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## Political Science 101: Introduction to American Government

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**Instructor:**

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**Course Information:**

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45  
BSB 1170A  
CRN: 24172 & 24173  
  
Office Hour: Tuesday 11:00-12:00

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**Textbook:**

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy (12<sup>th</sup> Ed)  
George C. Edwards III, Martin P. Wattenberg, & Robert L. Lineberry

**Attendance, Participation & In-Class Activities (140 points):**

- Attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. It is your responsibility to sign-in – failure to do so will result in an absence.
- If you are more than 10 min. late to class, you will be deducted ½ of your attendance/participation points for that day.
- Consistent tardiness and/or 4+ absences will result in a **failing** grade for the course.
- A failing grade will also be issued to students who do not participate in class assignments and activities – regardless of attendance record.
- In order to obtain the attendance/participation points, you must attend all classes and be an active participant in class activities.

**Exams: (300 points)**

- Three Exams: non-comprehensive; 100 points each
- Format: 25 multiple choice (2 points each), 2 short essay questions (25 points each)
- You must attend the review sessions for exam information. Do not e-mail me asking me about the exam if you decide to skip class the day of review!
- I will not administer makeup exams except in cases of **documented serious emergencies**. "Serious emergency" include being hospitalized for illness or injury at the time the exam was being administered, but not for being home with the flu or a cold, or making an office visit to a physician in the general time frame of the exam. "Documented" means written proof, such as a letter from a physician in the case of medical emergencies.
- If you know before an exam that you cannot make it on the scheduled date (i.e. court date, military duty, or university sports event- for athletes only), see me and you may be allowed to take the exam early, but you will not be allowed to take the exam after the scheduled date for any reason that you knew about before the exam. Documentation is still required.

**Media Journals (60 points):**

- 3 Ring Binder or Folder, or Spiral Notebook
- Entries do **not** have to be typed – However, if I cannot read your handwriting & the presentation is sloppy – points will be deducted
- For your weekly entries, compare the way different media sources and/or reporters cover the same event during a day or week.
- Examine articles that deal with any aspect of American government. Feel free to include political cartoons if you wish.
- 3 “spot checks” will be offered during semester on the day of exam reviews.
- 15 weeks, 30 entries; 2 entries per week
- Begin with Week 1 (Sunday, August 21 to Saturday, August 27)  
End with Week 15 (Sunday, November 27 to Saturday, December 3)

**Journal Entry #1**

**Week 1** – Sunday, August 21 – Saturday, August 27, 2005

**Source Date** – Aug. 23, 2005

**Media Source:** WWW, Newspaper, Magazine, Radio, or Television

**Internet, Newspaper, or Magazine Source Information:**

Clipping with Article Heading (including date and source information)

**\* OR \***

**Radio or Television Source Format:**

Source Information (date, time, program, and description of event).

**Description of Coverage:** Is the piece descriptive? Is it fair and balanced? Is it biased? How is it framed? Is the coverage positive or negative in its tone?

**THIS IS NOT A SUMMARY BUT A CRITIQUE OF THE COVERAGE**

**Reaction:** Your reaction to event.

**Grading (500 points total):**

300 points – Exams

60 points – Media Journals

40 points – Attendance & Participation

100 points – In-Class Activities – Cannot be made up! You must be in class to get these points!

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

59% and lower = F

**Schedule (May be subject to change with prior notice):**

- August 23 (T) Course Overview & Chapter 1. Introducing Government in America  
August 25 (Th) Chapter 2. The Constitution / Living Document Exercise (10 points)  
Begin Media Journals
- August 30 (T) Chapter 3. Federalism  
September 1 (Th) Case Studies (15 points)
- September 6 (T) No Class - Prelims  
September 8 (Th) Chapter 4. Civil Liberties & Public Policy
- September 13 (T) Chapter 5. Civil Rights & Public Policy  
September 15 (Th) Exam Review
- September 20 (T) **Exam #1**  
September 22 (Th) Chapter 6. Public Opinion and Political Action
- September 27 (T) Chapter 7. The Mass Media and the Political Agenda  
September 29 (Th) Chapter 8. Political Parties
- October 4 (T) Chapter 9. Nominations & Campaigns / Chapter 10. Elections & Voting Behavior  
October 6 (Th) Chapter 11. Interest Groups
- October 11 (T) Exam Review  
October 13 (Th) **Exam #2**
- October 18 (T) Interest Group Presentation – Preparation (10 points)  
October 20 (Th) Interest Group Presentations (10 points)
- October 25 (T) Interest Group Presentations (10 points)  
October 27 (Th) No Class – Conference
- November 1 (T) Chapter 12. Congress  
November 3 (Th) Project Vote Smart (20 Points)
- November 8 (T) Chapter 13. The Presidency  
November 10 (Th) Presidency Video (10 Points)
- November 15 (T) Chapter 15. The Federal Bureaucracy  
November 17 (Th) Centralia Case Study & Bureaucracies that Work (15 Points)
- November 22 (T) Chapter 16. The Federal Courts  
November 24 (Th) No Class – Thanksgiving Break
- November 29 (T) Chapter 17. Economic Policymaking & Chapter 18. Social Welfare Policymaking  
December 1 (Th) Exam Review
- December 6 (T) **Final Exam** – 10:30 to 12:30 – Media Journal Due  
In case of Conflict: Course listed *first* has precedence (alpha order).

**Journal Entry #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week** \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

**Source Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Media Source:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Source:**

**Description of Coverage:**

**Reaction:**