

American Government - POLI 2051, Sect 7

Fall 2014

McKinzie Craig
Office Hours: TR) 10:30am-11:30am
and by appointment

Office: Stubbs 217
email: mcraig@lsu.edu

Course Description

This course seeks to introduce students to the basic principals and study of the US government. Beyond simply identifying the rules and branches of government, this course will evaluate how the US government has evolved from the founding to the modern era. We will explore how politics and institutions shapes policy outcomes. Students will also be introduced to how political scientists study both American institutions and political behavior.

Course Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify the institutions of the US government and understand how the foundations for these institutions derive from the US Constitution;
- Describe the basic principals of the US governmental system and how those principals have evolved from the founding into the present day;
- Describe the role of public opinion, electoral politics, and linkage organizations in US government;
- Evaluate policy outputs from the US government and identify how those outputs are influenced by different aspects of the American system of government.

Text Book

Required: O'Connor, Sabato and Yanus, American Government: Roots and Reform [Pearson] (2012)

Course Requirements

Exams

There are 3 exams in this class. The exams are composed of multiple choice, short answer, and discussion questions and each exam is worth 100 points. The first exam covers the foundations of American government. The second exam covers the institutions of American government. The third exam covers American political behavior. The first two exams will be given during class time. The third exam is not cumulative but will be given during the final exam time scheduled for this class.

Unless a student makes arrangement to take an exam early, all make up exams will be given during the final exam time for this class. The first 50 minutes of the final exam time will be for the class to take exam 3. The remaining 100 minutes of the final exam time will be dedicated to make ups for exam 1 and exam 2. The make up exams will be a combination of short answer and essay questions. If a student does not make up a missed exam during the final exam time, the missed exam will be entered as a 0.

Quizzes

In addition to exams, students can expect unannounced quizzes on throughout the semester. The quizzes will be given during class and they will be comprised of 5 or 6 questions based on the reading. **Each quiz will be worth 20 points and the two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.**

These quizzes are used for three reasons. First, periodic quizzes will encourage students to read and study the materials as course progresses. Second, these quizzes will help students prepare for exams because the questions on the quizzes will demonstrate core information from each unit. Third, these quizzes will allow the instructor to evaluate student progress and determine if students have adequately understood material as it is presented.

If a student misses a quiz, he or she must provide documentation of an excused absence to take a make up quiz. Only those students with a documented excused absence may retake a quiz. To make up a quiz, the student will have to make an appointment with the professor to take the quiz at the professor's office.

Labs

We will have "labs" periodically through the semester to explore that section's theme(s). The format of the labs will vary. Regardless of the format, all lab assignments will be completed and submitted during class time unless I indicate otherwise. There are no exceptions to this policy. **The lowest lab grade will be dropped.** If you miss a lab due to an excused absence, you will be given an opportunity to make up that assignment. **If you do not have an excused absence for a missed lab, you will not be eligible for making up that assignment and will receive a zero for that lab grade. There are no exceptions to this policy. This means that lab attendance is mandatory.** Any group work assignments will have accompanying group member evaluations to ensure that the work was completed in a fair manner and that all members contributed. Poor evaluations will result in a reduction of individual grades, according to my discretion.

Grading

20 percent	100 points	First exam
20 percent	100 points	Second exam
20 percent	100 points	Third exam
20 percent	100 points	Quizzes
20 percent	100 points	Labs
100 percent	500 points	Final grade

Grades will be determined based on the following: **A: 450 points or higher, B: 449 to 400 points, C: 399 to 350 points, D: 349 to 325 points, F: less than 325 points.** All points awarded through out the semester are totaled together to arrive at the final grade. This includes (but may not be limited to) each portion of each exam, the highest quiz grades, all participation points, and the highest lab grades. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I am unable to discuss grades via email or on the phone. Specific grades can only be discussed in person.

Tentative Due Dates

Test 1: Thursday, September 25, 2014

Test 2: Thursday, October 30, 2014

Test 3: Final exam time - Wednesday, December 10, 2014, 12:30pm

Tentative Schedule

Reading assignments are to be completed for class on the date on the syllabus. Students are responsible for entire reading assignment.

T) Aug 26 - Course Intro, READ: Syllabus

R) Aug 28, T) Sep 2 - Foundations, READ: Chapter 1

R) Sep 4 - Foundations (cont) READ: Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation (available on Moodle)

T) Sep 9, R) Sep 11 - The Constitution, READ: Chapter 2 and US Constitution (available on Moodle)

T) Sep 16, R) Sep 18 - Federalism, READ: Chapter 3

T) Sep 23 - Review

R) Sep 25 - Foundations of American Government

T) Sep 30, R) Oct 2 - Congress, READ: Chapter 6

T) Oct 7, R) Oct 9 - The Presidency, READ: Chapter 7

T) Oct 14 - The Bureaucracy, READ: Chapter 8

R) Oct 16 - The Judiciary, READ: Chapter 9

T) Oct 21 Civil Liberties, READ: Chapter 4

R) Oct 23 Civil Rights, READ: Chapter 5

T) Oct 28 Review

R) Oct 30 TEST 2 - Institutions of American Government

T) Nov 4 - Public Opinion - READ: Chapter 10

R) Nov 6 - Parties - READ: Chapter 11

T) Nov 11 - Campaigns and Elections - READ: Chapter 12 and 13

R) Nov 13 - News Media - READ: Chapter 14

T) Nov 18 - Interest groups - READ: Chapter 15

R) Nov 20 - Domestic Policy - READ: Chapter 16

T) Nov 25 - Economic Policy - READ: Chapter 17

T) Dec 2 - Foreign Policy - READ: Chapter 18

R) Dec 4 - Review

FINAL EXAM TIME: TEST 3 - American Political Behavior

Course Materials and Copyright

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

High standards of academic integrity are crucial for the University to fulfill its educational mission. To uphold these standards, procedures have been established to address academic misconduct.

As a guiding principle, the University expects Students to model the principles outlined in the University Commitment to Community, especially as it pertains to accepting responsibility for their actions and holding themselves and others to the highest standards of performance in an academic environment. For example, LSU students are responsible for submitting work for evaluation that reflects their individual performance and should not assume any assignment given by any professor is a group effort or work unless specifically noted on the assignment. In all other cases, students must assume the work is to be done independently. If the student has a question regarding the instructors expectations for individual assignments, projects, tests, or other items submitted for a grade, it is the students responsibility to seek clarification.

Any Student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit Academic Misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions set forth in Section 9.0. (*LSU Code of Student Conduct, Sect 8.1*)

Co-curricular Events Policy

Classes missed due to participation in college-sponsored co-curricular events are considered excused absences provided appropriate procedures are followed. In order for the absence to be excused, the instructor must receive notification before the student misses the class. The activity must be a performance, professional meeting, or contest to be considered an excused absence.

An excused absence allows the student to make up exams or quizzes given during the absence, to reschedule oral presentations, or to make some other equitable arrangement as determined by the faculty and the student. Students must recognize that many classroom and laboratory activities cannot be replicated and that absences may be detrimental to the students performance. It is the responsibility of the student to get notes from the class and to compensate as much as possible for the absence. It is also the students responsibility to work with the instructor in determining a time for make-up assignments.