

POLITICAL SCIENCE 105
American National Government
Dr. Mark Gobeyn
BR 434/2497

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the title of this course suggests, we will be examining both the structure and the process of the American national political system. Toward this end, we will begin by examining the philosophical origins and constitutional principles of the American system. After examinations of the basic structure of the U.S. Constitution and the contemporary American ideological spectrum, we will turn our attention to the institutions of the American government, namely the Congress, Presidency, Bureaucracy, and Judiciary. We will then focus on selected issues of public policy.

REQUIRED TEXT

Greenberg and Page, *The Struggle for Democracy*, 6th edition

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As the course description indicates, this course is loosely divided into four sections: the origins and structure of the American political system, the characteristics of the American electorate, institutions, and public policy. Throughout the course you will be required to participate in understanding the workings of American government. You will be required to master the material presented in the lectures and the text. As lectures are primarily designed to supplement and enhance the meaning of the text, attendance and participation are strongly advised. All material assigned and discussed will be testable. Please read each chapter before we discuss it in class.

GRADING

EXAMS: During the course of the semester you will be given FOUR examinations. The exams will be given following the completion of each of the aforementioned sections. Each exam is worth a total of 100 points, and the grading for the course will be based on the following criteria:

A=360-400
B=320-359
C=280-319
D=240-279
F=below 240

Participation may be considered in the case of borderline grades.

WEEK 1 (8/28)

Course introduction

WEEK 2 (9/2-9/4)

The philosophical origins of American government

Readings: ch. 1

WEEK 3 (9/9-9/11)

The U.S. Constitution

Readings: ch. 2

WEEK 4

(9/16-9/18)

Federalism

Readings: ch. 3

WEEK 5 (9/23-9-25)

Political economy and society

Readings: ch. 4

WEEK 6 (9/30-10/2)

EXAM ONE: TUES. SEPT. 30

The American ideological spectrum/Public opinion

Readings: ch. 5

WEEK 7 (10/7-10/9)

Interest group theory and practice

Social movements

Readings: chs. 7 & 8

WEEK 8 (10/16)

Social movements (cont.)

WEEK 9 (10/21-10/23)

Political parties

Elections and campaigns

Readings: chs. 9 & 10

WEEK 10 (10/28-10/30)

EXAM TWO: TUES. OCT. 28

Congress

Readings: ch. 11

WEEK 11 (11/4-11/6)

The presidency

The federal bureaucracy

Readings: chs. 12 & 13

WEEK 12 (11/11-11/13)

The federal court system

Readings: ch. 14

EXAM THREE: THURS. NOV. 13

WEEK 13 (11/18-11/20)

Civil rights and civil liberties

Readings: chs. 15 & 16

WEEK 14 (11/25)

Economic policy

Readings: ch. 17

WEEK 15 (12/2-12/4)

Economic policy (cont.)

Health care and social welfare policy

Readings: ch.. 17 (cont.)

WEEK 16 (12/9)

Social welfare policy (cont.)

FINAL EXAM (Section 4): Wednesday, December 17, 9-10:30 a.m.

(Section 5): Saturday, December 13, 2:30-4:00 p.m.