

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 101  
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS  
Winter Quarter 2006**



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Class Times: M & W 10:00-11:18  
plus recitations  
Class Location: CM 0200  
Office Hours: M & W 11:30-12:30  
and almost any time by  
appointment

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Political Science 101 is the introductory course in American politics, and as a result, it has several basic objectives that pertain both to your knowledge of government and to the tools you need to be a broadly educated member of society. The Student Learning Outcomes that the course seeks to develop in students are:

Knowledge of the structure, and operation of the institutions of our federal government  
Comprehension of terminology associated with the study of the actors and the institutions within our federal government and those institutions affecting our federal government.

Awareness of the role of citizens, interest groups, political parties, and politicians within the American political system.

Recognition of the role of politics and strategy in the operation and impact of the government.

Awareness of the institutions within our government and how their roles intersect, compete, and complement each other.

An understanding of some of the major general theories underlying the study of American government.

The ability to synthesize the material from the course to develop their own opinion regarding the proper role of the government in our society.

**EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Your responsibilities for the course include regular attendance and participation in class, preparation with the assigned readings, and timely completion of assignments.

**Preparation** for lecture and discussion is crucial. I expect you to read the material in the assigned texts for each day in advance of the class. Discussion sessions will involve lectures as well as some discussion. Because class discussion is important, a portion of your final grade (described below) will reflect the quantity and quality of your class **participation**. It should not be difficult for you to obtain full participation credit if you make an effort to complete the internet assignments, which are due for your discussion sections, and contribute to class discussion in the sections on a weekly basis. With regard to **attendance**, I expect you to attend class regularly--*lectures may contain new information in addition to reinforcing the readings and the material from the Friday internet activities and associated discussion material may be on the exam*. The discussion sections are central to the course and will be the primary basis for the participation grades. Finally, you will need to complete all course **assignments** in a

timely fashion. Specific assignments include internet assignments (approximately 2 pages in length), which form the basis of the discussion on Fridays, and three exams. The two midterm exams and the final exam will follow the multiple choice format. In constructing each exam, I will draw on lecture material as well as the reading assignments.

You must complete all course assignments in a timely fashion. All students will take exams at the time they are scheduled. If you cannot avoid missing an exam for a justifiable reason, you must tell me in advance, and I may allow you to take a make-up (probably essay only) exam without penalty. Others who miss exams will most often not be allowed to retake the exam; however, in extraordinary circumstances, you will be allowed to retake the exam with a grade penalty of one letter grade for each day between the exam and the time that you contacted me, including the day of the exam.

#### **ASSISTANCE**

1. I want to help you to do well in this course, and I hope that you will feel free to talk with me and any of the teaching assistants for the course with questions about readings and assignments, or for suggestions about studying and understanding the material. Our scheduled office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus, but we are always happy to arrange alternative times to meet if these are inconvenient. We also check email and phone messages (though we check email more often), and these are good ways to get in touch when you have quick questions.
2. If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office For Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so

#### **ADVISORIES**

1. Plagiarism: This concept causes many students confusion, so I will try to put it plainly. Academic work must be your own work. It is plagiarism to claim work (such as writing, exams, or presentations) done by anyone other than the author named. Plagiarism also includes cutting and pasting information from internet websites without attribution or paraphrasing someone else's ideas or writing without attribution. It is not sufficient to re-arrange or re-state someone else's writings or ideas. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any plagiarized writing or work turned in for this course will result in a course grade of "F."
2. Disrespectful behavior: In the university we are all students, seeking truth and understanding. Skin color, gender, age, or other characteristics over which individuals have no choice are irrelevant to that pursuit, as are religious preference or sexual orientation. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others in the course is unacceptable and can result in a course grade of "F."

## GRADING

The items described above will contribute to your final grade, which will be determined on the basis of the points you have earned out of 200 total possible points. The point values for each assignment are as follows:

Exam I: 50

Exam II: 50

Final Exam: 60

Internet assignments: 20

Participation: 20



*Total: 200*

The scale for the *letter* grades for each exam will be determined after the exams are graded, and similarly the final grade scale will be determined after all of the points for the course are added. The scale will never be any more strict, though, than 180 points=lowest A-, 160 points=lowest B-, etc. (I will assign +/- grades.)

## REQUIRED Text

*The Dynamics of Democracy*, Alternate Edition, 4e, by Squire, Lindsay, Covington and Smith. ISBN: 1-59260-216-9

Course materials are available at the OSU Bookstore/Borders, may also be available from other campus bookstores and online booksellers. Importantly, you can order your book directly from the publishers, Atomic Dog Publishing. FYI: Print and online versions are available. The print and online are seamless...they match up word for word, section by section.

**You can purchase your textbook directly from the Atomic Dog Publishing website.**

**Your Course Registration ID: 1409404105120**

1. Type the following URL into your web browser:

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2. The next screen will prompt you to verify your course and instructor. After doing so, click "Next."

3. On the "Shopping Cart" screen, you will need to select the edition(s) you wish to purchase. You have the choice to purchase an *Online Edition* or a *Paperback and Online Edition*. The Online Edition provides web-only access, meaning you will need an active Internet connection in order to view the book. Purchase of a Paperback Edition includes access to the Online Edition at no additional fee. Select the edition you wish to purchase. Your subtotal will appear at the bottom of the screen. Once complete, click "Checkout"

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There is a scratch-off Book Activation Key sticker on the inside title page of your textbook. The Online Edition comes at no additional charge with the purchase of a NEW Paperback Edition. Click "Purchase or Activate Textbooks" on our homepage, then enter your Book Activation Key and click "Go." You will be asked for a 13-digit "Course Registration ID" on the next page.

If you purchased your textbook USED from your campus bookstore, there should be a previously scratched off Book Activation Key on the inside title page. Using this key, you may be eligible to access the Online Edition at a discounted rate. Click "Purchase or Activate Textbooks" on our homepage, then enter your Book Activation Key and click "Go." You will be asked for a 13-digit "Course Registration ID" on the next page. If you do not have this number, you can search for it using your instructor's last name.

If you have any questions, you can contact Atomic Dog Publishing at: 1-800-310-5661 ext. 8, or [support@atomicdog.com](mailto:support@atomicdog.com)



### **COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

All readings are required.

#### **Week 1**

Wednesday 1/4: Course Introduction

Thursday 1/5: Discussion Section Introduction

#### **Week 2**

Monday 1/9: Studying the Dynamics of Democracy (Chapter 1)

Wednesday 1/11: The Constitution (Chapter 2)

Thursday 1/12: Internet Assignment: Studying the Dynamics of Democracy (Chapter 1)  
& The Constitution (Chapter 2)

### **Week 3**

Monday 1/16: No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday

Wednesday 1/18: The Social Context of American Politics (Chapter 3)

Thursday 1/19: Internet Assignment: The Social Context of American Politics (Chapter 3)

### **Week 4**

Monday 1/23: Civil Liberties (Chapter 4)

Wednesday 1/25: **Midterm Exam I**

Thursday 1/26: Internet Assignment: Civil Liberties (Chapter 4)

### **Week 5**

Monday 1/30: Civil Rights (Chapter 5)

Wednesday 2/1: Public Opinion (Chapter 6)

Thursday 2/2: Internet Activity: Civil Rights (Chapter 5) & Public Opinion (Chapter 6)

### **Week 6**

Monday 2/6: Voting and Participation (Chapter 7)

Wednesday 2/8: The News Media (Chapter 8)

Thursday 2/9: Internet Activity: Voting and Participation (Chapter 7) & The News Media (Chapter 8)

### **Week 7**

Monday 2/13: Political Parties (Chapter 9)

Wednesday 2/15: **Midterm Exam II**

Thursday 2/16: Internet Activity: Political Parties (Chapter 9)

### **Week 8**

Monday 2/20: Interest Groups (Chapter 10)

Wednesday 2/22: Congress (Chapter 11)

Thursday 2/23: Internet Activity: Interest Groups (Chapter 10) & Congress (Chapter 11)

### **Week 9**

Monday 2/27: The Presidency (Chapter 12)

Wednesday 3/1: The Federal Bureaucracy (Chapter 13)

Thursday 3/2: Internet Activity: The Presidency (Chapter 12) & The Federal Bureaucracy (Chapter 13)

## **Week 10**

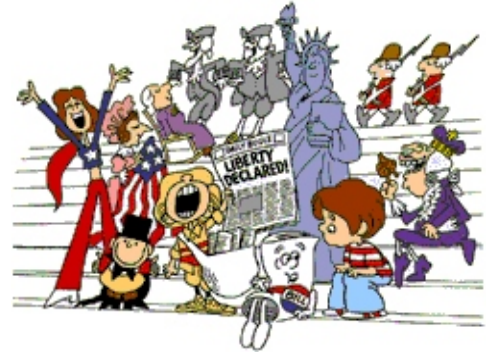
Monday 3/6 : The Courts (Chapter 14)

Wednesday 3/8: The Federal System and State Government (Chapter 15)

Thursday 3/9: Internet Activity: The Courts (Chapter 14) & The Federal System and State Government (Chapter 15)

**Final Exam: As scheduled by the University**

## **Internet Assignments for Discussion Sections**



### Chapter 1 - Studying the Dynamics of Democracy: Conflict, Rules, and Change

Go to The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>) or The Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>) web sites and select an article from each site that deals with either a similar issue or the same political player(s). In what ways does conflict drive the issues you have read about? What positions or opinions are in conflict? Select one of the articles and write a brief summary (1 page) and analysis of the situation, discussing how you might seek to resolve the conflict. Compare and contrast what you learned from the different sources.

### Chapter 2 - The Constitution

Go to the Interactive Constitution (<http://www.constitutioncenter.org/constitution/>) and select a Supreme Court case involving the Constitution. Research the case through the website, and prepare a summary of the case including its major players, the issues under discussion, and its outcome. Be prepared to present your case in class (along with your opinion as to whether the outcome was correct).

### Chapter 3 - The Social Context of American Politics

Visit the web site for Congress (<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>) and select three Congress people, at least two of whom must be from different parties. Read their biographies and political positions. Create a brief report as to what segments of the population the three individuals you selected represent. View the statistics for Congress as a whole. How well do the three selected representatives match the general population in terms of race, wealth, and education?

#### Chapter 4 - Civil Liberties

The American Civil Liberties Union (<http://www.aclu.org/>) is one of the country's most active groups working to protect civil liberties. Visit their site and select an such as Immigration Rights, Religious Liberty, or Reproductive Freedom. Read the ACLU's stance and recent work on the cause, and then prepare a brief statement summing up their position (as well as your own). Do you agree or disagree with the ALCU on your particular issue? Why? Which politicians share your view on this issue?

#### Chapter 5 - Civil Rights

Visit the Press Releases section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights section (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/pressindex.html>), and select one recent press release. What issues are discussed? Does the case or decision affect you personally? What about any of your friends or family members? Prepare a brief report on the release for discussion in class (1-2 pages) (the report should cover the basics of the case, the issues involved, and the outcome).

#### Chapter 6 - Public Opinion

Visit Polling Report (<http://www.pollingreport.com/>) and look at any poll from the "In the News" section. Then search for a news article that discusses the poll results. How are the questions framed? How do the respondents' views compare to your own? How does the media present the results of the poll? Select one poll and bring the results to class for discussion.

#### Chapter 7 – Voting and Participation

Who will you vote for in the next elections? Will you vote at all? Visit Project Vote Smart at <http://www.vote-smart.org/> and look up your local representatives. Who are they? What kinds of participation and voting records do they have as representatives? What kind of an impact will the information at Project Vote Smart have on your choices in the next election?

#### Chapter 8 – The News Media

Select a story about politics that is currently in the news. Look up coverage of the story in at least two different news sources, selecting at least one from the following list: The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/>); The Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>); The Chicago Tribune (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/>); The Houston Chronicle (<http://www.chron.com/>); and The San Francisco Chronicle (<http://www.sfgate.com/chronicle/>). How does the coverage differ from paper to paper and region to region? List specific items that caught your attention and bring them to class.

## Chapter 9 – Political Parties

Today many people think the two-party system needs reform. Visit Politics1 (<http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm>) and read about the third parties active in the United States today. Are there any you would join? Prepare a short report (1-2 pages) on any third party to bring to class.

## Chapter 10 – Interest Groups

Visit the website of the National Rifle Association (<http://www.nra.org/>) and the Brady Campaign (<http://www.bradycampaign.org/>). While you're looking at the website (or after you've seen both), think about the similarities and differences between them. Both groups are striving for broader support and political influence. How do these groups promote their causes and disparage opposing views? What kind of language is used on the website, and what does it say about the organization, its audience, and its prospective supporters? How are the NRA and the Brady Campaign similar in their approaches to gaining support and political power? What kinds of people are they trying to reach? How do they target demographic groups with certain characteristics, and which groups are assumed to be more open to each cause? Based on your knowledge of these groups prior to viewing their website, are you more likely to support one or the other after visiting the pages? How did their arguments sway your opinion? If you already had a firm opinion on this topic, did reading these sites change your perspective in any way?

## Chapter 11 – Congress

At the site for Congress, visit the legislative issues section at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/issuesaction/bill/> and select an issue area you're interested in. Choose two issues currently under discussion by Congress in your area and summarize them for class (1-2 pages). Be sure to include information on who is sponsoring the bills, and exactly what the bills would do. How would they affect you if passed? What "pork" is attached?

## Chapter 12 – The Presidency

1. Visit AmericanPresident.org's Presidency in Action section at [http://www.americanpresident.org/action/a\\_home.shtml](http://www.americanpresident.org/action/a_home.shtml). Select two of the following areas, and prepare a statement on each articulating the current President's position on them (as well as what the President has done to indicate this position). Then write a brief statement from your own point of view supporting or opposing the President's position. Topics may include:

Poverty	The USA Patriot Act
Abortion	Employment
Environmental protection	Economic policy
Law enforcement	Debt relief for foreign nations
Labor-management relations	The national deficit
Health care insurance	Taxes
Prescription drug coverage	Trade



AIDS and stem cell research and development	International labor affairs
Educational accountability and testing	Legislative strategy
Welfare reform	War powers
Logging	Veto powers
Affirmative Action	National Missile Defense
Gay marriage	Increase size of Army
Gays in the military	Military Program budgets
Gay adoption	Drug costs
Hate crime legislation transportation safety	Medicare solvency
Homeland security	Prescription drugs benefit
Drilling in ANWR	Nationalized health care
Alternative fuels	Immigration
Energy policy	Death penalty
Gas mileage requirements	Drug policy
Gun control	Education reform
	Supreme Court

### Chapter 13 – The Federal Bureaucracy

Go to the FirstGov A-Z Department and Agency Index ([http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All\\_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml)), and select one of the federal agencies listed. What does it do? Under whose jurisdiction does it fall? Prepare a short presentation on the agency you selected and be ready to discuss the role of agencies in our everyday lives.

### Chapter 14 – The Courts

What Federal Court District is your hometown in? Look it up on <http://www.uscourts.gov/about.html>, and do some research on your district on the same site. Who are the judges? What important cases is your current or home district court hearing right now? Prepare a brief essay (1-2 pages) on your current or your hometown's district court for class. Then go to the Supreme Court's website for recent opinions the court has handed down (<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/05slipopinion.html>). Summarize one recent opinion for class, and add a commentary including your own views on the opinion (and whether you feel the outcome of the case will affect you personally).

### Chapter 15 – The Federal System and State Government

Visit the Directory of State and Local Government at <http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm> and look up information for your home state. Select a top story on your state government (from those listed on the site) and prepare a brief report on the topic for class. How does the issue listed affect you personally? Then visit Ohio's home page at <http://ohio.gov>. What form of state government does it have? Who is the current governor, and what is his/her party affiliation? Write a short description (1-2 pages) of the state government for the state of Ohio.