

## Introduction to American Government

GO101-001

Fall 2008

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Ladd 308

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We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

*Declaration of Independence, 1776*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

*Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, 1848*

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream, 1963*

Nothing is more certain than the indispensable necessity of government; and it is equally undeniable that whenever and however it is instituted, the people must cede to it some of their natural rights, in order to vest it with requisite powers.

John Jay, *Federalist Paper 2, 1787*

We would strongly recommend that the United States government face the Indian problem squarely. That it acknowledge to the nations of the world the international status of Indian nations as perhaps among the smallest and weakest nations of the world but yet as nations with an inherent right to political and cultural existence comparable to any other nation.

Vine Deloria, Jr. (Sioux), *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence, 1974*

### Course Description

This introductory course critically examines United States national government with an emphasis on constitutionalism, Congress, the judiciary, the Presidency, the role of citizens, and the government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes.

## **Required Texts:**

- American Government: Power and Purpose, Brief Tenth Edition (L, G & S) Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, and Kenneth A. Shepsle
- *Federalist Papers*, -see assignment section (available on the internet)
- *The Great Law of Peace* (“Iroquois” Constitution) (available on the internet)
- American Indians and US Politics, (Meyer)

*Additional Readings will be handed out in class* (HO)

## **Course Requirements**

1. Attendance is required. Participation in class discussion is expected. (10%)
2. One 3-5 page discussion paper on issues or ideas gleaned from a particular week’s readings and related to current events. E-mail copies of your paper to students **before** class as you will be leading the class discussion. (20%)
3. Two exams (mid-term 20% and final 25% respectively)
4. One legislative simulation (20%)
  - District Profile
  - Legislative Memo
  - Participation
5. Constitution Quiz **Must receive a grade of 75% to pass the course**

## **Course Standards**

**Attendance.** It counts. Poor attendance, defined as 2 or more absences, will result in your final grade being lowered. Tardiness counts as an absence.

**Participation.** I assume that if you stay in the course you agree to carefully prepare all class assignments, come to class prepared, actively listen, take meaningful notes, and thoughtfully participate in class discussions.

**Late Papers.** I don’t accept them except under extraordinary circumstances and then only with prior permission

**Academic Integrity.** Do your own work.

**Equity.** I assume that if you stay in the course you have agreed to the terms of the course as outlined above.

This syllabus is a “living and flexible document.” I reserve the right to amend the syllabus, reading lists and assignments.

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topics and Assignments</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>
9/3	Politics, Power and the American Government	
9/5	American Political System: An overview	<i>Federalist Papers</i> #1-2, 6, L, G & S: Ch1
	<i>Discussion Questions:</i> What is politics? What is power? What does political power look like?	
9/8	Constitutionalism: Historical Context American Indians, Europeans, British Colonies <i>Declaration of Independence</i> , A3 <i>Articles of Confederation</i> , <a href="http://www.usconstitution.net/articles.html">http://www.usconstitution.net/articles.html</a> <i>US Constitution</i> , A7 <i>The Great Law of Peace</i> , <a href="http://www.constitution.org/cons/iroquois.htm">http://www.constitution.org/cons/iroquois.htm</a>	<i>Federalist Papers</i> :10, 49, 51 L, G & S: Ch 2 Meyer, Ch 1

9/10	Constitutionalism: Historical Context, cont. <b><u>Class Activity:</u></b> As a class we will draft an essay discussing the similarities and differences between the <i>Declaration, Articles, US Constitution</i> and <i>The Great Law Of Peace</i>	
9/12	Constitutionalism: Federalism <b><u>Assignment:</u></b> bring in examples of Federalism	L, G & S: Ch 3 Constitution Art. IV, V, VI <i>Federalist Papers:</i> 10,16, 51 Meyer, chs. III
9/15	Constitutionalism: Separation of Powers/Checks & Balances  <b><u>Assignment:</u></b> bring in examples of SOP/C&B	Constitution: Art. I, II, III L, G & S: Ch 3 L, G & S: Ch 4
9/17	Constitutionalism: Limited Government/Individual Rights <b><u>Assignment:</u></b> bring in examples	Constitution: Art. VI Meyer, V Amendments I - X
9/19	Constitutionalism: Tribal Sovereignty <b><u>Assignment:</u></b> bring in examples of Tribal Sovereignty	Const.: Art.I sec.8, cl. 3 Article VI Meyer, II
9/22	Constitutionalism: Tribal Sovereignty, cont.	
9/24	Congress: the First Branch of Government	L, G & S: Ch 5
9/26		Constitution: Article I Amendment XV Meyer, VIII
9/29	Congress, continued	
10/01		
10/03		
10/6	Presidency	<i>Federalist Paper</i> 70
10/8		Constitution: Article II,
10/10		Amendment XX, XXII, XXV L, G & S: Ch 6 Meyer, IX
10/13	Bureaucracy	L, G & S: Ch 7
10/15		Meyer, X
10/17	<b><u>Class Activity:</u></b> list all the federal bureaucracies involved in a single day of your life	
10/20	Mid-term Review	
10/22	Mid Term	
10/24	<i>Relax Day</i>	
10/27	Role of Citizen	<i>Federalist Papers</i> 49 & 50
10/29	Role of Citizen: Public Opinion	L, G & S: Ch 9
10/31	Role of Citizen: Political Parties	L, G & S: Ch 11
11/3	Electoral College	<i>Federalist Paper</i> 68 Constitution Amendments

11/5	Role of Citizen: Elections	XII, XXIII,
11/7	<i>Class Activity:</i> Election Analysis	L, G & S: Ch 10
		Meyer, VII
		Constitution, Amendment
		XXIV, XXVI
11/10	Role of Citizen: Interest Groups	L, G & S: Ch
11/12		Meyer, VI
11/14	Social Movements	HO
11/17	Judiciary: The Least Dangerous Branch	<i>Federalist Papers:</i> 78, HO
11/19		L,G & S: Ch 8
11/21		Meyer, XI
11/24	<i>Class Activity:</i> Oral Arguments	
	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	
12/1	Legislative Session: Reconciling Competing Interests	HO
12/3		
11/5		
12/8	Legislative Session Debrief	
12/10		