

POLITICAL SCIENCE 101
Introduction to American Government
Autumn, 2005

Professor Therese Filicko
Office Hrs: TBA
Cell Phone: 614-571-8193
email: filicko.1@osu.edu

Classes meet as follows:

- 101 (Columbus) meets Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 9:30a – 10:48a in BO 124
- 101E (Del Ctr) meets Tuesday, Thursday – 1:30p – 3:45p in DC 217
- 101N (Marion) meets Tuesday, Thursday – 8:00p – 10:15p in MR 284

NOTE 1: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

NOTE 2: Any student intending to graduate this quarter should speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

The ultimate authority in American government is said to be "the people." In this course, students will examine how the institutions of American government and the behavior of political actors reflect this. We will begin with a review of ideas about human nature and the nature and role of government as they were discussed at the Founding and institutionalized in the Constitution. This includes a discussion of the nature of federalism. After a brief discussion of public opinion, we will move on to an examination of the ways in which the attitudes of the masses are channeled to the government; these include political parties, interest groups, and the media.

The major focus of the class will be an examination of the nature of government institutions to see if and how they provide for the needs or desires of the public -- *en masse* or as channeled through the mentioned linkages. This includes the Presidency, the Congress, the Judiciary, and the bureaucracy.

The successful student in this introduction to American politics will leave the course with:

- a mastery of the basic information about American politics, including the ideas that shape American politics, the institutions of American government, and the linkages between the American people and their elected officials;
- knowledge of current American politics and how current events fit with class discussions of institutions and ideas; and
- the ability to participate in discussions of American politics.

Required Books:

Welch, Susan et al. 2006 *Understanding American Government*. (with InfoTrac) 8th Edition. Belmont CA. Wadsworth.

Serow, Ann G. and Everett C. Ladd (Eds) 2000. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*. 2nd Edition. Baltimore: Lanahan. (NOTE: This text is noted below as "Lanahan.")

Daily Newspaper. *The Columbus Dispatch*, *The New York Times*, or something similar. You may choose to read the newspaper(s) online.

Requirements:

- 20% Final. There will be a cumulative final exam.
- 20% Paper. Paper guidelines will be distributed. We will discuss these in class.
- 30% Midterms (15% each). The midterms are noted on the syllabus. Specific dates will be announced shortly after the beginning of the quarter.
- 10% Current Events quizzes. Dates to be announced.
- 10% Class Participation. Note that class participation includes daily current events discussions as well as discussions about the materials in the texts.
- 10% Homework.

Course Outline, including Reading Assignments

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

I. Introduction and Framework

- A. Review of syllabus
- B. Framework for thinking about politics and some definitions

Readings: Welch, 1
Lanahan, 1-4, 8

II. Philosophical foundations of American government

- A. Characteristics of Democracy
- B. Classical Tradition and the Enlightenment tradition
- C. Ideology -- The Normative Questions
- D. How do governments decide what to do?

Readings: Welch, 1 (continued)
Lanahan, 1-4, 8 (continued)

III. The Founding and Constitutional Framework

- A. Historical Background
- B. Battle for Ratification/ Federalist Debate
- C. The Bill of Rights/ Civil Rights
- D. Constitution Today (see book re: amendment procedures, etc)
- E. American Identity

Readings: Welch, 2
Lanahan, 9-14

IV. Federalism

adings: Welch, 3
Lanahan, 9-21

MIDTERM EXAM #1: The first midterm exam will include material covered up to this point.

PART TWO: THE ROLE OF THE MASSES & LINKS TO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

I. Policy-making in American politics is assumed to be in response to public opinion at some level. That is, politics at the elite level originates in the masses or in responses to the attitudes and values held by the American electorate.

- A. Role of the public in American democracy
 - 1. Public opinion
 - 2. Political participation

Readings: Welch, 4; 7, pp 196-198; 8 pp213-228 & 245 – 249
Lanahan, 59-63

B. Linkages groups

- 1. Interest groups

Readings: Welch, 6
Lanahan, 64-68

- 2. Political parties

Readings: Welch, 7
Lanahan, 79-81

- 3. The media

Readings: Welch, 5
Lanahan, 84, 86, 87

C. Elections, Money and Politics

Readings: Welch, 8 - finish reading chapter; 9
Lanahan, 71, 75, 76, 78

MIDTERM EXAM #2: The second midterm exam will cover material from this second section (Linkages).

PART THREE: INSTITUTIONS

I. Nature of Institutions

II. Congress

A. Institutional Side

B. The Role of Staff

C. The Electoral Side (Campaign and Elections)

D. Policy-Making

Readings: Welch, 10, review Fed. 10
Lanahan, 15, 23, 24, 29, 31

III. Executive

A. Presidency

B. Bureaucracy

Readings: Welch, 11 - 12

Lanahan, 32-34

IV. Judiciary

A. Framework

B. Jurisdiction

C. Question of Judicial Theory

Readings: Welch, 13

Lanahan, 43-46

VI. POLICY

REVIEW: Last Day of Class

FINAL EXAM:

101 (Columbus): Weds., Dec. 7 9:30-11:48

101E (DC): TBA

101N (Marion): TBA

Other Important Dates:

Nov. 11 – Veterans' Day – No Classes

Nov. 24 – Thanksgiving – No Classes

Nov. 25 – Columbus Day observed – No Classes

Dec. 2 – Last Day of Class

Note: A calendar with quizzes, homeworks, and midterms noted will be handed out shortly after the quarter begins.