

POL SCI 104, SECTION 001
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE
SPRING 2008

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Office Hours: Thursday, 3-5 pm

COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION: Tuesday, 5:30 - 8:10 PM, Bolton (BOL) B46

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course in American politics and is intended to provide students with a general overview of American political institutions and processes. In this course, we will review foundational documents including the U.S. Constitution and will explore the evolution of our federal government. Key institutions of American government will be examined along with topics including public opinion, campaigns, elections, and political participation. Finally, we will conclude the semester with a look at the role of the media in American politics and with a brief overview of the policy-making process.

EXAM DATES

Exam 1: Feb. 19

Exam 2: April 1

Final Exam: May 13 (5:30-7:30 pm)

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato, *American Government: Continuity and Change*. 2008 Edition. Pearson-Longman.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

General Class Conduct

I seek to create a classroom environment which is marked by mutual respect. At all times, I expect students to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner. Please do not arrive late, leave early, or talk while the instructor is talking or a classmate has the floor. If you need to leave a class early, or if you know that you will be late, please inform me in advance whenever possible.

The use of cell phones in this class will not be tolerated. Please silence the ringer of your cell phone prior to entering the classroom.

Class Readings, Participation, Attendance

It is important that students arrive to class having read the assigned material. Although the class is large, attempts will be made to encourage discussion.

It is also crucial in a course such as this to pay special attention to current events. As part of your preparation for class meetings, you should review a major newspaper. News events will be raised in class and are fair game on any exam or homework assignment.

Regular attendance and active participation in this course is expected of all students including those auditing the course or taking the course under the credit/no credit option. Since the class meets only once a week, each class will cover essential material that might appear on an exam or homework assignment. Course exams will include material from the textbook as well as any material presented in lecture.

Please make sure you check the course D2L Web site on a regular basis. I will post brief overviews of each class meeting as well as special announcements on the page. In addition, the D2L site will include discussion forums so that students can extend debate and discussion beyond the classroom. Please remember to extend professional courtesy to your classmates when participating in these online discussions. These are venues for scholarly exchange; they are not forums for personal attacks and non-scholarly commentary.

As a general policy, I do not post PowerPoint presentations on D2L, nor will I post lecture notes. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain copies of the lecture notes from a peer.

Exams

There will be a total of three exams in this class. The second exam will test material covered in the textbook and/or in lecture since the first exam. The final exam will emphasize material covered since the second exam. However, some questions on the final exam will be cumulative in nature.

All exams will be closed book and will include multiple choice, true/false, short essay questions, and at least one long essay question. Students will be provided Scantron sheets for the multiple choice portion of the exam and blue books for the written portion of the exam. Please bring a number two pencil for the multiple choice portion of the exam. Answers to the essay portion of the exam are required to be written in ink.

Make-up exams will only be given to students who have a medical excuse, University-excused absence, or other reasonable excuse (as determined by me). In order to qualify for a make-up examination, students must provide supporting documentation for missing the scheduled exam and must contact me (by phone or e-mail) *prior* to the scheduled exam. If a student cannot contact me prior to the exam due to extenuating circumstances, the student is required to contact me within 24 hours after the missed exam.

Students who have been approved to take a make-up exam for Exam 1 must take it on **Friday, February 22 at 3:00 pm (location TBA)**. Students who have been approved to take a make-up exam for Exam 2 must take it on **Friday, April 4 at 3:00 pm (location TBA)**.

These will be the only such make-up opportunities I extend unless the student has a documented emergency on these days and times and provides me with sufficient notice. If you miss the final exam, you should follow the above procedures regarding notification and documentation and, if approved, I will arrange a time for you to take a make-up exam.

The results of exams (or any other component of a student's grade) will not be conveyed to students over the phone or in an e-mail message.

Because we meet only once a week, Exams 1 and 2 will be given during the first part of class (i.e., you will take the exam during the first hour and fifteen minutes of the session during these weeks). After a short break, we will resume lecture on those days. I appreciate your understanding regarding this scheduling matter.

Homework Assignments

There will be two homework assignments this semester. Assignments are required to be typed. Students should not collaborate on homework assignments. If you have questions on the assignments, please ask the instructor or the TA.

Grades

Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Final Exam	30%
Homework Assignments	20% (two assignments - 10% each)

Point Scale

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

Grading Concerns

If you have questions or concerns regarding how an exam or assignment was graded, your first step should be to discuss the issue with the TA during office hours or by appointment. If you are not satisfied after that point, you should meet with me during office hours, and I will re-grade the assignment or the exam. Please note that the grade I assign might be lower than the grade assigned by the TA. I ask that all students who wish to appeal grading matters do so within one week of the assignment or exam being returned to the class.

Academic Dishonesty

I do not tolerate acts of plagiarism or any forms of cheating on exams or assignments. Students who are caught engaging in academic misconduct will receive an "F" (zero percentage points) for the assignment or exam. It is also possible that a student who is caught engaging in academic misconduct will receive an "F" for the course. If I suspect a case of academic misconduct, I will follow the academic misconduct and reporting policies of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Dropping the Course & Incompletes

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with all relevant drop deadlines (please see the UWM calendar for further details). An incomplete may be given to a student who is unable to complete the course requirements due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, injury, family emergency, etc.). Supporting documentation is necessary to receive an incomplete.

Submitting Course Assignments & Late Penalties

Assignments are due in class on the date noted in the syllabus. Any assignment submitted after its due date will be subject to a ten percentage point deduction for each day it is late (including weekends).

Assignments submitted after class on the date they are due will be considered one day late. Late work should be handed directly to me (i.e., the instructor) whenever possible. Otherwise, students can leave late work in the envelope posted on my office door (Bolton 602), but it is the student's responsibility to send me an e-mail message noting the date and time at which the assignment was submitted and to confirm that I received the late assignment (please "cc" the TA in this e-mail message). Assignments left in the envelope after 5:00 pm will be posted as received the next day. Please do not leave assignments in my departmental box or slide them under my office door.

Under most circumstances, I will not accept course assignments or any parts thereof submitted via e-mail. Students are required to submit hard copies of all assignments on the date noted on the syllabus.

Student Accommodations

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Students should also contact a Student Accessibility Center (SAC) counselor on campus (414) 229-6287.

CLASS SCHEDULE

*** READING ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

- Jan. 22: Introduction to the class, discussion of class policies, and introduction to the study of American politics
- Jan. 29: Foundations for Studying American Politics
Reading: Chapters 1 & 2
- Feb. 5:** Federalism
Reading: Chapter 3
Homework Assignment #1 Due
- Feb. 12: Civil Liberties
Reading: Chapter 5
- Feb. 19:** **EXAM 1**
Civil Rights
Reading: Chapter 6
- Feb. 26: Congress
Reading: Chapter 7
- Mar. 4: The Presidency & the Executive Branch
Reading: Chapter 8
- Mar. 11: The Judiciary
Reading: Chapter 10
- Mar. 18: ****Spring Break****
- Mar. 25: Public Opinion
Reading: Chapter 11

- April 1:** **EXAM 2**
Voting and Elections
Reading: Chapter 13
- April 8: Campaigns
Reading: Chapter 14
- April 15: Political Parties
Reading: Chapter 12
- April 22:** Interest Groups
Reading: Chapter 16
Homework Assignment #2 Due
- April 29: Media
Reading: Chapter 15
- May 6: Public Policy
Reading: Chapter 17
- May 13:** **FINAL EXAM (5:30-7:30pm)**