

Political Science 2051
Introduction to American Government
Fall 2011

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Tues. 5:15-6:00 pm

Purpose:

American government works better to the extent that thoughtful citizens invest time and effort in making it work. And making it work requires more of us than simply making demands of it.

In this class, we will work on understanding the historical, structural, and philosophical context of modern American government and politics. Ideally, this context will provide you with a framework for making sense out of the governmental and political landscape, a landscape which often appears unnecessarily complex and even chaotic. And hopefully this understanding will facilitate your lifelong engagement in the betterment of American government and society. Said another way, my goal is to plug you in to your own government by making it seem less strange.

This course is designed to meet the goals of the LSU General Education requirements for the Social Sciences and as such is intended to introduce you to systematic inquiry into the nature of human association so that you better appreciate the complexity

Make-up tests:

If you must miss any of the three tests, you may take a make-up test on Tuesday, **November 29**, during the regular class meeting time. However, you should plan on taking a make-up test only if absolutely necessary because: a) you will probably find it more difficult than the original test; b) the last week before exams is usually not a good time to be taking a test; c) you will not have the graded test to use in studying for the cumulative final.

Readings:

Course reading will include a combination of classic texts and contemporary articles. Assignments and links to the readings will be posted on Moodle. No textbook is required for this class.

Tentative Class Schedule:

Aug. 23: Influences on the Constitution	Oct. 25: State and Local Government
Aug. 30: The Constitution & The Legislative Branch	Nov. 1: Civil Rights
Sept. 6: The Legislative Branch	Nov. 9: Civil Rights
Sept. 13: The Executive Branch	Nov. 15: TEST NO. 3; Economic Policy
Sept. 20: TEST NO. 1; The Judicial Branch	Nov. 22: Economic Policy
Sept. 27: The Bill of Rights/Civil Liberties	Nov. 29: NO CLASS; make-up day for all tests
Oct. 4: Political Culture	Friday, Dec. 2: Final Exam review session (2:00-4:00); location TBA
Oct. 11: Public Opinion & Democracy	Dec. 6: Final Exam 8:00-10:00 pm
Oct. 18: TEST NO. 2; Federalism	