Political Science 2052  
Honors American Government  
Fall 2010

Dr. Robert Hogan  
Office Hours:
POLI 2052, Section 1  
TTH 1:30 – 2:30 or by prior arrangement
TTH 10:40-12:00  
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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. The first part of the course examines the ideological, historical, socioeconomic, and constitutional contexts of politics in the United States. The second part explores components of the political process including interest groups, political parties, and elections. The third part focuses on the institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policies. The preponderance of our time will be spent on national-level politics, but aspects of state and local governments will be incorporated throughout the semester.

As a General Education Course, POLI 2052 classes are designed to address the following General Education outcomes:

- A familiarity with the nature and function of the social sciences.
- An appreciation of the methods of critical inquiry.
- A comprehension of how knowledge is acquired and applied.

More specifically, this course is intended to meet the following General Education Social Science objectives:

- An understanding of the levels of association ranging from friends and family to civilizations of global significance.
- An understanding of how people relate to each other and to the world around them.

Required Texts

Two books are available for purchase in the bookstore:


On the syllabus there are several additional “Readings” listed. These can be found on the class’s Moodle web site.

Student Evaluations and Policies

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

- Participation: discussions, quizzes, class activities, short assignments, etc. 15%
- Writing Assignments (2 @ 12.5% each) 25%
- Mid-Term Exam 25%
- Final Exam 35%

TOTAL 100%

Letter grades will be determined as follows: A = 90 – 100 percent, B = 80 – 89 percent, C = 70 – 79 percent, D = 60 – 69 percent, and F = below 60 percent.

Participation: Discussions, Quizzes, Class Activities, Short Assignments
Participation counts as a large portion of your overall course grade. Much of this is determined by your involvement in class discussions. However a sizeable amount is also determined by performance on unannounced quizzes given at the beginning of class covering the readings assigned for that day. In-class assignments and class activities also count as part of the participation grade. In addition, I will occasionally ask you to complete a short assignment that is due at the beginning of the next class meeting. These assignments typically involve writing a short essay on a given topic. All of this work becomes part of your overall participation grade. Any class assignment given that is due during the next class meeting will be posted on Moodle soon after it is provided in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to check Moodle for any missed assignment prior to the next class meeting. Also, assignments not handed in on time will receive a grade penalty.
Given that this is a small class that uses a discussion format, it is important to keep up with the readings and to be prepared every day. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. It is therefore necessary to complete the readings prior to class and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current developments in national, state, and local politics given that these will often be used as examples in our discussions.

Writing Assignments
There are two writing assignments listed on the syllabus and each counts for 12.5 percent of the course grade. These assignments will require you to write a brief paper (approximately 5 pages) based on readings listed on the course syllabus. These assignments are provided one week in advance of their due date so it is to your advantage to keep up with the readings so you have time to write these papers. These writing assignments will be handed in on Friday, September 10 and Friday, October 29. A hard copy of the paper should be placed in my box in the Department of Political Science Office in Room 240 Stubbs Hall by 4:00 p.m. on these days (the department office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.). Late papers will receive a grade penalty.

Exams
There are two exams – a mid-term and final (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of short-answer/essay style questions. Note that makeup exams are only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible.

General Policies

Classroom Decorum: Please be considerate of those around you who are trying to listen and take notes. Keep in mind that class will begin promptly at 10:40. Please be on time and seated prior to the beginning of class and leave early only for emergencies. Most importantly, do not talk to others during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Plagiarism: Use of another’s words, ideas, or data without giving proper credit will not be tolerated. Care should be made to properly cite sources where appropriate. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult me. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect that you are not doing your own work. All violations of this policy are turned over to the Dean of Students for adjudication.

Policies on Late and Missed Assignments: If you are encountering a difficulty in completing an assignment on time or taking an exam on the required day, contact me as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the semester to ask to make up work, such requests are almost never granted.

Special Needs: For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance so arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule

August 24  Introduction to the Course
August 26  Approaches to Studying American “Democracy”
            Government in America, Chapter 1
            Reading#1: “Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age”
            Reading#2: “Democracy”
            Reading#3: “Top Secret in America”
August 31  Origins of American Government
            Government in America, Chapter 2
            Government in America, Appendix: Declaration of Independence and Constitution
September 2 Debate over the Constitution
            Government in America, Appendix: The Federalist #10 and #51
September 7 Ratification of the Constitution
            Reading#4: “The Constitution”
            Reading#5: “It is Time to Repair the Constitution’s Flaws”
September 9  Federalism  
*Government in America,* Chapter 3  
Reading #6: “Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations”  
Reading #7: “There Will Always Be a New Federalism”  

*** Paper Assignment #1 due on Friday, September 10 by 4:00 p.m. *** 

September 14  Public Opinion  
*Government in America,* Chapter 6  
Reading #8: “Trust in Government Remains Low”  

September 16  The Mass Media  
*Government in America,* Chapter 7  
Reading #9: “Why We Must Shift Our Attention from ‘Save Newspapers’ to ‘Save Society’ ”  

September 21  Interest Groups  
*Government in America,* Chapter 10  

September 23  Interest Group Influence and Effectiveness  
Reading #10: “Tobacco Lobby Political Influence”  
Reading #11: “K Street and the Status Quo”  

September 28  Political Parties  
*Government in America,* Chapter 8  

September 30  Presidential Nomination Contests  
*Government in America,* Chapter 9, part (pp. 301-312)  

October 5  General Elections for President  
*Government in America,* Chapter 9, part (pp. 312-345)  
Reading #12: “Obama’s America”  

October 7  Voting Behavior: Turnout and Candidate Choice  
Reading #13: “Should America Adopt Public Financing of Political Campaigns”  

October 12  Mid-Term Exam  

October 14  Representation in Legislatures  
*Government in America,* Chapter 11, part (pp. 380-392)  
Reading #14: “Representation”  

October 19  Legislative Process  
*Government in America,* Chapter 11, part (pp. 393-421)  
Reading #15: “The Empty Chamber”  

October 21  Fall Holiday  

October 26  Legislatures in the States  
Reading #16: “Legislative Politics in the States”  

October 28  The Presidency  
*Government in America,* Chapter 12  

*** Paper Assignment #2 due on Friday, October 29 by 4:00 p.m. ***  

November 2  The Presidency  
*Going Public* (entire book)  

November 4  Bureaucracies  
*Government in America,* Chapter 13  
Extra Reading #17: “Bureaucracy”
November 9  The Judiciary  
*Government in America*, Chapter 14

November 11 The Supreme Court  
*Reading#18: “Is Judicial Review Obsolete?”*  
*Reading#19: “Our Fill-in-the-Blank Constitution”*  

November 16 Civil Liberties Policymaking  
*Government in America*, Chapters 4

November 18 Civil Rights Policymaking  
*Government in America*, Chapters 5

November 23 Budgets, Taxes, and Social Welfare Policymaking  
*Government in America*, Chapter 15 and 16

November 25 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

November 30 National Security Policymaking  
*Government in America*, Chapter 17  
*Reading#20: “How Globalization Went Bad”*

December 2 Summation and Review

December 10 **Final Exam in this classroom Friday Dec. 10th from 3:00-5:00 pm**