

Political Science 2051

Introduction to American Government Fall 2017

Professor: Kevin V. Mulcahy

6:00 pm – 8:50 pm Wednesday 220 Stubbs

Office: 221 Stubbs

Hours: 2:00-6:00 M-F, or by appointment

See Wikipedia 'Kevin V. Mulcahy' for professional background

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide an overview of various theories on the American form of government. Three major areas relating to America's political system will be highlighted in this course: The Constitutional System, Governmental Institutions, and Electoral Processes.

My goal is to give a good college civics course: to improve your capacity to act as informed and concerned citizens. Voting alone should be a decision informed by a familiarity their implications.

This course is a general education course and has been designed with the LSU understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic

Required Books and Materials

The following material constitutes the required readings and materials for this course:

Patterson, *We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics*, 12th edition, 2017. McGraw Hill.

Pocket Copy of the US Constitution (which will be provided free of charge).

Plunkitt, George W, and William L. Riordon. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*. (2014)

Minimum of 13 Scantrons and a #2 pencil (**Must bring a Scantron and a #2 pencil to EVERY class period! Scantrons are necessary for quizzes.**)

Class Decorum

In-Class Essays

There will be three in-class tests with short answer and essay based off your understanding of the constitution. The following are the general topics for the essays. The essays should be three paragraphs of approximately 7-8 sentences each. There will be no makeups! Each test will be worth 60 points for a total of 180 points.

- 1) Bill of Rights, September 20th
- 2) Checks and Balances, October 18th
- 3) Electoral Systems, November 15th
- 4) *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*,
politics including among others, graft, patronage, civil service,
partisan loyalty, the drink. November 27th

Final Exam

The final is multiple choice AND 2 moderate length essays on anything related to the course material over the semester. The final exam is 120 points.

Extra Credit

Extra credit is available two ways.
It is possible to receive 120 point on quizzes which are graded out of 100.
Optional Essay; take on _____ and argue to the contrary. 1,000 words; font etc. cover sheet and title page. Is worth 20 points and is due at the final exam. A total of 40 extra credit points are available.

Grading

This grading scale established by the university will apply to the class: This is out of a total of 400 points (with 440 total possible points)

A+	388-400	A	376-387	A-	360-375
B+	348-359	B	336-347	B-	320-335
C+	308-319	C	296-307	C-	280-

Course Outline

Aug. 23 Hand out syllabus; Introduction, Political Thinking and Political Cultures.

Movie: *Contrasting Images of America*

Part One: The American Constitutional System

Aug. 30 Constitutional Democracy; Patterson - Chapter 2

Sep.6 Quiz #1 on Chapter 2

Federalism; Patterson - Chapter 3

Sept. 13 Quiz #2 on Chapter 3

Civil Liberties; Patterson - Chapter 4

Sept.20 Quiz #3 on Chapter 4

Equal Rights; Patterson - Chapter 5 **In-Class Essay 1**

Movie: *Berkeley in the Sixties (1)*

Part Two: The Institutions of Government

Sept .27 Quiz #4 on Chapter 5

Congress

Nov. 22 Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 27 Quiz #12 on Chapter 9,
Essay on *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*

Dec. __ Final Exam as scheduled. It is cumulative. The format is multiple
Choice, short answer, essay.
