The fundamental principles of American government comprise a scientific body of knowledge that every undergraduate in the United States should be familiar with. Because the American regime was founded upon philosophical grounds, we will begin the semester by briefly looking at some of those foundational documents, so that we may begin to see how those ideas have shaped the American regime and way of life. Once we have restored to our sight the view from our nation's founding, we will proceed to examine our government's structure and institutions. And we will definitely be looking into the many and varied relationships between the American (national/Federal) government on the one hand, and both lower (state and local) governments and foreign governments on the other. By the end of the semester, you will have gained a more sophisticated, political-scientific perspective on American politics than you had going into this semester, and should be able to confront and analyze difficult problems, such as those raised in upper-level political science classes, or in any of the arts and sciences disciplines.

Prescribed Reading

Reading selections posted on Moodle (marked with *)

General Education Requirement

This course is applicable to the University's General Education Requirement for the social sciences, and as such, it embraces the fundamental aims of a classical liberal education. Such an education seeks to free our minds from the tyranny of unexamined opinion, and enable us to make intelligent, free choices about the ends and means of both private and public life. This course will not only illuminate some of the permanent questions of human existence in community (through the study of certain factual elements of American Government), but will have great relevance to contemporary problems as well.
Grades

Scale: 100-90 = A  
     89-80 = B  
     79-70 = C  
     69-60 = D  
     59-   = F

Rubric: quizzes – 20% (four quizzes; 5 points each; 20 points total)  
          short paper – 20% (one paper, 20 points)  
          midterm – 20% (20 points)  
          final – 40% (40 points)

Course Requirements:

Participation: The study of American politics cannot be done in isolation. Only by entering into the conversation among learners (some more experienced than others) can a genuine understanding of the essential problems of American political life be achieved. Therefore you must attend class every day, having read the assigned text carefully, and be prepared to respond to the comments of your teacher and fellows. A few additional points: 1) please bring the book that we will be discussing with you to class every day; 2) laptops will not be allowed in class except for official note-takers; and 3) please turn off cell phones. If you have a documented disability, you may contact the Office of Disability Services at disability@lsu.edu, and they will assist you in bringing it to my attention. I will make every effort to accommodate you.

Quizzes/Short Papers: There will be four quizzes (5 questions each) and one short paper. The quizzes will be multiple choice, and the papers will be due in class; no e-mail submissions or papers left in my mailbox will be accepted. You’ll have plenty of advance notice before quizzes are given and papers are due.

Midterm and Final Exams: The midterm and final exams will be in essay format, the details of which will be explained to you in class. The final will be cumulative, but the major emphasis will be on material covered after the midterm.

Academic Integrity

I take academic integrity very seriously. Plagiarism is a serious breach of trust; it undermines the entire academic enterprise, and is akin to theft of intellectual property. Section 8.1 of the LSU Code of Student Conduct governs our scholarly practice. http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/code.htm
Tentative Schedule: (* - selections will be posted on Moodle)

Monday, January 14th – Introduction to the course (syllabus and course policies)

Wednesday, January 16th – #1: The Declaration of Independence; Appendix: The U.S. Constitution

Friday, January 18th – #2: The Meaning of the Declaration of Independence; #3: Exchange on State Sovereignty and the Problem of Majority Rule

Monday, January 21st – Dr Martin Luther King Day, no class

Wednesday, January 23rd – #8: Federalist no.10; #9: Federalist no. 51

Friday, January 25th – Anti-Federalist, Brutus #1 *

Monday, January 28th - #83: Miller v. California; #84: Lawrence v. Texas

Wednesday, January 30th - #28: The New Republican Party; #29: Take Back America

Friday, February 1st - #30: On Congress; #32: In Defense of Congress

Monday, February 4th - #31: The Need for Cabinet Government in the United States

Wednesday, February 6th - #34: U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton

Friday, February 8th - #33: Congressional Government and Separation of Powers

Monday, February 11th Mardi Gras holiday, no class

Wednesday, February 13th - #39 On the Presidency

Friday, February 15th - #21: The Electoral College; #23: The Electoral College and the American Idea of Democracy

Monday, February 18th - #24: Political Parties and Presidential Ambition

Wednesday, February 20th - #40: The Power to Persuade

Friday, February 22nd - #41 The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency

Monday, February 25th - #42 Campaign Speech on the Presidency; #43 On Stem Cell Research
Wednesday, February 27th – #77: On Neutrality Toward France; #78: James Madison's *First Inaugural Address*

**Friday, March 1st** - #75: The Moral Basis for International Action; #76: The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy

**Monday, March 4th** - #80: Remarks on National Security (Obama); Remarks on National Security (Cheyney) *Midterms Begin*

**Wednesday, March 6th** - #48: On the Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus; #47: *Korematsu v. United States*

**Friday, March 8th** - #51: The Role of the Supreme Court; #52: The Problem of Judicial Review

**Monday, March 11th** - #55: *Marbury v. Madison*; #54: The Authority of the Supreme Court

**Wednesday, March 13th** – #56: *United States v. Nixon*

**Friday, March 15th** - #57: *City of Boerne v. Flores*; #58: *United States v. Morrison*

**Monday, March 18th** - #59: Constitutional Interpretation; #60: Testimony Before the Senate Judiciary Committee

**Wednesday, March 20th** #63: *California v. Bakke*

**Friday, March 22nd** – #64: The Supreme Court, Affirmative Action, and the Judicial Function; #65: *Grutter v. Bollinger*


**Wednesday, March 27th** - #87: *Plessy v. Ferguson*; #88 *Brown v. Board of Education*

**Friday, March 29th** – Spring Break begins, no class

**Monday, April 8th** - #66: Capitalism and Freedom

**Wednesday, April 10th** - #67: The New Goals of Politics

**Friday, April 12th** - #68: Ideology and Supply-Side Economics

**Monday, April 15th** - #70: Against Manufacturing; #71: Report on Manufactures

**Wednesday, April 17th** - #69: Soft Despotism; #14: Equality and Commerce

**Friday, April 19th** - #19: Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital

**Monday, April 22nd** - #74: The Political Lessons of Economic Life
Wednesday, April 24th – The 99 Declaration*; Can Occupy Wall Street Make Sense Of Itself ?*

Friday, April 26th – Congressman Boehner Call for Bipartisan Action to Avert the Fiscal-cliff*

Monday, April 29th – Remarks by the President on Fiscal-cliff Negotiations*; Statement by the President on the Tax Agreement*

Wednesday, May 1st - Review

Friday, May 3rd – Review

Monday, May 6th – Final Exam

Have a nice summer!