

POLI 2051: Introduction to American Government

MWF 9:30 AM-10:20 AM

131 Allen

Instructor: Tatum Taylor

Email: (ttayl38@lsu.edu)

Office: 310 Stubbs Hall

Office Hours: T/TH 10:00-12:00 and by appointment

Aim of the Course:

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of American government and politics and critically engage the class with issues and themes related to the American political system. We will examine the fundamental components of American government including representation, political institutions, mass participation, and the policy-making process. Students will end the course familiar with the decision making-process in the American political system.

This course is a general education course and has been designed with the LSU learning competency statement in mind: "LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference."

Structure of the Course:

The course will be divided into 3 units, with an exam being given at the end of each unit to tes0 1 72.024 326.30

Text:

The Struggle for Democracy (12th Edition) (ISBN: 9780134571706).

Additional readings are posted to Moodle. I may assign more readings throughout the semester as I come across them and post those to Moodle as well. Students are expected to have completed the readings for each day listed on the schedule BEFORE we meet for class that day.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend every class and pay attention to the instructor. Roll will not be taken at every class, but the pop quizzes cannot be made up, so it is in your best interest to attend class. The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped which will serve as a means of overcoming a quiz missed due to illness, etc. If you do experience an exceptional problem preventing your class attendance, come see me as soon as possible and we may be able to work out a solution. There is nothing I can do about prior absences/late work at the end of the semester. Regular attendance and keeping up with the course readings are necessary to do well in this class.

Classroom Etiquette:

Since this is a small class, I will frequently include class discussions along with lectures into our meetings. It is important that you conduct yourselves in an appropriate manner in the classroom. Classroom etiquette requires that students be attentive and respectful to one another (this means listening when others are making comments or asking questions). Please make sure that your phones and other devices are turned off or are silenced during class time so they do not serve as a distraction to you and those around you.

Technology:

I should mention now that numerous studies support increased information retention from handwritten notes as opposed to typed notes. That being said, laptops are allowed in class to take notes and refer to readings. If it is clear you are using the laptop for another purpose, I will ask you to put it away. Please make sure cellphones are silenced and put away during class time. If I notice students obviously on their phones or texting during class I will ask you to put it away or leave the class.

Student Obligations:

It is your responsibility to come to class having read the material and to be ready to discuss the material assigned. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask. The only way I can know which items you are struggling with is if you bring them to my attention. I am more than happy to go over unclear topics again, time permitting. As a student it is also your responsibility to do your own work. Under no circumstances will cheating be tolerated. Any cheating or plagiarism will be immediately reported to the dean of students.

Students with Special Needs Policy:

If you have special needs that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible, and see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Services so that such accommodations may be arranged. The Office of Disability Services is located in 115 Johnston Hall and may be reached at 225- 578- 5919.

Course Calendar:

Unit I: Foundations

Week #1: August 20-24: Introduction to U.S. Government and Politics

8/20 – Intro & Syllabus

8/22 – Ch 1

8/24 – Ch 1

Week #2: August 27-31: The Constitution

8/27 – Ch 2

The Constitution

The Declaration of Independence

8/29 – Ch 2

Federalist #10 and #51

8/31 – Ch 2

Week #3: September 3-7: Federalism

9/3 – Labor Day, no class

9/5 – Ch 3

9/7 – Ch 3

Week #4: September 10-14: Civil Rights and Liberties

9/10 – Ch 15

9/12 – Ch 15

9/14 ± Ch 16

Week #5: September 17-21: Civil Liberties

9/17 – No class, watch *The Sixties: A Long March to Freedom*

9/19 – Make up da

Week #10: October 22-26: Interest Groups

10/22 – Ch 7

10/24 – Make up day/exam review

10/26 – **Exam 2**

Unit III: Institutions