

POLI 2051

Introduction to American Government

Summer 2009B

M-F 11:00 – 12:30

121 Allen Hall

Instructor: Kaitlyn Sill
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307 Stubbs Hall
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Office Hours: T&Th 12:40p – 2:00pm
Other times by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Who is responsible for deciding whether marijuana is legal? Who is responsible for deciding the legal drinking? Who determines what goes on in America?

In this class we will take a more in depth look at who is actually making these decisions. Specifically, we will examine the decision making, or “political process” in the United States by exploring the various powers and limitations held by actors in process. We will then ask ourselves, “Which of these are the most powerful.” By the end of the course, you will learn how American government works and, by doing so, will have gained an understanding of who holds power in America.

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES:

In addition to enabling you to demonstrate a mastery of the factual knowledge of American Government, this course will provide a better understanding of levels of associations, from friends and family, to economy and polity, and to civilizations of global significance and describe how people relate to each other and the world around them.

COURSE EVALUATIONS:

In-class participation	(30%)
Essay # 1	(20%)
Essay # 2	(25%)
Essay # 3	(25%)

Essays will be 5-8 pages, single-spaced, with size 12 font, and 1 inch margins and will be submitted via email. Lecture material and assigned reading is all that will be necessary for the essays. Outside research is not required.

The assigned readings will provide additional information to be included in your essay assignments. It will not be possible to achieve a passing grade on the essays without incorporating the assigned material.

BOOKS:

Kernell, Samuel and Steven S. Smith. 2007. Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings. 3rd Edition. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Obtain via Email or Online:

United States Constitution.

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.overview.html>

Collins, Paul M. N.d. "APSA Style Guide for Citations and References."

<http://www.psci.unt.edu/~pmcollins/APSA%20Citation%20and%20Reference%20Guidelines.pdf>

(June 6, 2009).

If Needed (order online):

Berman, Larry and Bruce Allen Murphy. 2009. Approaching Democracy. 6th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall.

Occasionally other readings may be disseminated.

DUE DATES:

July 13	First Paper Due @ 11:00am via email
July 20	Second Paper Due @ 11:00am via email
August 1	Final Paper Due @ 11:59pm via email

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

Section 1: Constitutional Structure

6/29	Syllabus and Introduction <u>Readings:</u> US Constitution including Amendments
6/30	Structures of Government and the American Government <u>Readings:</u> Page 59, <i>Federalist</i> No. 10, James Madison
7/1	Structure of Government and the American Government continued <u>Readings:</u> Page 66, <i>Federalist</i> No. 51, James Madison
7/2	Federalism and Essay Writing <u>Readings:</u> Page 86, "Federalism: Battles on the Front Lines of Public Policy" <i>Recommended:</i> Collins (Moodle)
7/6	Discussion Essay # 1 and Essay Writing

Section 2: Inputs

- 7/7 Power of the Public
7/8 Power of the Public continued
Readings: Page 427, "Dynamic Representation"
7/9 Power of the Public continued
Readings: Page 492, "America's Ignorant Voters"
7/10 Interest Groups
7/13 Interest Groups continued
Readings: Page 597, "The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System"

***1st Paper Due**

- 7/14 Political Parties
Readings: Page 566, "Why Parties"
7/15 Political Parties continued
Readings: Page 590, "Who Needs Political Parties",
7/16 Discussion Essay # 2

Section 3: Process/Institutions

- 7/17 Congress
Readings: Page 254, "Congressional Trends"
7/20 Congress continued
Readings: Page 245, "from *Congress: The Electoral Connection*"

***2nd Paper Due**

- 7/21 President
7/22 President continued
Readings: Page 311, "How Cable Television Ended the Golden Age"
7/23 Courts
7/24 Courts continued
Readings: Page 134, "The Real World of Constitutional Rights"
7/27 Media
7/28 Media continued
Readings: Page 621, "The Market and the Media"
7/29 Discussion Essay # 3
7/30 Meetings
7/31 Essay Writing
8/1 Final Exam

***Final Essay Due**

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is not compulsory; however, students will be unlikely to achieve a passing grade in the course if they regularly miss class. The vast majority of information disseminated in this course will be

delivered in class and will be unavailable by other methods. Furthermore, in-class participation constitutes a substantial portion of your grade, which will be negatively affected if classes are missed.

WRITING RESOURCES:

The LSU Writing Center offers free individual tutoring for all currently enrolled LSU students, first-year through graduate levels. Call or drop-by to make a 30-minute appointment. LSU Writing Center, B-18 Coates Hall, 225-578-4439, www.lsu.edu/writingcenter

UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES:

Students must abide by the Code of Student Conduct, which can be located at [http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/\\$Content/Code+of+Conduct?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/$Content/Code+of+Conduct?OpenDocument).

Late Assignments: Assignments turned in late without a *documented*, university approved excuse will be penalized 1 letter grade (10 points) for every 24 hour period they are late. So, an "A" paper turned in 1 minute to 24 hours late will be given a "B", turned in 24 hours and 1 minute late to 48 hours late will be given a "C", and so forth. See PS-22 for a listing of university approved absences.

Power Point Presentations: The Power Point presentations are intended to aid the lecture by providing visuals to better enable students to keep pace. They are not used to present the relevant information from lecture and will contain minimal information, thus simply copying the information from the slides is insufficient. The slides will NOT be distributed or otherwise made available.

Lecture notes: Students who miss lecture are responsible for obtaining notes from another student. The instructor will NOT provide notes to any student. It is your responsibility to obtain any information missed in your absence.

Extra Credit: No extra credit assignments will be given under any circumstance, **regardless of extenuating circumstances.**

Incompletes: The instructor cannot give incompletes for this introductory course.

Plagiarism: According to the *Code of Student Conduct*, "'Plagiarism' is defined as the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data. When a student submits work as his/her own that includes the words, structure, ideas, or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas, or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism (5.1.C.16)." For more information: <http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm>.

Essay 1

Due: July 13, 2009 @ 11:00am via Email

Using information from the lectures and readings, answer the following question in 5-8 pages. Be sure to provide strong support for your answer. Answers must be typed in size 12, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins and doubled spaced. Essays must be sent as a .doc or a .pdf. Essays must be fully cited according to APSA guidelines. Structure, grammar, and spelling count!!!

When the Founding Fathers designed the United States' system of government, did they intend for governmental power to be consolidated or diffused? What evidence is there of the founders' intentions?