

Introduction to American Government

Spring 2010

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

Government is not reason. It is not eloquence. It is a force, like fire: a dangerous servant and a terrible master.

George Washington

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 Eleventh Edition, 2010 (L, G & S) Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Ansolabehere
- *Federalist Papers*, (available on the internet)-see assignment section (FP)
- *Lots of additional Readings will be handed out in class (HO)*

Course Requirements

1. Constitution Quiz **Must receive a grade of 80% to pass the course.** (Your grade on the quiz does NOT factor into your final grade.)
2. Attendance 10%
3. Participation 10%
4. 3-5 pager 10% Due Thursday, 2/18 in class
5. Midterm 25% in-class exam on Thursday 3/11
6. Legislative session 25% 4/27 & 4/29
(includes District Profile and Legislative Memo)
7. 5-8 page paper 20% Due 5/11 no later than 9:00 p.m.

Course Standards

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Attendance. It counts. Poor attendance, defined as 3 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 and come to class ready to 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.

This syllabus is a "living and flexible document." I reserve the right to amend the syllabus, reading lists and assignments when "necessary and proper for carrying into the execution" the goals and objectives of the course.

Date	Topics and Assignments	Readings
1/26	Politics, power, political power, government	
1/28	American Political System: An overview	FPs:1-2, 6, L, G, S & A: Ch1
2/2	Constitutionalism: Historical Context	FPs: 10, 49, 51
2/4	American Indians, Europeans & British Colonies <i>Declaration of Independence</i> , A3 <i>Articles of Confederation</i> , http://www.usconstitution.net/articles.html <i>US Constitution</i> , A7 Constitutionalism: Historical Context, cont. <u>Class Activity</u> : As a class we will do a “blue sky” session focusing on the similarities and differences between the <i>Articles</i> and the <i>US Constitution</i> with regard to politics, power, political power and government, including the role of state governments and the role of citizens.	L, G, S & A: Ch 2
2/9	Federalism <u>Assignment</u> : bring in examples of Federalism	L, G, S & A: Ch 3 Constitution Art. IV, V, VI FPs: 10, 16, 51
2/11	Separation of Powers/Checks & Balances <u>Assignment</u> : bring in examples of SOP/C&B	Constitution: Art. I, II, III L, G, S & A: Ch 3
2/16	Constitutionalism: Limited Government/Individual Rights <u>Assignment</u> : bring in examples	L,G, S,&A: Ch: 4 Constitution: Art. VI Amendments I - X
2/18	Constitutionalism: Tribal Sovereignty <u>Assignment</u> : bring in examples of Tribal Sovereignty	Const.: Art. I, sec.8, cl. 3 Article VI; HO
2/23	Congress: the First Branch of Government	L, G, S & A: Ch 5
2/25		Constitution: Article I Amendment XV
3/2	Presidency	FP: 70
3/4		Constitution: Article II, Amendments XX, XXII, XXV L, G, S & A: Ch 6
3/9	Presidency	
3/11	Mid-term	
3/23	Executive Bureaucracy	L, G, S & A: CH 7
3/25	The Federal Courts	FP: 78; HO L, G, S & A: Ch 8
3/30	Judiciary, continued	
4/1		

4/6	Role of Citizen: Public Opinion	FPs: 49 & 50
4/8	Role of citizen: Elections	L, G, S & A: Ch 11
4/13	Elections, cont.	FP: 68 Constitution Amendments XII, XXIII, XXIV, XXVI L, G, S & A: Ch 9
4/15	Role of Citizen: Political Parties	L, G, S & A: Ch 11
4/20	Role of Citizen: Interest Groups	L, G, S & A: Ch 12
4/22	Social Movements	HO
4/27	Legislative Session: Reconciling Competing Interests	HO
4/29		
5/4	Debrief	