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**POLITICAL SCIENCE 1100: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS**  
**Online Course ~ Fall Semester 2012**

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**Class Hours & Location:** Whenever/wherever you want them to be. That's the great thing about an online course!



**Course Description:**

Welcome to Introduction to American Politics! This course is an introduction to the institutions, processes, and influences of American government, politics, and political behavior. It is roughly broken into two sections. The first part of the course will focus on political elites, discussing the history and theories of American democracy, as well as its political institutions (Congress, Executive, and Judiciary). In the second half of the course, we will shift gears and focus on mass political behavior and interests. This is a team-based course as it was designed and taught by a team – Professor Jan Box-Steffensmeier, Vanessa Bouche, Matthew Hitt, and Emily

Lynch. You will hear lectures from a variety of instructors, but we will be leading this course for the fall. If you have any questions during the quarter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

This course satisfies the Social Sciences, Organizations & Politics GEC requirement. In this course, you will learn about the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; of the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and of the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources. These goals and the expected learning outcomes will be achieved through lectures, debates, discussions, assignments, and exams throughout the quarter.

Social Science Expected Learning Outcomes

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

### Organizations and Politics Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they are applied to the study of organizations and politics.
2. Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
3. Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

## **COURSE LOGISTICS**

There are a number of things you need to do in order to get yourself set up for this course and they correspond with the two online interfaces for the class, CARMEN and [www.americansgoverning.com](http://www.americansgoverning.com).

1. The first interface is this CARMEN site. On the CARMEN site under "Content" you will find the course syllabus, full lectures with Powerpoints, and separate corresponding Powerpoints on which you can take lecture notes. Weekly "topic videos" will be posted on the CARMEN course homepage, and you will also use CARMEN to complete your weekly quizzes on the readings. Simply click on "Quizzes" in the upper left corner of the CARMEN site to access your quizzes each week. This is also where the Midterm and Final will be taken. You will upload your extra credit video assignment to the "Dropbox" section on CARMEN. It is important to check the CARMEN site daily because I will post important information and reminders in the "News" section on the CARMEN course homepage.
2. The second online interface is [www.americansgoverning.com](http://www.americansgoverning.com). This is where you will access the online textbook, view/read all the supplementary material for the course (see below), and where you will complete the supplementary quizzes. The Americans Governing materials are required for this course.

Go to [www.americansgoverning.com](http://www.americansgoverning.com), click on "Student Signup," and follow all the prompts. The course textbook, *Central Ideas*, is available through the Americans Governing website. You have two purchase options through Americans Governing:

- a. *Central Ideas* e-textbook (\$50)
- b. *Central Ideas* e-textbook + hard copy textbook (\$75)

Course Textbook:

Evans, Jocelyn and Kristy Michaud. 2012. *Central Ideas in American Government* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Asheville, NC: Soomo Publishing. ISBN: 978-0-9826106-6-4.

\*I have also put the *Central Ideas* textbook on two hour reserve at Thompson Library.

*You should complete these course logistics (signing up for Americans Governing and obtaining the textbook) before the first week of class.*

**Course Requirements:**

1. *Carefully read this syllabus and take the syllabus quiz.* The syllabus contains important information about the course, so it is imperative you read through it before the quarter begins. After you carefully review the syllabus, you must take the syllabus quiz on Carmen during the first week of class. You have until Saturday, Sept. 1 at 10pm to complete this quiz. The syllabus quiz is worth ten points and is weighted slightly less than a weekly Carmen quiz. **Note:** You must complete two quizzes on CARMEN by the end of the first week of class – the syllabus quiz and the first reading quiz.
2. *Do the reading and listen to lectures:* To start off the week, you should read the assigned chapter(s) for that week. As previously addressed, the e-textbook is located directly on the Americans Governing website. You should also listen to the full lectures for that week and use the corresponding Powerpoints to facilitate note taking on these lectures (both the midterm and final exams will cover material in the Powerpoint lectures). For maximum effectiveness, you should also take notes as you do the readings and listen to the lectures.

I will also post a “topic video” each Sunday on that week’s readings. Each topic video is a short 5-10 minute lecture that introduces the material for that week by highlighting many of the main points about the week’s topic. The topic video is meant to supplement the full lecture by presenting important concepts in a short animated video to help you understand the material. The link to the topic lecture video will appear on the CARMEN course homepage as a “News” item. **Note:** The weekly quizzes and exams will cover material in these short videos.

3. *Take quizzes on the reading:* After you’ve completed reading the chapter(s) for the week and watching the full lecture and topic video, you should login to the CARMEN site and take the quiz on that week’s material. The quizzes contain 10 multiple choice questions and are worth 10 points each. **Quizzes for weekly modules are available only during the week that module is assigned. Quizzes are available starting at 7am Sunday and become unavailable at 10pm Saturday.** For example, you must take the first week’s quiz on the Constitution and Federalism anytime between Sunday, August 26 at 7am and Saturday, Sept. 1 at 10pm. After that time, the quiz will be unavailable and you will receive a 0. Also, the quizzes are timed, and you have 15 minutes to complete them. After 15 minutes from the time you start, the quiz will no longer be available to you. That means you should read the book carefully before taking the quiz and you should NOT use your book while taking the quiz. In addition, you should NOT wait until the last minute to take the quiz. ***I do not extend deadlines or make exceptions when something goes wrong with the computer at the last minute. I also do not allow make-up quizzes for any reason other than death in the family or a serious medical condition requiring a doctor’s note.*** Therefore, plan for contingencies and do not wait until the last minute. These quizzes are worth 140 points total (1 syllabus quiz + 13 CARMEN quizzes @ 10 points each). They are weighted to account for half of your quiz grade and all the quizzes (both Carmen and AG) are 60% of your overall course grade.

4. *Watch/read supplementary materials:* Every week, there is supplementary material that you must view/read by logging into [www.americansgoverning.com](http://www.americansgoverning.com). The assigned material is located within the required chapters in *Central Ideas*. Pay close attention to the material as you view or read it because you are required to take a quiz on this material.
5. *Take quizzes on supplementary material:* The supplementary material is located within each of the *Central Ideas* chapters (you should refer to the “Course Schedule” at the end of the syllabus for the list of required quizzes). After viewing or reading the supplementary material at [www.americansgoverning.com](http://www.americansgoverning.com), you must take a multiple-choice quiz on the website that corresponds with that material, which is located directly beside the material. Unlike the quizzes on CARMEN, there is no time limit on these quizzes. You can take as long as you want or need. There is also no mandatory time period within which you have to complete these quizzes. In other words, you do not need to complete these quizzes the week that module is assigned; however, I *strongly* encourage that you watch/read the material and take the quizzes while you are reading the chapters during the week it is assigned in order to keep up and get most out of the class. Do not wait until the last few weeks of the course to complete these quizzes because it will take you a very long time, and some of these questions will appear on your midterm and final exams. **You must complete ALL Americans Governing assignments by Friday, November 30 at 10pm. Any quizzes you complete past this deadline will NOT count towards your grade (I can view the date and times each quiz is completed) and I do not make exceptions to this rule, so do not go past this deadline.** These quizzes are worth 69 points total and are weighted to be 50% of your overall quiz grade. All the quizzes (both Carmen and AG) are 60% of your overall course grade.

Regarding the Americans Governing quizzes, you need to know which answer you want to select prior to making any selection. **You only get one click. Once you click on an answer, the system automatically determines that is your final answer and this answer is automatically saved.** You don't have the luxury of clicking through different answers before deciding on one.

6. *Take midterm and final exams:* You must complete the midterm exam on **Friday, October 12** between 7am and 10pm. The final exam must be taken on **Friday, December 7** between 7am and 10pm, which is the second day of examination period. If you have any scheduling conflicts for the midterm or final exam, you must let me know by the end of the first week of class.

Both the midterm and final exams will mostly cover material in the textbook, but on each of the exams there will be 10 questions that cover material in the full lectures and topic videos, and 5 questions from the Americans Governing supplementary material quizzes. They both consist of 55 multiple choice questions (very similar to the types of questions on the weekly Carmen quizzes), and you will have 75 minutes to complete them. The midterm will cover Weeks 1-7. The final exam will cover Weeks 8-14 (i.e., the final is not comprehensive). **DO NOT wait until the last minute to complete the midterm and final exams because, just like the quizzes, things can go wrong with the computer and I will not make exceptions based on technical problems that occur at the last minute.**

7. *Video Extra Credit Assignment:* You may create a short video about one of the American government concepts you learned about in this class. You will earn 10 points, weighted 2.5 (so your grade percentage can increase from 90 to 92.5, for example) by creating a short (approximately 5 minute video) and submitting a one paragraph summary that explains how your video relates to a course topic. Some examples include: (1) elaborating on a concept from class (for example, your video could include news clips that are considered to be “infotainment” and discuss implications of this type of news); (2) recording political bumper stickers and creating a video of them; (2) compiling a video of clips of newscasts and/or commercials about a particular interest group; (3) creating a video about how a recent current event is related to a topic in class (for example, the importance of federalism when evaluating the federal and state responses to natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina); (4) gathering 2012 campaign ads with common themes (for example, ads about presidential character); (5) researching and explaining a concept from the Congress, Judiciary, or Presidency chapter in more detail. The options are endless! Your video could be featured in a future PS1100 course. You will be graded on: (1) clarity of main idea and (2) evidence of time and effort taken to produce the video. Completed videos will receive either a ✓+ (10/10) or ✓ (5/10). If you do not have access to a video recorder, you must contact me by the end of the first week of class. The videos must be uploaded to the “Video Assignment” Folder under the Dropbox tab on Carmen by **Monday, November 26 at 10pm.**

8. *Political Science Experiment Extra Credit:* You may also to earn extra credit points by participating in a political science experiment. You have the opportunity to receive 10 extra weighted 2.5 (so your grade percentage can increase from 90 to 92.5, for example) points by participating. You will receive an email during the quarter inviting you to participate. I will post reminders for the experiments under the “News” section on the Carmen class homepage. The deadline for the extra credit experiments will be announced during the quarter.

*If you do both extra credit opportunities, you can raise your grade 5 percentage points, so from 90 to 95.*

**Grading:**

Quizzes: 60%  
 Midterm: 25%  
 Final: 25%

**Grading Scale:**

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
60-66	D
< 60	E



**Academic Honesty:**

I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. No dishonest practices on the examinations or in the course will be acceptable, and any suspected cases of dishonesty will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy. The quizzes and exams are to be taken during the allotted time period without the aid of books, notes, or other students. Do not attempt to copy the test to take it or distribute it to anyone. The statistics feature on Carmen will monitor and report how you take the quizzes and exams, and I will compare IP addresses, grades, and timing for each assignment.

**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.

**Important Deadlines**

<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Due dates:</b>
Carmen Weekly Quizzes	Sunday at 7am – Saturday at 10pm each week
Midterm Exam	Friday, October 12 (7am-10pm)
Americans Governing Quizzes	All AG assignments must be completed by Friday, November 30 at 10pm
Video Assignment	Monday, November 26 at 10pm
Extra Credit Experiments	*TBA*
Final Exam	Friday, December 7 (7am-10pm)

**Course Schedule:****Week 1/August 22-Sept 1: Constitution**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 1

*Carmen Quizzes: Must take Syllabus quiz and Carmen reading quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Sept 1*

Americans Governing (AG) Quiz: Ch.1: Purpose of Government

**Week 2/Sept 2-8: Federalism**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 2

*Carmen Quizzes: Must take Carmen reading quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Sept 8*

Americans Governing (AG) Quiz: Ch.2: Visions of Federalism

**Week 3/Sept 9-15: Congress**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 3

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Sept 15*  
AG quiz: Ch.3: United We Stand

**Week 4/ Sept 16-22: Political Parties**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 4

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Sept 22*

AG quiz: Ch.4: 2008 Party Platforms

**Week 5/Sept 23-29: Interest Groups**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 5

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Sept 29*

AG quiz: Ch.5: Evil Lobbyists

**Week 6/Sept 30-Oct 6: Presidency**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 6

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Oct 6*

AG Quiz: Ch. 6: LBJ's First Days

**Week 7/Oct 7-13: Judiciary**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 7

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Oct 13*

AG Quiz: Ch. 7: The First Cowgirl

**MIDTERM: Must take midterm on Friday, Oct. 12 between 7am and 10pm**

**Week 8/Oct 14-20: Voting and Political Participation**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 8

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Oct 20*

AG Quiz: Ch. 8: Getting Out the Vote in Toledo

**Week 9/Oct 21-27: Elections and Campaigns**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 9

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Oct 27*

AG Quiz: Ch. 9: Elizabeth the Elector

**Week 10/Oct 28-Nov 3: Civil Liberties**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 10

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Nov 3*

AG Quiz: Ch.10: You Have the Right

**Week 11/Nov 4-10: Civil Rights**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 11

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Nov 10*

AG Quiz: Ch.11: Suffrage: The Amendment

**Week 12/Nov 11-17: Media**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 13

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Nov 17*

AG Quizzes: Ch. 13: On the ground in Haiti

**Week 13/Nov 18-24: University Closed Nov. 21-23. Happy Thanksgiving!**

Use this week to work on extra credit video assignment and/or extra credit via participation in approved online political science experiments (links will be sent). Videos are due Monday, Nov 26. Wrap up all All American Governing quizzes, which are due Friday, Nov 30. Finals next week.

**Week 14/Nov25-Dec 1: Public Opinion**

Readings: Central Ideas, Chapter 12

*Carmen Quiz: Must take quiz by 10pm on Saturday, Dec 1*

AG Quizzes: Ch. 12: How is Congress doing?

**FINAL EXAM: TAKE IT BETWEEN 7am-10pm on Friday, Dec 7. NO EXCEPTIONS.**