

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 101
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS
WINTER QUARTER 2006**

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Office Hours:
Tues. 12:30 - 2:30
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Lecture is on Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 - 12:18 in CL (Caldwell Lab) Room 277.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

I would like to welcome everyone to Political Science 101! This class is the introductory course in the study of the government and politics of the United States, focused primarily at the national level. We will start this course by studying the foundations of American government followed by an examination of the institutions of government. The final section will be an investigation of the political behavior of the people and groups involved in American politics. The first goal of this course is that by the end of this introductory class, you will understand how the processes and mechanics of the American political system work in theory and in practice. The second goal is that you will understand the importance of politics in your daily lives and have the tools to become and remain a politically educated member of American society.

Goals/Rationale

Courses in social science help students understand human behavior and cognition, and the structures of human societies, cultures and institutions.

Learning Objectives

1. Students understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies.
2. Students comprehend human differences and similarities in various psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts.
3. Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

Assistance

I want to help you do well in this course, and I hope that you will feel free to talk to me if you have any questions about the readings, concerns about the course, or for suggestions about studying and understanding the material. My scheduled office hours are listed at the beginning of the syllabus, but I would be happy to arrange an alternative time to meet if the office hours are inconvenient. Also, class time affords a perfect opportunity to ask questions, and you are encouraged to take advantage of it. I am also available for assistance after class and at any other mutually agreeable time. This syllabus is also

intended to be helpful to you. Please read it carefully because it includes material that you will need to have about the class and about your responsibilities.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

GRADING

The items described below will contribute to your final grade.

Exam I: 25%

Exam II: 25%

Final Exam: 35%

Participation: 15%

Exams

Three exams will be given throughout the quarter and will basically cover each of the three sections in class (give or take a few topics). The first midterm will cover all of the material that has been reached to that point. The second midterm will cover the material since the first midterm. The final will cover all of the material since the second midterm. In other words, **the final is not comprehensive**.

Participation and Attendance

Preparation for lecture and discussion is crucial therefore I expect you to read the material in the assigned text for each day in advance of the class. In regards to **attendance**, it is expected that students will attend class on a regular basis therefore attendance will probably be taken during most class sessions. The first reason that one's attendance is required is because attendance and participation go hand in hand. In other words, you cannot participate if you are not in class. Consequently, because class discussion is important, a portion of your final grade (described above) will reflect the quantity and quality of your class **participation**. It should not be difficult for you to obtain full participation credit if you come to class, make an effort to contribute to the class discussions and **don't intentionally disrupt the class and the instructor**. The second reason that regular class attendance is important is that some material will only be presented during class sessions and you are responsible for all of the information provided in both the class sessions and the readings. If you must miss a class, make sure to find out from another student what information was presented in class. The third reason that regular class attendance is important is because in general one's performance on examinations improves with regular class attendance. To further quantify this attendance/participation expectation, here is a template as to how the grading for this section will work. If one comes to at least 16 class sessions, not including test days, and has moderately participated in the classroom discussions, that student will receive all 15% of the attendance/participation points. If you come to 15 class sessions and moderately participate in the discussions, you will receive 14 out of the 15 percentage points for the attendance/participation portion of the grade, etc.

Students who want to do well in this particular course should follow a simple but proven pattern: come to class regularly and on time, pay attention and ask questions when you do

not understand, read thoroughly and prior to the class in which those readings will be discussed, contribute regularly to class discussions, complete all assignments carefully and in a timely manner, and use the office hours as a resource when necessary.

COURSE MATERIAL:

Required Text

Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato. 2006. *American Government: Continuity and Change, Alternate 2006 Edition* (Pearson Longman Publishing)

The required text is available at Long's, and may also be available from other campus bookstores as well.

Additional Readings

Pick up a copy of the OSU Lantern every day and read any articles that deal with some aspect of American politics. These articles will generally be discussed at the beginning of class and are a part of the participation grade.

The instructor will provide additional supplementary readings when deemed necessary. Also, video footage will sometimes be used as it relates to the specific topics on the course agenda.

COURSE POLICIES:

Missed Exams

All students are expected to take the exams at the scheduled times. If you must miss an exam for a justifiable reason, you must inform me **as soon as possible PRIOR** to the scheduled test and present documentation of the exceptional circumstance. When prior approval for missing an exam has been given, the make-up exam will be given without penalty; however, make-up exams (probably essay only) are generally harder than the regular exams so it is definitely in one's best interest to take the exams at the regularly scheduled times. Others who miss exams without prior approval will most often not be allowed to retake the exam, resulting in a grade of zero for that particular exam; however, in extraordinary circumstances, you will be allowed to retake the exam with a penalty of one letter grade for each day after the exam, including the day of the exam.

Students with Disabilities

If you have any condition, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, please notify both the instructor and Wayne DeYoung in the Political Science Department *during the first week of the quarter* so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

Academic Honesty: My expectation is that all of the work you do in this course will be your own. Consequently, I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism in any form to the university committee on academic misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy.

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS AND READINGS:

All dates are tentative; the schedule may be modified as needed.

Part 1: Foundations of Government

- Week 1 Tues 1/3: Course Introduction
 Thurs 1/5: The Political Landscape (Chapter 1)
- Week 2 Tues 1/10: The Political Landscape, cont'd (Chapter 1)
 Thurs 1/12: The Constitution (Chapter 2)
- Federalist 10 and 51 (located in the appendix to text)
 - The Constitution (located after chapter 2)
 - Declaration of Independence (located in the appendix to text)
- Week 3 Tues 1/17: Federalism (Chapter 3)
 Thurs 1/19: State Governments (Chapter 4)
- Week 4 Tues 1/24: **Midterm Exam I**
 Thurs 1/26: Civil Liberties (Chapter 5)
- Week 5 Tues 1/31: Civil Liberties, cont'd (Chapter 5)
 Thurs 2/2: Civil Rights (Chapter 6)
- Week 6 Tues 2/7: Civil Rights, cont'd (Chapter 6)
 Thurs 2/9: Civil Rights, cont'd (Chapter 6)

Part 2: Institutions of Government

- Week 7 Tues 2/14: Congress (Chapter 7)
 Thurs 2/16: The Presidency (Chapter 8)
- Week 8 Tues 2/21: **Midterm Exam II**
 Thurs 2/23: The Judiciary (Chapter 10)

Part 3: Political Behavior

- Week 9 Tues 2/28: Public Opinion and Political Socialization (Chapter 11)
 Thurs 3/2: Political Parties (Chapter 12)
- Week 10 Tues 3/7: Voting and Elections (Chapter 13)
 Thurs 3/9: The News Media (Chapter 15)

Final Examination: As scheduled by the University