

# American Government

## Political Science 2051

Spring 2022

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### **Course Description**

This course is dedicated to introducing students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. There are three parts to this course. The first examines the ideological, contextual, and developmental aspects of American politics and government. The second part builds upon this understanding and outlines the exact political processes that help create and participate in American politics. The third part focuses on how policies are introduced, debated, decided, and implemented by the legislative, judicial, and executive branches. Students will be exposed to a variety of material that will showcase, explain, explore, and endeavor to understand American Government and American political behavior.

### **Required Reading Materials**

The textbook for the course is listed below. The e-book version is available for purchase in the bookstore. You may prefer to rent or purchase a physical copy of the book and these are available from on-line vendors. Note that we are using the 18th edition.

“Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, 2020 Presidential Election edition, 18th Edition” (by George C. Edwards, Martin P. Wattenberg, and William G. Howell, Pearson: ISBN: 9780136966456).

### **LSU Integrative Learning Core**

LSU Integrative Learning Core 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.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to cheating on exams, plagiarizing (from published sources or from fellow students), buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. Be very careful with the writing assignments. Use of another person’s words without proper citation or copying from another person’s work is considered plagiarism. 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.

### **How to Contact Me**

The best way to contact me is by e-mail. I will make every effort to answer your questions in a timely manner (usually within 24 hours during the normal work week). If you would like to set up a specific time to talk with me directly, e-mail me and we can schedule a time that is mutually convenient to speak by telephone through Zoom or in-person if you would prefer.

## **Student Evaluations and Policies**

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

Participation: 10%

Practice Chapter Quizzes 18% (1% each)

Exam #1: 20%

Exam #2: 25%

Exam #3 (Final Exam): 27%

Total = 100%

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

97-100 = A+

93-96 = 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+

63-66 = D

60-62 = D-

## **General Policies**

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## **Policy on Deadlines**

To provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. If you encounter a problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline, please contact me. I understand that problems can arise, and I will accommodate difficulties that you may encounter. But please be prepared to provide documentation. Finally, please note that that all listed times on the schedule are calibrated to the Central Time Zone.

### **Make-up Policy**

**Students with an excused absence have one week to make up the material, quiz, or exam. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to remind a student to make up what the student has missed.**

### **Special Needs**

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made. If you are a student registered through Disabilities Services and you are seeking a “Note Taker” to assist you in assembling notes and other review materials for this course, please email me the appropriate form at the beginning of the semester. I will then post the code listed on the form to the course Moodle page to enable volunteers to contact you through Disabilities Services. If you are a student interested in volunteering to serve as a “Note Taker” please read the instructions indicated on the course Moodle page.

### **Extra Credit**

There will be various opportunities to earn extra credit points throughout the spring semester. These extra credit points will be used on each of the three exams as the students see fit. Points are earned in the following ways:

1. Attending a political science lecture and then writing a 250-word essay detailing the lecture and the student’s thoughts on the lecture.
2. A written response to relevant American political science material that is, or will be discussed, throughout the spring semester.

I reserve the right to offer and distribute extra credit points, and there will not be any extra credit points beyond what I provide as the instructor. Extra credit is a privilege and is not a guaranteed.

### **How to read the Syllabus**

**Green:** Part (Example: Part 1: ....)

**Yellow:** Chapter (Example: Introducing Government in America)

**Pink:** Chapter quiz for that class.

If you see “Read,” you will need to read that chapter and or section before the beginning of the next class. Always assume you will have a chapter quiz at the beginning of each class.

**Gray:** Study Session!

## **Part 1: Constitutional Foundations: What is American Government?**

### **January 18<sup>th</sup> : Introduction to the Course**

- Review of Syllabus
- What is American Government?
- What does politics mean?

Read Chapter 1

## **January 20<sup>th</sup> : Fundamental aspects of American Government**

-Important to Know:

-Scope

-Purpose

-Types of Democracy

### **Chapter 1 Quiz**

Read Declaration of Independence, Federalist 10 and 51

## **January 25<sup>th</sup> : Founding Documents.**

-How does Factionalism relate to politics today?

-What is an example of a faction?

-Did the founders think of themselves as Englishmen or Americans?

### **Quiz on the Declaration of Independence, Federalist 10 and 51**

Read Constitution and Bill of Rights (Located in the Appendix of your Textbook)

## **January 27<sup>th</sup> : The Constitution and the birth of the American Republic**

- What does the Constitution mean for American democracy?
- How does the Bill of Rights factor into what the Constitution outlines?
- How does the Bill of Rights add on to Constitution?
- Is the Bill of Rights necessary?

### **Quiz on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights**

Read Chapter 2

## **February 1<sup>st</sup> : Revolutionaries and the Importance of Revision**

Important to Know:

- The Philadelphia Convention
- The Articles of Confederation
  - What it did and what were its flaws.
- Checks and Balances.

### **Chapter 2 Quiz**

Read Chapter 3

## **February 3<sup>rd</sup> : Federalism**

Important to Know:

- What is Federalism?
- State vs. Federal governments

### **Chapter 3 Quiz**

Read Chapter 4

## **February 8<sup>th</sup> : Civil Liberties**

Important to Know:

- The Importance of Freedom of Speech
- What are Civil Liberties?

### **Chapter 4 Quiz**

Read Chapter 5

## **February 10<sup>th</sup> : Civil Liberties and Public Policy**

Important to Know

- The importance of equality in democracy
- Minority Rights

### **Chapter 5 Quiz**

-Prepare for your first Exam!

**February 15<sup>th</sup>: Study Session!**

- Come with tons of questions! (Completely Optional)

**February 17<sup>th</sup>: First Exam (Covering Chapters 1-5)**

-Read Chapter 6

**Part II: People, Policy, and Action**

**February 22<sup>nd</sup> : Public Opinion and the Public's Involvement**

Important to Know:

- Political Involvement
- Political Ideology
- Political Participation

**Chapter 6 Quiz**

Read Chapter 7

**February 24<sup>th</sup>: Reporting Politics**

Important to Know:

- The Role of the Media in Politics
- How political information is presented.
- Agenda Setting.

**Chapter 7 Quiz**

Read Chapter 8

**March 1<sup>st</sup> : Mardi Gras Holiday (NO CLASS)**

### **March 3<sup>rd</sup> : Political Parties**

Important to Know:

- Political Voting Behavior
- Money in Politics
- The Electoral College

### **Chapter 8 Quiz**

Read Chapter 9

### **March 8<sup>th</sup> : Campaigns and Voting Behavior**

Important to Know:

- What makes an Interest Group?
- Are Interest Groups better representations of the People?

### **Chapter 9 Quiz**

-Prepare for Exam

### **March 9<sup>th</sup>: Study Session!**

-Completely Optional! Come with tons of questions!!

### **March 10<sup>th</sup> : Exam # 2 (Covering Chapters 5-10)**

-Read Chapter 10

## **Part 3: Policy Creation, Implementation, and Adjudication**

### **March 22<sup>nd</sup> : Interest Groups**

Important to Know:

- Congressional Oversight
- Lawmaking Process
- Policy Making in Congress

### **Chapter 10 Quiz**

Read Chapter 11

### **March 24<sup>th</sup> : Congress**

Important to Know:

- Passion and the Executive
- Presidential Leadership
- The Presidential Veto

**Chapter 11 Quiz**

Read Chapter 12

### **March 29<sup>nd</sup> : The Presidency**

Important to Know:

- Federal Revenue
- The Income Tax
- How the Government Budgets.

**Chapter 12 Quiz**

Read Chapter 13

### **March 31<sup>st</sup> : The Budget: Where does the Money Go?**

Important to Know:

- The Budgetary Process
- The difference between Revenues, Deficits, and Expenditures
- What is uncontrollable spending?

**Chapter 13 Quiz**

Read Chapter 14

### **April 5<sup>th</sup> : Bureaucracy**

Important to Know

- Meritocracy in Bureaucracy
- Regulating and Implementing Policy
- The Power of Bureaucracy.

**Chapter 14 Quiz**

Read Chapter 15

### **April 7<sup>th</sup> : The Courts**

Important to Know:

- Judicial Review
- Judicial Policymaking
- Why are the Courts Important?

**Chapter 15 Quiz**

Read Chapter 16

### **April 12<sup>th</sup> : Social Welfare and its Role**

Important to Know:

- What is the core argument for Social Welfare?
- Types of Social Welfare
- What are the limits of Social Welfare in the United States?

**Chapter 16 Quiz**

Read Chapter 17

### **April 14<sup>th</sup> : Healthcare, The Environment, and Energy Policies**

Important to Know:

- What is the Government's Role in Healthcare?
- Does the Government have a role in energy production?
- What is the EPA?

**Chapter 17 Quiz**

Read Chapter 18

## **April 19<sup>th</sup> : Foreign Policymaking and the International Community**

Important to Know:

- Does the U.S have obligations to the international community?
- America's Foreign policy,
- The global economy and America's place in it.

**Chapter 18 Quiz**

## **April 21<sup>st</sup> Civil Liberties, their Importance, and the Courts**

Important to Ponder

- The importance of tolerance, freedom of speech, equality, and association

Things to Note:

- This will be a more open discussion on your ideas of civil liberties.
- We will be going over the seminal supreme court cases from 1919 to 2021.

The purpose of this is to explore how integral these ideals are to American government and politics

## **April 26<sup>th</sup>: Offensive, Hateful, and Free?**

Important to Ponder

- What makes speech offensive or hateful? Should this speech be protected?

Things to Note:

- This will be a more open discussion on your ideas of Hate Speech and what makes speech offensive.
- We will be going over seminal cases in the Supreme Court from 1900 to the modern day.

## **April 28<sup>th</sup>: Church, Government, and Schools (Oh my!)**

Important to Ponder

-What should public schools allow in terms of religious practices? What about the government?  
How do you ensure that you are not biased towards one religion?

Things to Note:

-This will be an open discussion on your ideas of separation of church and state and how the U.S government attempts to separate the two.

- We will be going over supreme court cases from the late 1800's to the modern day.

## **May 3<sup>rd</sup>: (Last Class Study Session!)**

**-Bring tons of questions!**

**May 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: Concentrated Study Period**

**FINAL EXAM: MAY 11<sup>TH</sup> 2022 @ 12:30-2:30**