

Political Science 2051: American Government (Fall 2017)

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30–10:30 am,
Thursdays 12:00–1:00 pm,
or by appointment.

Time: MWF 8:30–9:20

Place: 0027 Allen Hall

Introduction and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an overview of American government. Discussion will center on how the American system of government came to exist and the various forces that have shaped its subsequent development. Thus, much of our focus will be on the structure of our government including executive, judiciary, legislative, and electoral institutions, among others. Throughout the course I will contrast the American system with other systems around the world. Additionally, I will be attempting to integrate discussions about how the phenomena discussed in theories of rational choice and collective action may influence or constrain the way our government was formulated and the way it works.

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:

- Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power and Purpose*, 14th Edition (Brief) (2017) [ISBN: 978-0393283778].
- All other required readings will be posted to Moodle

Course Requirements:

Students should read the selected text for the class **prior** to the class meeting so that they can participate and engage with the course material. These readings are provided on the reading schedule at the end of this syllabus.

The lectures I give during our class meetings are intended to prepare you for the exams, and material may be presented in the lecture that is **not** in the textbook and will be on the exam. Students should come to class prepared and be attentive and responsive during the lecture. Students are **expected to attend class regularly, punctually, and for the duration of class meeting**. I reserve the right to penalize students who engage in disruptive behavior, such as using electronic devices, or those who arrive late or leave class early without clearing it with me before hand. (More information on disruptive behavior and recourse can be located in the Academic Honesty section of this syllabus)

Throughout the semester there will be a series of ten **quizzes**. Six of these quizzes will be on moodle. Three of these will precede the exams and will serve as exam review/prep, while the other three will be spaced throughout the semester. For all six of these quizzes, you will have 24 hours to take them and will be given two attempts. The remaining four quizzes will be in class and will be made up of one or two simple questions. These four will be given at my discretion (read: pop quizzes). However, the likelihood that I will give one of these quizzes will be much higher on days where attendance to our class meeting is low, which serves as a mechanism for encouraging class participation in the form of attendance.

The course consist of two in-class **exams** and a final exam on Monday, December 4. The in-class exams will not be cumulative and will consist of a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. The dates of all

of these are provided in the “important dates” section of the syllabus, as well as on the reading calendar. I will make it abundantly clear that short of a real conflict (familial or personal harm), there are absolutely **no makeups for exams**. If you do end up having an emergency and miss an exam, you will be required to provide a doctors note, funeral notice, or some form of documentation pertaining to a family, or other, emergency.

You are also required to complete a **Book Review**, due toward the end of the semester. You will be expected to select and furnish an academic book from the list provided and you must read this book throughout the semester independently. The book review will be due **Friday, November 17 by 11:59pm**. This assignment must be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. In order for students to be able to capture the requirements of this assignment, a 1,200 word minimum is required. Late assignments will absolutely not be accepted, unless some extreme circumstance prevents you from turning it in. The book review should include a **concise** summary of the book, an analysis of the arguments and evidence, examination of the various methods employed, and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the book. When reading the book and subsequently writing the review, consider questions such as:

What question motivates the research? Why is it important? What is the goal of the researcher – description, explanation, prediction? What is the theory? What is the logic of argumentation? Are the arguments logically consistent? Are the concepts in the theory clearly defined? Are the key actors in the theory individuals, groups, societies, or states – does it matter? Is the story “compelling”? What are the implications of the theory?

Literature for Book Review:

- Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*
- Marty Cohen et al, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*
- Michael C. Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*
- Keith L. Dougherty, *Collective Action under the Articles of Confederation*
- Laurel Harbridge, *Is Bipartisanship Dead?: Policy Agreement and Agenda-Setting in the House of Representatives*
- Christopher F. Karpowitz, *The Silent Sex: Gender, Deliberation, and Institutions*
- David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*

Extra Credit:

You will be given two chances for extra credit throughout the semester. This will come in the form of attendance at a lecture or panel of my choosing outside of class hours. You will check in with me if I’m there or if I’m not, you will write a single-page response regarding what you took from it. Each one of these will be rewarded with extra credit in the form of 1% of your final grade, equivalent to a quiz grade.

Attendance Policy:

In order to receive a passable grade, students are **required** to attend class. Despite the fact that this is a relatively early class, I expect you to take your education seriously. I am allowing three (3) unexcused absences without penalty, but **each** one beyond that will result in 1% docking of your final grade. Examples of excused absences, which will not endanger a students grade, are familial emergencies and duties (e.g. a sudden death, attending a wedding, etc.) and severe illness.

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 advise me of their situation as early in the semester as possible so arrangements can be made to ensure that their needs are met.

Important Dates:

Quiz #1	September 1, 2017
Quiz #2	September 13, 2017
Exam #1	September 15, 2017
Quiz #3	October 6, 2017
Quiz #4	October 27, 2017
Exam #2	October 30, 2017
Quiz #5	November 17, 2017
Book Review	November 17, 2017
Quiz #6	December 1, 2017
Final Exam	December 4, 2017

Grading Policy:

Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Exams	30%
Final Exam	25%
Book Review	25%

Grading Scale:

A+	97–100
A	93–96.99
A-	90–92.99
B+	87–89.99
B	83–86.99
B-	80–82.99
C+	77–79.99
C	73–76.99
C-	70–72.99
D+	67–79.99
D	63–66.99
D-	60–62.99
F	0–59.99

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 web site for the LSU Dean of Students:

<http://www.lsu.edu/students/deanofstudents/files/lsu-code-of-conduct.pdf>

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, i.e. no “second chances.” 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.

Reading Schedule and Topic Outline:**Section I: The Philosophy and Constitution of the United States**

Week 1	The Gang Goes to College
August 21	Syllabus Day/Introduction <i>No Readings</i>
August 23	Rational Choice and Collective Action <i>Read: Chapter 1; pgs. 1-6</i>
August 25	Natural Rights and the Philosophy of the Declaration of Independence <i>Read: Chapter 2; pgs. 30-37</i> <i>Declaration of Independence, pgs. A3-A6</i>
Week 2	The Gang Gets Constitutional
August 28	The Articles of Confederation and the Constitutional Convention <i>Read: Chapter 2; pgs. 37-46</i> <i>Articles of Confederation; pgs A7-A12</i>
August 30	The Constitution <i>Read: Chapter 2; pgs. 46-57</i> <i>The Constitution of the United States; pgs. A13-A23</i>
September 1	Federalists vs. Antifederalists: Fighting for America's Future <i>Read: Chapter 2; pgs. 57-62</i> <i>James Madison, Federalist #10; pgs. A34-A39</i>
Week 3	The Gang Makes Amends
September 4	Labor Day (NO CLASS)
September 6	Origin of the Bill of Rights <i>Read: Chapter 4; pgs. 102-112</i>
September 8	Civil Liberties <i>Read: Chapter 4; pgs. 112-128</i> <i>Amendments to the Constitution; pgs. A24-A25</i>
Week 4	The Gang Gets Civil
September 11	Civil Liberties, cont'd <i>Read: Chapter 4; pgs. 128-143</i>
September 13	Civil Rights <i>Read: Chapter 5; pgs. 144-164</i> <i>Challenging the Status Quo, Frederick Douglass [Moodle]</i>
September 15	EXAM 1 No Readings

Section II: The Structure of the American Government

Week 5	The Gang Goes America All Over Everybody's Butt
September 18	Federalism: What Makes America <i>America</i> <i>Read: Chapter 3; pgs. 72–83</i> <i>Defending A Republican Form of Government, James Madison [Moodle]</i>
September 20	Federalism continued <i>Read: Chapter 3; pgs. 83–92</i> <i>The "Marble Cake" Theory of Federalism, Mortin Grodzins [Moodle]</i>
September 22	The Separation of Powers <i>Read: Chapter 3; pgs. 92–101</i>
Week 6	The Gang Watches Schoolhouse Rock
September 25	Congress: Quagmire of Freedom <i>Read: Chapter 6; pgs. 182–199</i>
September 27	Congressional Organization and Lawmaking <i>Read: Chapter 6, pgs. 199–215</i>
September 29	How Congress Decides <i>Read: Chapter 6, pgs. 224–238</i>
Week 7	The Gang Meets the President
October 2	The President: King of Democracy <i>Read: Chapter 7, pgs. 240–253</i> <i>Theories of the Presidency [Moodle]</i>
October 4	The Presidential Government <i>Read: Chapter 7, pgs. 261–270</i> <i>The Presidential Power to Persuade, Richard Neustadt [Moodle]</i>
October 6	Guest Lecture: Executive Bureaucracy <i>No Readings</i>
Week 8	The Gang Goes to Court
October 9	Bureacracy Continued <i>Read: Chapter 8, pgs. 290–311</i>
October 11	The Judicial Branch: It Rules <i>Read: Chapter 9, pgs. 328–345</i> <i>Defending the Judiciary, Alexander Hamilton [Moodle]</i>
October 13	Judicial Decision Making <i>Read: Chapter 9, pgs. 360–374</i>

Week 9	The Gang Runs for Office
October 16	Campaigns <i>Read:</i> Chapter 11; pgs. 470–477
October 18	Elections <i>Read:</i> Chapter 11; pgs. 426–435
October 20	Fall Break (NO CLASS)
Week 10	The Gang Discusses Her Emails
October 23	How Voters Decide <i>Read:</i> Chapter 11; pgs. 455–470 <i>Selling Candidates as Products, Joe McGinniss</i> [Moodle]
October 25	Analysis of the 2016 Elections: What Happened? <i>No Readings</i>
October 27	Review/Catch-Up Day <i>No Readings</i>

Section III: Democratic Politics

Week 11	The Gang Parties
October 30	EXAM 2 <i>No Readings</i>
November 1	Political Parties <i>Read:</i> Chapter 12; pgs. 490–505 <i>Electoral Basis of the Two-Party System, Maurice Duverger</i> [Moodle]
November 3	History of Political Parties <i>Read:</i> Chapter 12; pgs. 519–533 <i>Urban Political Machines, Harold Gosnell</i> [Moodle]
Week 12	The Gang Gets Opinionated
November 6	Public Opinion <i>Read:</i> Chapter 10; pgs. 376–386 <i>The Paranoid Style in American Politics, Richard Hofstadter</i> [Moodle]
November 8	Shaping Opinions <i>Read:</i> Chapter 10; pgs. 399–413 <i>Leaders Mold and Influence Public Opinion, V. O. Key, Jr</i> [Moodle]
November 10	Interest Groups <i>Read:</i> Chapter 13; pgs. 538–548

Week 13	The Gang Lobbies Washington
November 13	Groups and Interests Contd <i>Read: Chapter 13; pgs. 548–555</i> <i>Attacking Pluralist Politics, Theodore J. Lowi [Moodle]</i>
November 15	The Media <i>Read: Chapter 14; pgs. 578–596</i> <i>Language and Politics, George Orwell [Moodle]</i>
November 17	No Class - Book Review due by 11:59PM
Week 14	The Nightman Cometh
November 20	Domestic Policy <i>Read: The Case for Liberalism, Franklin D. Roosevelt [Moodle]</i> <i>The Case for Conservatism, Milton Friedman [Moodle]</i>
November 22	Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASS)
November 24	Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASS)
Week 15	The Gang Wrestles for the Troops
November 27	Economic Policy <i>Read:</i>
November 29	Foreign Policy <i>Read: The Case for the Cold War, Harry S. Truman [Moodle]</i> <i>The Case for Preemptive War, George W. Bush [Moodle]</i>
December 1	Review / Catch-Up Day <i>No Readings</i>
December 4	FINAL EXAM, 10:00-12:00