

# Introduction to American National Government Political Science 101



Fall I 2001 Mr. Charles Smith  
Course # 19918-4

## I. Introduction

This course is a survey of political institutions and behavior in the United States, focusing primarily at the national level. It is divided into four sections: A) The Founding and the Constitution; B) Political Behavior; C) Governing Institutions; and D) Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. The primary aim of the course is to demonstrate the connection between the guiding principles of the American Constitution and the role of politics and government in contemporary American life.

## II. Contact and Meeting Information

Instructor: Charles Smith    2031 Derby Hall  
Phone: 614-292-1426 (office)  
E-mail: csmith31@columbus.rr.com

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 1:30-3:00; Wednesday, 2:00-3:00  
and by appointment

Class Meetings: Tuesday, Thursday, 3:30 to 5:18 P.M. in 043 University Hall

## III. Required Text: Walter E. Volkomer (2001). *American Government* (9<sup>th</sup> updated election edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

The instructor will provide additional supplementary readings as necessary. Video and news footage will also be used as it relates to the course.

## IV. Course Requirements and Grading

Due to unfortunate disparities in the curricula of high schools, some of you have a greater degree of factual knowledge regarding the structure of the American political system than do others. Keeping up with the assigned readings will minimize this gap. No matter what side of this divide you are on, you will only succeed in this class if you are diligent in completing the readings as scheduled and attend class regularly.

**Formal Course Requirements**

*First examination:* 25%

The first examination will be held in class on Tuesday, October 9.

*Second examination* 25%

The second examination will be held in class on Thursday, October 25.

*Final examination:* 25%

The final examination will be held on Thursday, December 6, at 3:30 pm. The final examination **IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE**.

*Quizzes:* 10%

There will be four unannounced quizzes given throughout the quarter. Quizzes will consist of ten short-answer and/or identification questions over basic concepts and terminology. **The lowest quiz score will be dropped.**

*Writing Assignments:* 15%

Students will complete **THREE** short writing assignments during the quarter. Writing assignments will not be longer than two typewritten pages. The instructor will announce writing topics at the appropriate time. Writing assignments will be graded on a 10-point grading scale (see attached). Due dates are listed in the course schedule below.

**Policy on missed exams and late assignments**

*Exams:* Exceptions in emergency situations are inevitable but, in general, students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. If you must miss an exam (such as in cases of illness or family/personal emergencies), please contact the instructor **as soon as possible PRIOR** to the scheduled test time. **Makeup exams MUST be completed within SEVEN days of the regularly scheduled examination.**

*Quizzes:* Missed quizzes **cannot** be made up. If you should miss a quiz due to absence, that will be the quiz score dropped at the end of the quarter.

*Writing Assignments:* Students will be penalized  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter grade for each day the assignment is late (e.g., from an A to an A-). If you know your paper will be late, it is in your best interest to contact me **PRIOR** to the deadline.

**Policy on attendance**

It is expected that students will attend each class session. Attendance will be taken daily during the first two weeks of the course. Afterward, regular attendance will not be taken. Performance on quizzes and examinations improves with regular class attendance.

**Policy on participation**

While grades will not be assigned specifically for participation, it is hoped that students will make an effort to provide informed contributions to class discussions.

**Please refrain from wearing hats during quizzes and exams.****The final exam WILL NOT BE COMPREHENSIVE!!!****V. Academic Integrity**

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. *Cheating or plagiarism* (using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution) *will not be tolerated*. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy.

**VI. Students with Disabilities**

If you have any condition, such as a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, or which will require extra time for quizzes and exams, please notify both the instructor and Wayne DeYoung in the Political Science Department as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Class time affords a perfect opportunity to ask questions, and you are encouraged to take advantage of it. The instructor is also available for assistance after class and at any other mutually agreeable time.

**VI. Graduating Seniors**

Seniors planning to graduate at the end of fall quarter, 2001, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements for the final examination.

**VIII. Course Schedule** – All dates are tentative; the schedule may be modified as needed.

Thursday, Sept. 20

*Introduction and Orientation*

- Bennett, “Why Young Americans Hate Politics” (Handout for 9-25)

**A—The Founding and the Constitution**

**American Politics and the Constitution**

Tuesday, Sept. 25

*Getting Started: American Politics and the Constitution*

- Chapter 1, “Politics, Democracy, and the American People”

Thursday, Sept. 27

- Chapter 2, “From Colonialism to Constitutionalism”
- Declaration of Independence (located in appendix to text)
- Topic for first writing assignment handed out

Tuesday, Oct. 2

- Federalist 10, 51 (located in appendix to text)
- The Constitution (located in appendix to text)
- **First writing assignment due at beginning of class**

**Federalism and State Government**

Thursday, Oct. 4

*Defining spheres of authority*

- Chapter 3, “The Federal System”

Tuesday, Oct. 9

**First Examination**

**B—Political Behavior**

**Becoming Political**

Thursday, Oct. 11

*Discovering public opinion*

- Chapter 4, “Public Opinion and the Mass Media”
- “Are you a liberal or a conservative?” (In class)

**What People (Don’t) Know**

Tuesday, Oct. 16

- Chapter 5, “Political Parties and Interest Groups”
- “What If We Held An Election and Nobody Came?” (Hand out for 10-18)
- “The New America” (Hand out for 10-18)

Thursday, Oct. 18

*“If nominated I will not run, if elected I will not serve.”*

- Chapter 6, “Nomination and Election”

**Getting Elected**

Tuesday, Oct. 23

*Creating the political spectacle*

- Video – campaign advertisements, 1952-1999

Thursday, Oct. 25

**Second Examination**

**C—Governing Institutions**

**Creating the Chaos – the First Two Branches**

Tuesday, Oct. 30

*America’s institutionalized criminal class*

- Chapter 7, “Congress”
- Video – State Opening of Parliament; Special Orders
- Impeachment readings (Handout for 11-1)

Thursday, Nov. 1

*Why good men aren’t elected president*

- Chapter 8, “The Chief Executive”
- Video – Prime Minister’s Question Hour
- Topic for second writing assignment handed out

Tuesday, Nov. 6

*The original 400-pound gorilla*

- Chapter 9, “The Federal Bureaucracy”
- **Second writing assignment due at beginning of class**

### **Implementing and Squaring Policy**

Thursday, Nov. 8

*“ . . . independent of Heaven itself.”*

- Chapter 10, “The Judiciary”

### **D—Civil Rights & Civil Liberties**

*“We hold these truths . . .”*

Tuesday, Nov. 13

*Civil Rights*

- Chapter 12, “Civil Rights”

Thursday, Nov. 15

*Civil Liberties*

- Chapter 11, “Civil Liberties”
- Topic for third writing assignment handed out

Tuesday, Nov. 20

**No Class**

Thursday, Nov. 22

**No Class—Thanksgiving**

Tuesday, Nov. 27

*Civil Liberties*

- Selected topics
- **Third writing assignment due at beginning of class**

Thursday, Nov. 29

*Recap and Review*

**Final examination – Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 P.M.**

### **Instructions for writing assignments**

- Each writing assignment must be typed double-spaced, using one-inch margins and standard, 12 point font.
- They must be printed in black ink, and should run no longer than **two** pages.
- Please be mindful of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Having a friend proofread your work is always a good idea.
- If you choose to cite information contained in the textbook, class materials, or other sources please use either footnotes or parenthetical citation. Please construct your bibliography using APA format. If you have any questions, consult your instructor.
- Do not use a title page.** It serves no purpose and wastes paper.
- Your social security number, course, and quarter should appear on top left corner of the first page.

YOUR NAME SHOULD NOT APPEAR ON THE PAPER!!! USE ONLY YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.

### 10 POINT GRADING SCALE FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

10. Superior work. Strong analytical focus. Responds to all elements asked in the question. Uses convincing evidence to support thesis. Shows signs of original thinking and creativity. Great care has been taken with regard to spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- 9-8. Above average. Presents a thesis. Uses evidence in an organized fashion to support thesis. Adequate coverage of the important issues raised in the question.
- 7-6. Average. States rudiments of a thesis. Cites facts appropriate to the development of the thesis, but does not clearly link these to the thesis. Discusses some of the major issues. Incorrect factual illustrations and/or faulty or incomplete logic may be encountered.
5. Below average. Demonstrates comprehension of the pertinent concepts and facts. Presents descriptive narrative with little reference to an organizing principle. Responds to some of the issues raised in the question. May contain some factual errors.
4. Weak or implausible thesis. Breadth of coverage and depth of information may be adequate, but contains many factual errors. Information may not fit the thesis.
3. Weak thesis that is not sustained in discussion. Offers few, if any, factual illustrations to support thesis. Includes irrelevant information.
- 2-1. Attempts to respond to the question. However, fails to provide detail and breadth of coverage.
0. No attempt to answer the question in any meaningful way.

Blatant, repeated errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation will result in the loss of up to two points on the assignment