

## Political Science 2051: American Government (Spring 2018)

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Instructor: Steven Brailsford; 309 Stubbs Hall

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 pm,

Thursdays 12:30-1:30 pm,

or by appointment.

Time: TTH 1:30-2:50

Place: 129 Tureaud 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

and in 300-500 words, briefly summarize it and, more importantly, critically analyze it. So for these writing assignments, I want to see that you did the reading, followed by you essentially telling me what you thought of it; what you liked/didn't like/agreed with/disagreed with, but most importantly, you must explain why.

The course consists of two in-class exams and a final exam. The in-class exams will not be cumulative and could consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay 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 doctor's note, funeral notice, or some form of documentation pertaining to a family, or other, emergency.

#### Extra Credit:

You will be given at least two chances for extra credit throughout the semester. This will likely come in the form of attendance at a lecture or presentation 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. I will conduct four(4) attendance checks randomly throughout the semester and if you're present, you will receive full credit but if you are not... you don't. Since these are random, university-excused absences will be honored, but you must provide documentation to me. Examples of excused absences, which will not endanger your grade, are familial emergencies and duties (e.g. a sudden death, attending a wedding, etc.), university-sponsored events (athletic, club-affiliated, 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. Note that the website for the Office of Disability Services is posted on the Moodle page.

#### Important Dates:

Quiz #1 .....	January 25, 2018
Writing Assignment #1 .....	February 1, 2018
Quiz #2 .....	February 6, 2018
Exam #1 .....	February 8, 2018
Writing Assignment #2 .....	February 22, 2018
Quiz #3 .....	March 1, 2018
Writing Assignment #3 .....	March 13, 2018
Quiz #4 .....	March 15, 2018
Exam #2 .....	March 20, 2018
Quiz #5 .....	April 12, 2018
Writing Assignment #4 .....	April 19, 2018
Quiz #6 .....	April 26, 2018
Final Exam .....	April 30, 2018

## Grading Policy:

Participation .....	10%
Quizzes .....	10%
Writing Assignments .....	15%
Exams .....	40%
Final Exam .....	25%

## Reading Schedule and Topic Outline:

## Section I: The Philosophy and Constitution of the United States

Week 1 January 11	The Gang Goes to College Syllabus Day/Introduction No Readings
Week 2 January 16	The Gang Gets Constitutional Intro to American Government and the Philosophy of the Declaration of Independence Read:Chapter 1; pgs. 1 10 Chapter 2; pgs. 22 27 Declaration of Independence; pgs. A3 A6
January 18	The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution Read:Chapter 2; pgs. 27 50 Articles of Confederation; pgs. A7 A12 The Constitution of the United States; pgs. A13 A23 James Madison Federalist #1; pgs. A34 A39
Week 3 January 23	The Gang Makes Amends Origin of the Bill of Rights Read:Chapter 4; pgs. 84 93
January 25	Civil Liberties Read:Chapter 4; pgs. 93 107 Amendments to the Constitution; pgs. A24-A25
Week 4 January 30	The Gang Gets Civil Civil Rights Read:Chapter 4; pgs. 107 117 Challenging the Status Quo, Frederick Douglass [Middle]
February 1	Federalism: What Makes America Read:Chapter 3; pgs. 58 77 Defending A Republican Form of Government, James Madison [Middle] The Marble Cake Theory of Federalism, Mortin Grodzins [Middle]
Week 5 February 6	The Gang Goes America All Over Everybody's Butt The Separation of Powers and Exam Review Read:Chapter 3; pgs. 77 82
February 8	EXAM 1 No Readings

## Section II: The Structure of the American Government

Week 6	The Gang Watches Goes Bureaucrazy
February 13	Mardi Gras Break (NO CLASS)
February 15	Bureacracy
	Read:Chapter 7, pgs. 206 221
	Bureaucracy and the Public Interest, E. Pendleton H[Missle]
Week 7	The Gang Actually Reads a Book
February 20	Congress: The Electoral Connection, Part 1
	Read:Pages 1 77
February 22	Congress: The Electoral Connection, Part 2
	Read:Pages 81 180
Week 8	The Gang Goes to Court
February 27	The President: King of Democracy
	Read:Chapter 6, pgs. 170 197
	Theories of the Presidency [Moodle]
	The Presidential Power to Persuade, Richard Ne [Wood]
March 1	The Judicial Branch: It Rules
	Read:Chapter 8, pgs. 240 253
	Defending the Judiciary, Alexander Hamill [Moodle]
Week 9	The Gang Runs for Of ce
March 6	Campaigns
	Read:Chapter 10; pgs. 344 349
March 8	Elections
	Read:Chapter 10; pgs. 314 334
Week 10	The Gang Discusses Her Emails
March 13	How Voters Decide
	Read:Chapter 10; pgs. 355 344
	Selling Candidates as Products, Joe McGinniss [Missle]
March 15	Review/Catch-Up Day
	No Readings
March 20	EXAM 2
	No Readings

## Section III: Democratic Politics

Week 11 March 22	The Gang Parties Political Parties Read:Chapter 11; pgs. 360 369 Electoral Basis of the Two-Party System, Maurice D. [Moodle] Urban Political Machines, Harold Gos[ Moodle]
March 27 & 29	Spring Break (NO CLASS)
Week 12 April 3	The Gang Gets Opinionated Public Opinion Read:Chapter 9; pgs. 276 280 The Pseudo-Environment of Public Opinion, Walter Lipp[ Moodle] Leaders Mold and In uence Public Opinion, V. O. Key[Moodle]
April 5	The Media Read:Chapter 9; pgs. 299 309 Language and Politics, George Or[ Moodle]
Week 13 April 10	The Gang Talks About Mass Incarceration Documentary 13th No Readings
April 12	Documentary 13th No Readings
Week 14 April 17	The Nightman Cometh Domestic and Economic Policy Read:Chapter 13; pgs. 428 446 The Case for Liberalism, Franklin D. Roose[ Moodle] The Case for Conservatism, Milton Fried[ Moodle]
April 19	Domestic and Economic Policy, cont'd.
Week 15 April 24	The Gang Wrestles for the Troops Foreign Policy Read:Chapter 14; pgs. 458 469 The Case for the Cold War, Harry S. Tru[ Moodle] The Case for Preemptive War, George W. [ Moodle]
April 26	Review/Catch-Up Day No Readings
April 30	FINAL EXAM, 3:00 5:00