

Instructor: Moriah Harman
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Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

Course Description

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. Topics are divided into three broad categories. Part One of the class focuses on the origins of U.S. politics, the Constitution, and what it means to have a federal system of government. Part Two of the class is an overview of American political institutions (Congress, the presidency and federal bureaucracy, the judiciary), political parties and elections, public opinion, the mass media, and interest groups. Part Three of the class focuses on policymaking.

Course Goals: The course is designed to make you think critically about how U.S. politics work. We will start with a historical perspective, reflecting on the founding and the Constitution, we will spend time exploring and discussing how the course material relates to modern political events. It is my hope that throughout this class, and hereafter, you will become more politically informed and engaged citizens.

Our activities in class may take a variety of formats. Class meetings will be a combination of both lecture and discussions, which is why it is important you show up prepared to contribute to discussion. I want to know what you learn and what you think about the readings on a weekly basis. At times, we may watch videos and I may ask you to work together in small groups.

Political topics and concepts often reveal differences in opinion. While some of us may have strong opinions and/or disagree with others about topics and concepts that come up throughout the semester, I ask that we all listen to each other thoughtfully, with civility and respect. It is perfectly okay to disagree and feel differently about things, but there is a line. I will not tolerate disrespectful remarks of any kind, regardless of the subject matter at hand. We are all adults, and it is important we all work toward maintaining an e

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct. Cheating, plagiarizing, collaborating with others without permission, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Accommodations

If you require accommodations, it is your responsibility to register for those accommodations and obtain the appropriate documentation from the Office of Disability Services. Please inform me of your situation as soon as possible (ideally, in the first week or two of the semester) so arrangements can be made.

Deadlines

As stated, deadlines for the exams are listed in the course schedule on this syllabus and on Moodle. We have deadlines for a reason, and I take them seriously. I have designed the exams in particular so that you have some flexibility in when you take them. It is my hope that providing the window of time outlined for the exams will make completing the exams easier and more convenient for those of you with busy schedules. Makeup exams will only be given to individuals who reach out to me with university-excused absences and will be open for a shorter window of time.

Course Schedule

Please pay careful attention to the due dates for the three exams. Note that the schedule is on Moodle. section

Part One: The Origins of U.S. Politics

Week #1: January 12th and 14th

Introduction to U.S. Government and Politics

- < Carefully read the course syllabus
- < Read *Government in America*, Chapter 1

Week #2: January 19th and 21st

U.S. Constitution

- < Read *Government in America*, Chapter 2 and Appendix (Declaration of Independence, Federalist No. 10 & No. 51, and U.S. Constitution with Amendments)
- ❖ January 20th marks the last day for dropping courses without rece (deadline: 4:30pm)

Week #3: January 26th and 28th

Federalism

- < Read *Government in America*, Chapter 3

Week #4: February 2nd and 4th

Civil Liberties

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 4

Week #5: February 9th and 11th

Civil Rights

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 5

Exam #1: Will be opened at 1:00pm Monday, February 8th, and closed at 1:00pm Friday, February 12th.

Part Two: People, Parties, and Political Institutions

Week #6: February 16th and 18th

Public Opinion

- ◁ Tuesday, February 16th = Mardi Gras Holiday (no class meeting on Tuesday)
- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 6

Week #7: February 23rd and 25th

Mass Media and Interest Groups

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapters 7 and 10

Week #8: March 2nd and 4th

Political Parties and Elections

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapters 8 and 9

Week #9: March 9th and 11th

Congress

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 11

Week #10: March 16th and 18th

The Presidency and the Federal Bureaucracy

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapters 12 and 14

Exam #2: Will be opened at 1:00pm Monday, March 15th, and closed at 1:00pm Friday, March 19th.

Week #11: March 23rd and 25th

The Judicial Branch

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 15
- ◁ Thursday, March 25th = March Break (no class meeting on Thursday)
- ❖ March 26th marks the last day to drop courses or resign from the University (deadline: 4:30pm)

Part Three: Policymaking

Week #12: March 30th and April 1st

Budget Policymaking

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 13

Week #13: April 6th and 8th

Economic and Social Welfare Policymaking

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 16

Week #14: April 13th and 15th

Health Care, Environment, and Energy Policymaking

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 17

Week #15: April 20th and 22nd

National Security Policymaking

- ◁ Read *Government in America*, Chapter 18
- ◁ Thursday, April 22nd = last day of class