

Poli 2051, Fall 2019
9:00-10:20am, Tuesday and Thursdays
Location: Atkinson Hall 0015

Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Dan Qi. Email: dqj2@lsu.edu
Office Hours: 10:30-12:00 am Tuesday & Thursday or by appointment.
Office: Stubbs 329, Department of Political Science

Purpose: The purpose of this course is to examine the environment, structure, and dynamics of the American political system. The course begins by examining the ideological, historical, socioeconomic, and constitutional context of politics in the United States. Components of the political process such as the branches of government, interest groups, and political parties will then be explored.

Core Curriculum Objectives: The core curriculum requirement in political science is designed to communicate an understanding of the nature of governments and of the actions of people concerning government and public policy. Such a requirement is intended to inform students in order that they may function more effectively as responsible citizens in their community, state, and nation.

Exemplary Educational Objectives: to comprehend the origins and evolution of the American political systems, with a focus on the growth of democratic institutions, the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights; to understand the operation of the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of a national government; to explain the activities of various types of participants in politics – candidates, officials, voters, and others; to understand the evolution and current state of the U.S.'s role in the world; to understand current public policy questions at the state and national level; to analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems; to read, listen to, and view mass media reports about politics and public policy with critical insight; and to recognize the similarities and differences between the U.S. political system and other political systems.

Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations, and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BOR Area of Social/Behavioral Sciences and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of Inquiry and Analysis.

Required Text:

- O'Connor, Karen, Larry J. Sabato (2018) American Government: Roots and Reform Edition, 13th edition. (Pearson). Available in the University Bookstore.
- All other required readings will be posted to Moodle

GENERAL POLICIES

Academic Integrity: Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<https://www.lsu.edu/saa/students/codeofconduct.php>). 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 9:00am 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. 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.).

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

Students with Disabilities: For students who have special needs or require accommodations, that student must ensure that they register with the Office of Disability Services and advise me of their situation as early in the semester as possible so arrangements can be made to ensure that their needs are met. Note that the website for the Office of Disability Services is posted on the Moodle page.

REQUIREMENTS

Basically, classes will involve lectures of the reading material assigned for each session. But, I will introduce and explain some concepts, issues and theories that are not in the readings, so attendance is crucial. This means that a significant amount of material on the examinations will come from class lectures presenting information not discussed directly in the textbook and other readings. Participation from students is important and will count toward the final grade. Some materials and

lectures might be difficult, so ask questions whenever necessary. In addition, feel free to stop my lecture and ask, to e-mail me, and to stop by my office. The general philosophy is that students who are eager to learn should be rewarded.

Final grades are based on attendance/participation, four quizzes, two writing assignments and three in-class examinations (two midterm and one final exam) for a total of 100 points.

Quizzes: There will be a series of four quizzes, which will be taken on Moodle. These will all be open for 24 hours and you will be given two attempts, with the highest score out of the two being recorded. There are absolutely no makeups for missed quizzes. I reserve the right to change quizzes into in-class format if necessary.

Writing Assignment: There will also be two short writing assignments in which you will choose from a selection of the readings on Moodle that have been assigned up to that point. For these assignments, you will read your selection and in 300–500 words, briefly summarize it and, more importantly, critically analyze it. So, for these writing assignments, I want to see that you did the reading, followed by you essentially telling me what you thought of it; what you liked/didn't like/agreed with/disagreed with, but most importantly, you must explain why.

Exams: The course consists of two in-class exams and a final exam. The in-class exams will not be cumulative and could consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. The dates of all of these are provided in the “important dates” section of the syllabus, as well as on the reading calendar. I will make it abundantly clear that short of a real conflict (familial or personal harm), there are absolutely no makeups for exams. If you do end up having an emergency and miss an exam, you will be required to provide a doctor's note, funeral notice, or some form of documentation pertaining to a family, or other, emergency.

GRADING POLICY & IMPORTANT DATES

- 1) Attendance and participation (10%)
- 2) Four Quizzes (20%)- Sep12(Th); Oct 10(Th); Nov 7(Th); Nov 26(I)
- 3) Two Writing Assignment (10%) - Oct 15(I); Nov 21(Th)
- 4) First mid-term examination (15%) - Sep 26, Thursday, in class
- 5) Second mid-term examination (15%)- Nov 14, Thursday, in class
- 6) Final examination (30%) - Dec 12, Thursday, 12:30-2:30PM

GRADING SCALE

A+ 100 ~ 97	B+ 89 ~ 87	C+ 79 ~ 77	D+ 69 ~ 67	F 59 ~ 0
A 96 ~ 93	B 86 ~ 83	C 76 ~ 73	D 66 ~ 63	
A- 92 ~ 90	B- 82 ~ 80	C- 72 ~ 70	D- 62 ~ 60	

NO CLASS

Aug 29, Thursday, Conference;
Oct 17, Thursday, Fall Break;
Nov 28, Thursday, Thanksgiving,

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SPECIFIC TOPICS
(subject to change)

PART I: FOUNDATION OF GOVERNMENT

Week 1 (08/27) Introduction

Week 2 (09/03, 09/05) American Roots, Context, & Culture. The Constitution

Week 3 (09/10, 09/12) The Constitution. The Federal System. Quiz1

Week 4 (09/17, 09/19) Civil Liberty & Civil Right

Week 5 (09/24, 09/26) Review. First Midterm Examination

PART II: INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Week 6 (10/01, 10/03) Congress.

Week 7(10/08, 10/10) The Presidency. Quiz 2

Week 8 (10/15) Bureaucracy and Judiciary. First Writing Assignment

PART III POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Week 9 (10/22, 10/24) Political Party; Elections and Voting

Week 10 (10/29, 10/31) The Campaign Process; The News Media

Week 11 (11/5, 11/7) Public Opinion. Quiz 3

Week 12 (11/12, 11/14) Review. Second Mid-Term Exam

PART IV: PUBLIC POLICY

Week 13 (11/19, 11/21) Domestic Policy. Second Writing Assignment

Week 14 (11/26) Economic Policy; Thanksgiving. Quiz 4

Week 15 (12/3, 12/5) Foreign and Defense Policy

Week 16 (12/12) Final Exam. 12:30- 2:30 pm