

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Political Science 2051- 004
Louisiana State University
Spring 2017
M/W/F 2:30-3:30

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to achieve a higher understanding of the political landscape in America. As part of the social sciences LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference. This course will provide a brief summary of American political institutions such as the legislative, judicial, and presidential branches of government. We will also survey other integral parts that make up the American political fabric such as voting and elections, interest groups, and the media at both the federal and state level. However, most of the emphasis in this course will be placed on American politics at the federal level. This is an introductory course that will provide students with an initial review of basic theories, concepts, and analyses in American government. There are many other topics and literature to consider beyond what is covered in this course.

PARTICIPATION

Your success in this course is dependent upon your participation and attendance. You are expected to have read the required materials *before* each class period and you are expected to be prepared to discuss them in a thoughtful and critical manner. Please bring a copy of the required text to each class meeting for reference during discussions. Failure to participate and be prepared will result in grade reductions.

MAKE-UP DATE

It is understandable that students may need to miss class in the case of an emergency or illness. I have therefore provided students the opportunity to make-up any of the quizzes or the midterm exam on April 28th. Please keep in mind that this does not include the final exam. If you do not need to make up a test, then you are not required to come to class on this day.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

It is required that all students respect one another while in class. This does not mean we have to agree with what each other has to say or think, but all discussions are to remain civil and polite. Students must also respect the use of technology in the classroom. All cellphone devices are to remain on silent during the entire class. The use of laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices are to be used for the sole purpose of note-taking or class discussion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Please review the university policies concerning plagiarism and cheating from the Code of Student Conduct handbook:

http://students.lsu.edu/saa/code_10_1

MOODLE

Login to Moodle through your myLSU account to access readings, other course materials, and grades.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Congress: The Electoral Connection, **second edition** by Mayhew

We the People, **Tenth Essentials Edition** by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, and Spitzer

Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement, by Chong

An Economic Theory of Democracy, by Downs

GRADING SCALE

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 = <60

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation = 20%
Quizzes = 30%
Midterm Exam = 20%
Final Exam = 30%

The course will consist of 2 quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam. Quiz 1 will cover material from February 20th - 22nd. Quiz 2 will cover material from March 24th - 29th. Please note that the final exam is not comprehensive. Therefore, the midterm will cover material from January 18th - February 17th. The final exam will cover material from March 6th - 22nd and from April 23rd - April 26th.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 January 11 January 13	Introduction Read Syllabus: Introduction, Class Format, Expectations, and Exams <u>No Class - 2017 SPSA Conference</u>
Week 2 January 16 January 18 January 20	Introduction to American Politics: Part 1 <u>No Class - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</u> Chapter 1: The Citizen and Government (p. 3) Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution (p. 28)
Week 3 January 23 January 25 January 27	Introduction to American Politics: Part 2 Chapter 3: Federalism (p. 62) Chapter 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (p. 92) Chapter 5: Public Opinion (p. 140)
Week 4 January 30 February 1 February 3	The Media and Bureaucracy Chapter 6: The Media (p. 172) Chapter 8: Interest Groups (p. 242) Chapter 11: Bureaucracy (p. 340)
Week 5 February 6 February 8 February 10	The Presidency Chapter 10: The Presidency (p. 310) Mayer (1999) Executive Orders and Presidential Power – Moodle Chapter 12: The Federal Courts (p. 368)
Week 6 February 13 February 15 February 17	The Judiciary Huber and Gordon (2004) Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind When It Runs for Office? -Moodle Never Talk to the Police Carey et al. (2006) The Effects of Term Limits on State Legislatures: A New Survey of the 50 States - Moodle
Week 7 February 20 February 22 February 24	Congress: The Electoral Connection and Quiz 1 Part 1: The Electoral Incentive p. 1-77 Part 2: Processes and Policies p. 81-180 Quiz 1 - The Electoral Connection
Week 8 February 27 March 1 March 3	Midterm Exam <u>No Class – Mardi Gras</u> <u>No Class – Mardi Gras</u> Midterm Exam

Week 9	Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement Part 1
March 6	Chapter 1: Public-Spirited Collective Action (p. 1)
March 8	Chapter 2: All-Or-Nothing Public Goods (p. 13)
March 10	Chapter 3: Selective Social Incentives and Reputational Concerns (p. 31)
Week 10	Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement Part 2
March 13	Chapter 4: Narrowly Rational Expressive Benefits (p. 73)
March 15	Chapter 5: Creating the Motivation to Participate in Collective Action (p. 90)
March 17	Chapter 8: Strategies of Collective Action (p. 173)
Week 11	Political Participation
March 20	Chapter 7: Political Parties, Participation, and Elections (p. 198)
March 22	McDonald and Popkin (2001) The Myth of the Vanishing Voter -Moodle
March 24	Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy Chapter 1 (p. 3)
Week 12	Downs and Quiz 2
March 27	Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy Chapter 2 (p. 21)
March 29	Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy Chapter 3 (p. 36)
March 31	Quiz 2 - An Economic Theory of Democracy
Week 13	American Political Psychology and Protests
April 3	Tarrow (1994) <i>Power in Movement</i> , Introduction - Moodle
April 5	Kam (2012) Risk Attitudes and Political Participation - Moodle
April 7	Shafir (1992) Prospect Theory and Political Analysis: A Psychological Perspective - Moodle
Week 14	Spring Break
April 10	<u>No Class – Spring Break</u>
April 12	<u>No Class – Spring Break</u>
April 14	<u>No Class – Spring Break</u>
Week 15	Documentary – The 13th
April 17	Part 1
April 19	Part 2
April 21	Part 3
Week 16	Policies and Make-up Date
April 24	Chapter 14: Foreign Policy
April 26	Chapter 13: Domestic Policy
April 28	Make-up Date
Week 17	Finals Week
May 4	Final Exam 12:30-2:30pm