enduring Debate:	Stephen Breyer, "Our Democratic Constitution"	
10/17		TEST		

Part Three

10/19	Public Opinion	
	AG:	392-432
10/21	Measuring Public Opinion	
	AG: Enduring Debate: Enduring Debate:	432-445 George Gallup, "Polling the Public" Richard Morin, "Choice Words: If You Can't Understand Our Poll Questions, Then How Can We Understand Your Answers?"
10/24	Elections	
	AG:	446-476
10/26	Elections	
	AG:	476-511
10/28	Elections/Political Parties	
	Enduring Debate: Enduring Debate:	V.O. Key, Jr., "The Responsible Electorate" Louis Menand, "The Unpolitical Animal: How Political Science Understands Voters"
	Enduring Debate:	William Galston, "Telling Americans to Vote or Else"
10/31	Political Parties	
	AG:	512-528
11/2	Political Parties	
	AG:	528-557
11/4	Interest Groups	
	AG: Enduring Debate:	558-567 Alexis De Tocqueville, "Political Association in the United States"
	Enduring Debate:	David Truman, "The Alleged Mischiefs of Faction"

11/7 Interest Groups

	AG: Enduring Debate:	568- 596 Ronald Dworkin, "The Decision that Threatens Democracy"
	Enduring Debate:	Bradley A. Smith, "Citizens United We Stand"
11/9	TEST	

Part Four

11/11	The Media	
	AG:	598-630
	Enduring Debate:	Markus Prior, "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout"
	Enduring Debate:	Paul Starr, "Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption"
	Enduring Debate:	James Fallows, "How to Save the News"
11/14	Economic Policy	
	AG:	632-667
11/16	Economic Policy	
	AG:	667-674
	Enduring Debate:	Timothy Noah, "The United States of Inequality, Part 10: Why We Can't Ignore Growing Income Inequality"
	Enduring Debate:	Richard Epstein, "Three Cheers for Income Inequality"
11/18	Social Policy	
	AG:	674-694
11/21	Social Policy	
	AG: Enduring Debate:	694-701 Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Call for Federal Responsibility"

	Enduring Debate:	Herbert Hoover, "Against the Proposed Deal"	
11/23	The Effects of Social and Econ	e Effects of Social and Economic Policy	
	Moodle: Moodle: Moodle: Moodle:	Samuelson, "Family Meltdown" Kay Hymowitz, "Marriage and Caste" Joshua Rothman, "The Lives of Poor White People" Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone"	
11/28	Foreign Policy		
	AG:	702-720	
11/30	Foreign Policy		
	******PAPER TWO D	*****PAPER TWO DUE*****	
	AG:	721-731	
	Enduring Debate:	Micah Zenko and Michael A. Cohen, "Clear and Present Safety: The United States is Safer than Washington Thinks"	
	Enduring Debate:	Paul Miller, "National Insecurity: Just How Safe is the United States?"	
12/2	Foreign Policy		
	Moodle: Moodle: Moodle: Moodle:	Irving Kristol, "What is a Neoconservative?" Irving Kristol, "The Neocon Persuasion" George W. Bush, "National Security Strategy" Claes Ryn, "Ideology of American Empire"	