

Political Science 11
Introduction to American Government
Spring 2007

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Course Description: As an introduction to American government, this course is designed to provide you with the information and concepts necessary for understanding the workings of our national government, the electoral process, your place in the system, and selected public policies. It is hoped that after this course you not only will have a better understanding of news relating to government, but that you also will want to know more about and become more involved in the political process.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course, the student is expected to be able to:

1. Apply basic American government vocabulary and concepts in analyzing and understanding current political developments.
2. Relate structure, operations and power of the federal government outlined in the US Constitution to current structure, operation and exercise of power of the federal government.
3. Utilize media and/or library sources to enhance understanding of developments in the government/political realm.
4. Communicate knowledge and analysis of topics related to American government verbally and in writing.
5. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the structure and processes of American national government.

Required Text: Greenberg, Edward S. and Benjamin I. Page. *The Struggle for Democracy*. Seventh Edition. New York: Pearson Longman, Inc., 2005.

Course Requirements:

Students will be evaluated as follows:

First exam	20%
Second exam	20%
Final exam	30%
Simulation Paper	15%
Participation/Activities	15%

The grading scale used in this course is:

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

Exams: There will be three examinations in this course, two during the course and a final. Exams will be a combination of identifications, short answer, and essays. The first and second exam will each count 20% of the student's final grade; the final exam will account for 30%.

Class Activities: Throughout the semester, you will participate in a number of class activities. Some of these will require work outside of class; others will be completed in class. Some will be undertaken in groups; others individually. **No late or make-up assignments will be accepted.** Twelve such assignments

will be made over the course of the semester. Students will receive 10 points for each assignment completed fully, up to a maximum of 100 points. This grade (total points received up to 100) will account for 15% of the student's final course grade.

Congressional Simulation: Each student will participate in a simulation of the House of Representatives. Students will complete a written paper in preparation. The paper will count 15% of the student's final course grade. Failure to participate in the simulation itself will result in the paper's grade being lowered 20 points. Further information on the simulation and the paper will be distributed in class. The final paper is due in our class on March 5. No paper will be accepted later than class on March 12. Any paper turned in between class on March 5 and the start of class on March 12 will have its grade lowered by 10 points.

Participation: Although class participation is not assigned a particular numerical value in computing the student's final course grade, students should realize its importance. You are expected to have completed the readings before class and to participate in class. I do not expect to lecture for two and a half hours each class! Meaningful participation in class will certainly help a student's final course grade should it be borderline.

Extra Credit: One point will be added to the final grade average of each student who shows me his/her valid voter registration card. If a student cannot legally register to vote, another option will be provided to receive this extra credit. It is the student's responsibility to contact me before for information concerning this alternate option.

Absences: In the event that you must miss a class, you are expected to contact another student or the instructor learn of any assignments made. If you miss one of the exams, you must contact the UES office to schedule a make-up. Everyone's participation is critical for success of our congressional simulation.

Students with Disabilities: If a student with a disability desires an accommodation, it is the student's responsibility to identify himself or herself as having a disability and to make a formal request for appropriate accommodations. The Disabilities Services Coordinator at Furman is Ms. Donna Taylor at extension 2322.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty in any form is a fundamental offence against the integrity of the entire academic community and is always a threat to the standards of the college and to the standing of every student. In taking examinations, doing homework, laboratory work, and writing papers, students are expected to perform with honor.

One of the most common forms of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another's words and ideas as if they were one's own. To avoid plagiarism, students should acknowledge their sources, using whatever documentation is appropriate to the discipline in which their work is being done.

Tentative Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:

- Jan. 8 Introduction to course
Democracy and American Politics
Chapter 1, pp. 4-16
- Jan. 15 *No class – holiday*
- Jan. 22 The Constitution
Chapter 2
- Jan. 29 Federalism: States and Nation
Chapter 3
- Feb. 5 First Exam**
The Media
Chapter 6
- Feb. 12 Political Parties
Chapter 9; Chapter 4, pp. 103-1009; Chapter 5, pp. 137-145; Chapter 10, p. 293
- Feb. 19 Interest groups and Corporations
Chapter 7
- Feb. 26 Participation, Voting, and Elections
Chapter 1, pp. 3-4, 10-11, 17-20; Chapter 10, pp. 275-287 and 298-302; and
Chapter 16, pp. 480-484
Campaign finance
Chapter 7, pp. 202-208; Chapter 9, pp. 239-240; Chapter 10, pp. 296-298; and
Chapter 11, pp. 323-327
- March 5 Congressional Simulation Paper due**
Congress
Chapter 11
- March 12 Second Exam**
Planning for simulation
- March 19 Congressional Simulation**
The Electoral College
Chapter 9, pp. 250-251; Chapter 10, pp. 302-305
- March 26 The Electoral College continued
The President
Chapter 12
- April 2 The President continued
The Courts
Chapter 14
- April 9 Freedom: The Struggle for Civil Liberties
Chapter 15
Civil Rights: the Struggle for Political Equality
Chapter 16
- April 16 Final Exam**