

American Government
Political Science 2051 (Section 1)
Spring 2021

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. The first part of the course examines the ideological, historical, socioeconomic, and constitutional contexts of politics in the United States. The second part explores components of the political process including interest groups, political parties, and elections. The third part focuses on the institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policy.

Student Evaluations and Policies

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Practice Chapter Quizzes (18 @ 0.5% each):

Reports 7 @ 3% each) # 21%

Exam #1: 20%

Exam #2: 23%

Exam #3 (Final Exam) 27%

Total = 100%

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97-100 = A+

93-96 = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-79 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

67-69 = D+

63-66 = D

60-62 = D-

<60 = F

Note: I generally round final averages. In other words, if your final average is an 89.5 you will receive an A. If your final average is 89.4 your letter grade is a B+.

Video Presentations

For each chapter of the text, I provide a series of video presentations (usually 4 videos for each chapter with a combined run time of anywhere from 40-60 minutes). The videos for each week along with the slides are provided on the course Moodle page. These presentations are intended to highlight aspects of the reading that will assist you in grasping the central concepts. My goal is to provide illustrative examples where needed while demonstrating how the various concepts are interrelated and significant. Please recognize that the video presentations should not be viewed as a substitute for carefully reading and taking thorough notes on the text. I cover many of the main points in each chapter, but I do not cover every definition and concept. Note that I have adopted a minimalist approach with the slide presentations. In other words, I do not include extraneous photos or graphs other than what I believe to be necessary for conveying the central ideas (DQG FRQFHSWV %\ DYRLGLQJ D 'GD]]OLQJμ SRZHU SRLQW SUHVH WKH PDWHULDO \RX QHHG WR NQRZ ZKLOH DOORZLQJ \RX WR SU printing the slides so that you may take notes on them as you listen). I strongly suggest reading and taking notes on the chapter prior to watching the video presentations. Once you are familiar with the concepts covered in the book, you will find the presentations more useful.

Practice Quizzes

A practice quiz on Moodle has been designed to accompany each chapter of the text. Each quiz contains approximately 12 multiple choice questions on concepts covered in the text. While these quizzes are not comprehensive in their coverage, they should help you assess your grasp of some key concepts and hopefully help you learn more of the material in preparation for the exams. Occasionally, some of the quiz questions appear on the exams. NOTE: You may take each quiz as many times as you want to improve your score up until the time when the quiz is closed (note the times listed on the syllabus). Each quiz is worth 0.25 percent of your course grade (for a total of 9 percent of your course grade). Note that the practice quizzes are due at 6:00 p.m. on the dates listed on the syllabus (usually on Fridays always). Because you may encounter technical difficulties

plagiarism. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations
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Computer Problems

If you experience a computer difficulty in submitting a report or in taking a quiz or exam, it is your responsibility to email me about this when it occurs and to document the problem. Quizzes and exams are graded automatically. Check to see that your grade appears soon after you submit each one. It is your

Course Schedule

Please pay careful attention to the due dates for the various quizzes, assignments, and exams. Note W K D W W K H V F K H G X O H L V V X E M H F W W R P L Q R U F K D Q U H H D Q G D Q \ course Moodle page.

Week #1: January 11-16

Introduction to U.S. Government and Politics

- f Carefully read the course syllabus.
- f Read Government in America Chapter 1.
- f Video Presentations: Chapter 1.
- f Practice Quiz Chapter 1 to be completed Friday, January 15 at 6:00 p.m.

Week #2: January 17-23

U.S. Constitution

- f Read Government in America Chapter 2 and Appendix D (Declaration of Independence, Federalist No. 10 & No. 51, and U.S. Constitution with Amendments).
 - f Video Presentations: Chapter 2.
 - f Practice Quiz Chapter 2 to be completed Friday, January 22 at 6:00 p.m.
 - f Work on Report #1 (due on Tuesday, January 26)
- ™ Wednesday, January 20 L Q D O G D W H I R U G U R S S L Q J F R X U V H Z L W K R X W U H F H L V

Week #3: January 24-30

Federalism

- f Submit Report #1 by Tuesday, January 26 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read Government in America Chapter 3.
- f Video Presentation Chapter 3.
- f Practice Quiz Chapter 3 to be completed Friday, January 29 at 6:00 p.m.

Week #4: January 31 - February 6

Civil Liberties

- f Read Government in America Chapter 4.
- f Video Presentations: Chapter 4.
- f Practice Quiz: Chapter 4 to be completed Friday, February 5 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Work on Report #2 (due on Tuesday, February 9).

Week #5: February 7-13

Civil Rights

- f Submit Report #2 by Tuesday, February 9 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read Government in America Chapter 5.
- f Video Presentations: Chapter 5.
- f Practice Quiz: Chapter 5 to be completed Friday, February 12 at 6:00 p.m.

EXAM #1

Week #7: February 21-27

Mass Media and Interest Groups

- f Make certain you have completed Practice Quiz for Chapter 10 by Monday, February 22 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read Government in America Chapters 7 and 10.
- f Video Presentations: Chapters 7 and 10.
- f Practice Quizzes: Chapters 7 and 10 to be completed by Friday, February 26 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Work on Report #3 (due on Tuesday, March 2).

Week #8: February 28- March 6

Congress

- f Submit Report #3 by Tuesday, March 2 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read Government in America Chapter 11.
- f Video Presentations: Chapter 11.
- f Practice Quiz: Chapter 11 to be completed by Friday, March 5 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Work on Report #4 (due on Tuesday, March 9).

Week #9: March 7-13

Political Parties and Elections

- f Submit Report #4 by Tuesday, March 9 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read Government in America Chapters 8 and 9.
- f Video Presentations: Chapters 8 and 9.
- f Practice Quizzes: Chapters 8 and 9 to be completed by Friday, March 12 at 6:00 p.m.

EXAM #2 (Covering Chapters 6-11) May be taken anytime from 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 14 through 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 16

Week #10: March 14-20

The Presidency and the Federal Bureaucracy

- f Make certain you take Exam #2 710C q xam #2 710C q xam #2 710ET 7 f0 6120 0 16t 6:00 p.m. (q 0.00000f 14

Week #14: April 11-17

Health Care, Environment, and Energy Policymaking

- f Submit Report #6 by Tuesday April 13 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read *Government in America* Chapter 17.
- f Video Presentations: Chapter 17.
- f Practice Quiz for Chapter 17 to be completed by Friday April 16 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Work on Report #7 (due on Tuesday April 20).

Week #15: April 18-24

National Security Policymaking

- f Submit Report #7 by Tuesday April 20 at 6:00 p.m.
- f Read *Government in America* Chapter 18.
- f Video Presentations: Chapter 18.
- f Practice Quiz for Chapters 18 to be completed by Friday April 23 at 6:00 p.m.

Exam #3 (Covering Chapters 12-18) May be taken anytime from 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 27 through 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 29.