

**INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**  
**Political Science 101**  
**Autumn 2005**  
**T Th: 7:30-9:18 a.m.**

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**Office Hours:**  
**Tuesdays 9:30 – 11:30**  
**and by appointment**

**Goals/Rationale:**

Courses in social science help students understand human behavior and cognition, and the structures of human societies, cultures and institutions.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Students understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies.
2. Students comprehend human differences and similarities in various psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts.
3. Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to both the theory and practice of American government. We will begin by outlining the broad logic underlying the formation of governments as a solution to collective action problems and then move to a specific focus on the formation and development of American democracy. First we will examine the founding principles and texts from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Next we will turn our attention to the formal institutions of American government with the aim of understanding the complex web of relationships among these institutions. During the second half of the course, attention will shift away from the formal institutions to the avenues for public influence on policy. We will conclude with a study of the continuing struggle over both the definition and the extension of civil liberties and rights.

It is my hope that this course will provide students with a structured opportunity to struggle with many of the issues challenging both scholars of American politics and concerned citizens. What roles do the rules of the game play in determining outcomes? Who participates and why? How should individual rights and liberties and the needs/desires of the community be balanced? How have both formal and informal institutions of government developed over time, and how well are they responding to the changing needs of the American polity? The attempt to address these and other questions will provide the foundations for course readings, lectures, and discussions.

Students who want to do well in this course should follow a simple but proven formula: come to class regularly and on time; pay attention and ask questions when you do not understand; contribute regularly to class discussions; complete assignments carefully and in a timely manner; and finally, use office hours as a resource and feel free to contact the instructor if you are still experiencing difficulties after completion of the previously outlined steps.

## Course Readings

The following books are required reading and are available for purchase at SBX.

Kernell, Samuel and Gary C. Jacobson. 2006. *The Logic of American Politics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Nelson, Michael, ed. 2005. *The Elections of 2004*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

In addition to the texts, students are expected to familiarize themselves with current events as they pertain to the course material by reading the *New York Times* each weekday. Coverage of current events will be incorporated into lectures, class discussions, assignments, and exams.

## Course Requirements and Grading

**Participation.** Students are expected to read assigned materials prior to the class period in which they are to be discussed and should come to each class prepared to participate. Class participation will involve two components: careful and respectful attention to the contribution of classmates and regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussions that demonstrate an understanding of the readings. I will distribute discussion questions for each set of readings prior to the class period in which they are to be discussed; you should use these questions to assist you as you prepare for both the class discussions and the exams. In addition, there will be several short in class activities and assignments; if you are absent for those activities, your participation grade will be penalized. There are no make-ups for these in-class activities.

**Papers.** Students will be required to submit two essays during the quarter. Each paper will require students to demonstrate mastery of the course material, the ability to conduct independent research, and critical thinking. The first paper is due in class on October 20, and the second essay is due in class on November 22. More details about the paper assignments will be distributed in class.

**Activities.** Students will be assigned a series of activities designed to introduce students to many of the available American politics resources. These assignments will involve the completion of a short task and generally will include a short writing assignment (1 typed page or less). Since activity assignments will draw on unfolding current events, they often will be made on short notice. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Exams.** There will be a midterm exam scheduled for October 27. A final exam will take place on December 5 as scheduled by the University Registrar.

**Course Grade.** Course grades will be assigned using the following formula:

Participation	10%
Paper #1	20%
Paper #2	20%
Activities	10%
Midterm #1	20%
Final Exam	20%

**Late Assignments and Missed Exams.** Late papers will be penalized one grade for each day they are late. Activity assignments must be turned in during the class period in which they are due. Late activity assignments will receive a grade of zero, and there are no make-ups for the activity assignments. Failure to take exams at the scheduled time also will result in a grade of

zero. Exceptions to this policy must be cleared in advance and can only be granted when students present documentation of exceptional circumstances.

**Attendance.** Class participation is a vital component of this class; therefore, attendance is both critical and required. Attendance will be taken each class period, and students who miss more than two classes will find their final grades reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional absence over the two-class limit. In contrast, students with perfect attendance records whose final grades fall in a gray zone on the border between grades will be rewarded for regular attendance. It is your responsibility to make arrangements with a responsible classmate to obtain notes for missed classes.

**Academic Honesty.** All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the University committee on academic misconduct and handled according to University policy.

**Disability.** Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner. Course materials are available in alternative formats upon request. For such materials, please contact Mr. Wayne DeYoung, 2140 Derby Hall, 154 North Oval Mall, 292-2880.

**Office Hours.** If you find yourself experiencing any difficulties with the course materials or assignments, you should speak with me as soon as possible. Taking corrective steps early is a strategy that promotes mastery of the material and a desirable outcome in terms of your grade. In addition, please feel free to stop by to discuss any other course-related concerns or feedback you might have. I will be available in my office on Tuesdays between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. If my regular office hours are inconvenient for you, we can arrange an appointment that fits into your schedule.

**Course Outline and Reading Schedule**

September 22	Course Introduction and Overview
<i>Foundations of American Government</i>	
September 27	The Logic of American Politics Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 1
September 29	The Founding and the Constitution Read: <i>Logic</i> , Appendix 2 and Appendix 3
October 4	The Founding and the Constitution Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 2
October 6	The Founding and the Constitution Read: <i>Logic</i> , Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 <i>Elections</i> , Chapter 1
October 11	Federalism Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 3
<i>Institutions of American Government</i>	
October 13	Congress Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 6 <i>Elections</i> , Chapter 8
October 18	The Federal Judiciary Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 9

<b>October 20</b>	<b>Paper #1 Due at Beginning of Class</b>
October 20	The Federal Judiciary Read: <i>New York Times</i> coverage of Supreme Court confirmation process
October 25	The Presidency Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 7 <i>Elections</i> , Chapter 7
<b>October 27</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
<b><i>Public Influence on National Policy</i></b>	
November 1	Public Opinion Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 10 <i>Elections</i> , Chapter 9
November 3	Elections Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 11
November 8	Elections Read: <i>Elections</i> , Chapters 2 and 3
November 10	Parties Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 12
November 15	The News Media Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 14 <i>Elections</i> , Chapter 5
<b><i>Citizen Rights and Liberties</i></b>	
November 17	Civil Rights Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 4
<b>November 22</b>	<b>Paper #2, Due at Beginning of Class</b>
November 22	Read: <i>Gratz v. Bollinger</i> <i>Grutter v. Bollinger</i> Patients' Bill of Rights <i>New York Times</i> TBA
November 29	Civil Liberties Read: <i>Logic</i> , Chapter 5
December 1	Civil Liberties Read: <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> <i>New York Times</i> TBA
<b>December 5 9:30 – 11:18 a.m.</b>	<b>Final Exam As Scheduled By the Registrar</b>

Instructor reserves the right to adjust reading schedule as the quarter progresses.