

**Political Science 2051
American Government
Spring 2014**

Dr. Hogan
POLI 2051, Section 8
TTH 1:30-2:50
Lockett Hall 16

Office Hours: Monday 9:00-11:00 a.m. (or by appt.)
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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. The first part of the course examines the ideological, historical, socioeconomic, and constitutional context of politics in the United States. The second part explores components of the political process including interest groups, political parties, and elections. The third part focuses on the institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policies. The preponderance of our time will be spent on national-level politics, but aspects of state and local governments will be incorporated throughout the semester.

As a social science general education elective this course is designed to prepare you to meet the following competency requirements: *LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.*

Required Texts

One textbook is available for purchase in the bookstore: George C. Edwards, Martin P Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry. 2011. *Government in America: Brief Version*, 11th Edition, New York: Pearson, Longman.

On the syllabus there are several additional “Readings” listed. These can be found on the class’s Moodle web site.

Student Evaluations and Policies

Grading

The final grade for this course will be determined by a student’s performance in the following areas:

Participation and Attendance	10%
Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	30%
Final Exam	35%
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TOTAL	100%

Letter grades will be determined as follows: A = 90 – 100 percent, B = 80 – 89 percent, C = 70 – 79 percent, D = 60 – 69 percent, and F = below 60 percent.

Participation and Attendance

Classes are generally conducted in a lecture-discussion format so it is important to keep up with the readings and to come to class prepared. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do this, it is necessary to complete the readings in advance and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. I will occasionally ask you to provide a short paragraph concerning the day’s assigned readings. I may also give you brief quizzes if I suspect that you are not keeping up with the readings. If you miss a class, make certain to check Moodle prior to the next class to check for any assignments you might have missed (these will be posted by the end of the day and listed prominently at the top of the page). Also, attendance will be checked periodically and will be used as a component of your overall participation grade.

Exams

There are three exams (two in-term exams and a final exam). These tests will consist of objective-style questions (multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions). Note that makeup exams are all-essay exams and will only be administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Decorum

Please be kind to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 1:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Recording Devices, Photography and Computers

No audio or video recording devices are allowed unless special permission is granted by the instructor. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violations of this policy are turned over to the Dean of Students. You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. I recognize, however, there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, or some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.). Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official events, etc.). For late assignments, penalties are assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points. Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course's Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a doctor's note, etc.).

Graded Work

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I hand back exams and allow time in class for you to view them. You are also free to come by during my office hours to look at your tests. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance.

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule

January 15	Introduction to the Course
January 21	Approaches to Studying American Democracy <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 1 <u>Reading#1</u> : “Democracy”
January 23	Origins of American Government <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 2 <i>Government in America</i> , Appendix: Declaration of Independence and Constitution
January 28	Debate over the Constitution <i>Government in America</i> , Appendix: The Federalist #10 and #51
January 30	Ratification of the Constitution <u>Reading#2</u> : “The Constitution” <u>Reading#3</u> : “It is Time to Repair the Constitution’s Flaws” <u>Reading#4</u> : “Our Broken Constitution”
February 4	Federalism <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 3
February 6	Public Opinion <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 6
February 11	The Mass Media <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 7
February 13	Exam #1
February 18	Interest Groups <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 10 <u>Reading#5</u> : “K Street and the Status Quo”
February 20	Political Parties <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 8 <u>Reading #6</u> : “Public Says Investigate Terrorism, Even If It Intrudes”
February 25	Presidential Nomination Contests <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 9, part (pp. 275-287)
February 27	General Elections for President <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 9, part (pp. 287-316)
March 4	Mardi Gras Holiday
March 6	Voting Behavior: Turnout and Candidate Choice <u>Reading #7</u> : “Data You Can Believe In”
March 11	Campaign Finance <u>Reading#8</u> : “Should America Adopt Public Financing of Political Campaigns” <u>Reading #9</u> : “Koch-backed political coalition, designed to shield donors, raised \$400 million in 2012”
March 13	Representation in Legislatures <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 11, part (pp. 347-357) <u>Reading#10</u> : “Representation”

March 18	Legislative Process <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 11, part (pp. 357-382)
March 20	The Presidency <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 12
March 25	Exam #2
March 27	Bureaucracies <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 13
April 1	The Judiciary <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 14
April 3	The Supreme Court <u>Reading#11</u> : “Is Judicial Review Obsolete?” <u>Reading#12</u> : “Our Fill-in-the-Blank Constitution”
April 8	Civil Liberties Policymaking <i>Government in America</i> , Chapters 4
April 10	Civil Rights Policymaking <i>Government in America</i> , Chapters 5
April 15	Spring Break
April 17	Spring Break
April 22	Budget and Taxes Policies <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 15
April 24	Social Welfare Policymaking <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 16
April 29	National Security Policymaking <i>Government in America</i> , Chapter 17
May 1	Summation and Review
May 7	Final Exam in this classroom on Wednesday, May 7 from 12:30-2:30 p.m.