

Political Science 2051: American Government (Fall 2017)

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30–10:30 am,
Thursdays 12:00–1:00 pm,
or by appointment.

Time: MWF 8:30–9:20

Place: 0027 Allen 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

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.

Reading Schedule and Topic Outline:

Section I: The Philosophy and Constitution of the United States

Week 1 August 21	The Gang Goes to College Syllabus Day/Introduction No Readings
August 23	Rational Choice and Collective Action Read:Chapter 1; pgs. 1-6
August 25	Natural Rights and the Philosophy of the Declaration of Independence Read:Chapter 2; pgs. 30–37 Declaration of Independence; pgs. A3–A6
Week 2 August 28	The Gang Gets Constitutional The Articles of Confederation and the Constitutional Convention Read:Chapter 2; pgs. 37–46 Articles of Confederation; pgs A7–A12
August 30	The Constitution Read:Chapter 2; pgs. 46–57 The Constitution of the United States; pgs. A13–A23
September 1	Federalists vs. Antifederalists: Fighting for America's Future Read:Chapter 2; pgs. 57–62 James Madison, Federalist #10; pgs. A34–A39
Week 3 September 4	The Gang Makes Amends Labor Day (NO CLASS)
September 6	Origin of the Bill of Rights Read:Chapter 4; pgs. 102–112
September 8	Civil Liberties Read:Chapter 4; pgs. 112–128 Amendments to the Constitution; pgs. A24-A25
Week 4 September 11	The Gang Gets Civil Civil Liberties, cont'd Read:Chapter 4; pgs. 128–143
September 13	Civil Rights Read:Chapter 5; pgs. 144–164 Challenging the Status Quo, Frederick Douglass [Moodle]
September 15	EXAM 1 No Readings

Section II: The Structure of the American Government

Week 5 September 18	The Gang Goes America All Over Everybody's Butt Federalism: What Makes America America Read:Chapter 3; pgs. 72–83 Defending A Republican Form of Government, James Madison [Moodle]
September 20	Federalism continued Read:Chapter 3; pgs. 83–92 The "Marble Cake" Theory of Federalism, Mortin Grodzin [Moodle]
September 22	The Separation of Powers Read:Chapter 3; pgs. 92–101
Week 6 September 25	The Gang Watches Schoolhouse Rock Congress: Quagmire of Freedom Read:Chapter 6; pgs. 182–199
September 27	Congressional Organization and Lawmaking Read:Chapter 6, pgs. 199–215
September 29	How Congress Decides Read:Chapter 6, pgs. 224–238
Week 7 October 2	The Gang Meets the President The President: King of Democracy Read:Chapter 7, pgs. 240–253 Theories of the Presidency [Moodle]
October 4	The Presidential Government Read:Chapter 7, pgs. 261–270 The Presidential Power to Persuade, Richard Neustadt [Moodle]
October 6	Guest Lecture: Executive Bureaucracy No Readings
Week 8 October 9	The Gang Goes to Court Bureacracy Continued Read:Chapter 8, pgs. 290–311
October 11	The Judicial Branch: It Rules Read:Chapter 9, pgs. 328–345 Defending the Judiciary, Alexander Hamilton [Moodle]
October 13	Judicial Decision Making Read:Chapter 9, pgs. 360–374

Week 9 October 16	The Gang Runs for Office Campaigns Read:Chapter 11; pgs. 470–477
October 18	Elections Read:Chapter 11; pgs. 426–435
October 20	Fall Break (NO CLASS)
Week 10 October 23	The Gang Discusses Her Emails How Voters Decide Read:Chapter 11; pgs. 455–470 Selling Candidates as Products, Joe McGinnis [Moodle]
October 25	Analysis of the 2016 Elections: What Happened? No Readings
October 27	Review/Catch-Up Day No Readings
 Section III: Democratic Politics 	
Week 11 October 30	The Gang Parties EXAM 2 No Readings
November 1	Political Parties Read:Chapter 12; pgs. 490–505 Electoral Basis of the Two-Party System, Maurice Duverger [Moodle]
November 3	History of Political Parties Read:Chapter 12; pgs. 519–533 Urban Political Machines, Harold Gosnell [Moodle]
Week 12 November 6	The Gang Gets Opinionated Public Opinion Read:Chapter 10; pgs. 376–386 The Paranoid Style in American Politics, Richard Hofstadter [Moodle]
November 8	Shaping Opinions Read:Chapter 10; pgs. 399–413 Leaders Mold and Influence Public Opinion, V. O. Key, [Moodle]
November 10	Interest Groups Read:Chapter 13; pgs. 538–548

Week 13 November 13	The Gang Lobbies Washington Groups and Interests Contd Read: Chapter 13; pgs. 548–555 Attacking Pluralist Politics, Theodore J. Lowy [Moodle]
November 15	The Media Read: Chapter 14; pgs. 578–596 Language and Politics, George Orwell [Moodle]
November 17	No Class - Book Review due by 11:59PM
Week 14 November 20	The Nightman Cometh Domestic Policy Read: The Case for Liberalism, Franklin D. Roosevelt [Moodle] The Case for Conservatism, Milton Friedman [Moodle]
November 22	Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASS)
November 24	Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASS)
Week 15 November 27	The Gang Wrestles for the Troops Economic Policy Read:
November 29	Foreign Policy Read: The Case for the Cold War, Harry S. Truman [Moodle] The Case for Preemptive War, George W. Bush [Moodle]
December 1	Review/Catch-Up Day No Readings
December 4	FINAL EXAM, 10:00-12:00