

POLI 2051-1 American Government

Professor Christopher Kenny

Spring 2020 T/TH 10:30-11:50; 143 Coates

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Office Hours: 9:00-10:20 T/TH and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to acquaint you with the fundamentals of American government and politics; 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 and federalism. The second section examines public opinion and the role that parties, interest groups, and the media play in the political process. The third section covers voting, campaigns, elections and the US Congress, Presidency, and Executive branch. The final section looks at the courts and questions concerning the democratic nature of our government (civil liberties and rights).

Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations, and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BOR Area of *Social/Behavioral Sciences* and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of *Inquiry and Analysis*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Four exams will be given in this class. Each is worth 150 points. All reading materials and lectures are fair game. Questions coming from the reading materials will primarily focus on the key concepts identified in the text in boldface type and at the end of the chapter. The format of the exams and quizzes will be discussed prior to the first test. The dates for readings and exams are listed on moodle. Your grade will be determined as follows:

582 – 600 (97%+)	A+
558 – 581 (93-97%)	A
540 – 557 (90-93%)	A-
522 – 539 (87-90%)	B+
498 – 521 (83-87%)	B
480 – 497 (80-83%)	B-
462 – 479 (77-80%)	C+
438 – 461 (73-77%)	C
420 – 437 (70-73%)	C-
402 – 419 (67-70%)	D+
378 – 401 (63-67%)	D
360 – 377 (60-63%)	D-
Below 360 (60%)	F

Class attendance is expected. It is quite possible that the lectures will contain material not found in either of the books, and that not all of the reading material will be covered in lectures. In addition, attending class can earn you bonus points. On random days throughout the semester you will be asked to give your opinion on

various controversies in American politics. These "attendance checks" are worth 1 point each and can be added directly to your total. It is therefore in your interest to attend class as often as possible. You can also earn bonus points by doing the practice quizzes in CONNECT. These will be discussed the first week of class.

TEXTBOOKS

Required texts for this class:

We the People 13th Edition by Thomas E. Patterson (at the bookstore as an ebook using CONNECT).