

**Introduction to American Politics**  
**Political Science 101**  
**Autumn 2006**  
**The Ohio State University**

Evans Laboratory 2001  
MW 9:30-11:18  
Office Hours: MW 11:30-12:30 & by appt  
Course website: <http://carmen.osu.edu>

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Welcome to Introduction to American Politics! This course will provide an understanding of the structure and operation of government institutions. We will also examine the actors (citizens, interest groups, politicians) within the political system. Finally, we will analyze the role of politics and strategy in the operation and impact of the government. At the conclusion of the course, the student will be able to synthesize the material from the course to develop his or her own opinion regarding the proper role of government in our society.

**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.

**Academic Honesty:** I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the university committee on academic misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy.

**Disability:** 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.

## **Grading**

Midterm Exam	35%	Monday, October 30th
Final Exam	45%	Wednesday, December 6 at <b><u>7:30 am</u></b>
Quizzes and Activities	20%	Daily
Extra Credit		As available

## **Exams**

The midterm is worth 35% of your total grade, and the final is worth 45% of your total grade. The final will be cumulative, but the emphasis will be on the second part of the quarter. Only university excused absences with appropriate documentation will be eligible to make up the midterm exam. Make-up for the midterm will be held on the last day of class. The make-up exam will have a different and more challenging format than the original exam. It would be your to your benefit to take the exam during the regular time.

## **Quizzes & Activities**

Each day of class will begin with a quiz over the assigned reading or a class activity. You can only make up one reading assignment, if you have a university excused absence with appropriate documentation. Class activities CANNOT be made up under any circumstances, due to the collective nature of the assignment.

## **Recommendations for Success in this Class:**

1. Do the readings- Please make sure the you do the readings and understand what you are reading. It helps many students to make an outline. In addition, get your head around the italicized words in the chapter/reading. The book was chosen partially because it was one of the least expensive and lighter, but that means the chapters are packed. DO NOT JUST SCAN THE READINGS.
2. Come to class-There will be some material that will JUST be available IN CLASS, especially the debate material. You will not be able to get this material if you do not come to class.
3. Try for the extra credit when you can- there are several opportunities for extra credit: Each exam will have two points, sometimes I will offer extra 1/2 points on the reading questions, and you will be eligible to participate in the Political Department experiments for two points (if any experiments are run).
4. Come to my office hours if you are having problems.
5. Study thoroughly for the exams.

## **Text and Readings:**

*The Basics of American Politics* by Gary Wasserman, 12<sup>th</sup> edition, Pearson Longman Press, ISBN 0-321-31795-5.

*The Dance of Legislation* by Eric Redman, University of Washington Press  
ISBN 0-295-98023-0.

Both texts have been ordered at Long's and SBX bookstores, and you should have access to a copy by the second day of class.

In addition, there are several other readings for the class, which I will either put on Carmen or hand out in class.

## Course Schedule and Readings

### Week 1

W 9/20 Course Introduction

### Week 2

M 9/25 Introduction to Politics

Chapter 1

W 9/27 The Constitution

Chapter 2

### Week 3

M 10/2 Elections

W 10/4 Presidency

Chapter 3 (pages 44-67)

### Week 4

M 10/9 The Cabinet and the Bureaucracy

Chapter 3 (pages 67-84)

W 10/11 Congress Part 1

Chapter 4

### Week 5

M 10/16 Congress Part 2

The Dance of Legislation (page 7-162)

W 10/18 Congress Part 3

The Dance of Legislation (pages 163-306)

### Week 6

M 10/23 The Judiciary Part 1

Chapter 5

W 10/25 The Judiciary Part 2

Review

Week 7

M 10/30 Midterm Exam

W 11/1 Civil Rights and Liberties  
Chapter 6

Week 8

M 11/6 The Media  
Chapter 8 (pages 234-254)

W 11/8 Interest Groups  
Chapter 8 (pages 222-234)

Week 9

M 11/13 Interest Groups

W 11/15 Parties  
Chapter 7 (pages 194-219)

Week 10

M 11/20 Policy Making and Representation Part 1  
Chapter 7 (pages 184-194)

W 11/22 No Class-Happy Thanksgiving  
Hill vs. Thomas CBS News Productions (available online  
through OSU library catalog)

Week 11

M 11/27 Policy Making and Representation Part 2  
Chapter 9

W 11/29 Course Conclusion

Final Exam

W 12/6 \*\*\*7:30-9:18\*\*\*