

**Introduction to American Government and Politics  
Political Science 101  
SYLLABUS**

**Spring Semester 2005  
University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)**

**Instructor:** Professor Ola Adeoye  
**Office Hours:** 9:30 to 10:30 AM Tuesday/Thursday or by appointment  
**Office:** BSB 1170A  
**Telephone:** 312-413-3279  
**E-mail:** [oadeyo1@uic.edu](mailto:oadeyo1@uic.edu)  
**Lecture:** Tuesday 8:00 – 9:15 AM in BSB 311  
**Discussion:** Thursday 8:00 – 9:15 AM in BSB 311

This course introduces students to the basic concepts, principles and structures of the American political system. We will dissect the processes of public governance and examine the roles of governmental and non-governmental actors operating within the system. In short, we will try to understand why the government does what it does. As you will learn in this class, the U.S. operates a democracy based on a set of time-honored ideas and values. These ideas and values underpin the interaction between government and society. The central goal of this course is to develop your skills in analyzing this interaction and capacity for independent thought.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

The text for this course is the latest edition of Edward S. Greenberg and Benjamin I. Page, *The Struggle for Democracy*, published by Longman. This book balances theory and empirical analysis and uses relevant vignettes to help you understand societal issues and governmental actions. It is available at the university bookstore.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

There are 5 modes of course evaluation consisting of two examinations (the midterm and the final), weekly reaction papers, a political films paper, and a group assignment on the 2005 presidential State of the Union (SOTU) address. The midterm and final examinations carry equal weight and consist of multiple choice and essay questions. You will write one essay question chosen from the two provided. The weekly reaction paper, due on Tuesday, is a one-page comment on the week's readings, featuring questions/observations that you can raise at Thursday's discussion. I will collect the papers first thing on Tuesday and return them first thing on Thursday. The weekly papers prove that you follow the readings and evidence your attendance. The political films assignment requires you to watch two films addressing politics selected from a list handed out in class and then write a 5-7-page paper about them. For the SOTU assignment, you and members of your group will watch the State of the Union address delivered by the President on February 2, 2005 and analyze it in terms of the policy issues (i.e., budget, jobs, healthcare, gun control, war on terror, etc). Each group will

share its observations/analysis with the class the following Thursday. Group members are expected to contribute equally to the project; any member reported not to do so will receive a lower or failing grade. Papers must be typewritten, properly numbered and stapled. No handwritten, late, emailed or faxed papers, including those covering the wrong assignment, will be accepted. Further details on these examinations and assignments will be discussed in class.

<b><u>Evaluation:</u></b>	<b>Midterm</b>	<b>= 30%</b>
	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>= 30%</b>
	<b>Weekly Reaction Paper</b>	<b>= 15%</b>
	<b>Political Films Paper</b>	<b>= 15%</b>
	<b>SOTU Report</b>	<b>= 10%</b>

<b><u>Grading Standards:</u></b>	<b>A = 90% to 100%</b>
	<b>B = 80% to 89%</b>
	<b>C = 70% to 79%</b>
	<b>D = 50% to 69%</b>
	<b>E = under 50%</b>

### **Attendance**

For the goal of this course to be realized you need to be in class and on time. As indicated, your weekly reaction paper forms the basis for your participation and marks your attendance. Frivolous excuses, such as missing the train, being home with the flu, or a snowstorm will not be entertained. More than 3 absences put you at risk for a failing grade. No exceptions.

### **Make-up Exams**

You are expected to take your exams and turn in your assignments at deadlines. Late work only slows down class progress. Prior permission from me or written certification by an M.D. that you were unable to attend an exam is the only condition under which a make-up will be given. There will be no make-up exam for the final.

### **Incomplete**

No incomplete will be given unless a doctor's certificate is provided stating that you are medically unable to complete the course.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Copying material from another source, i.e., book, newspaper, journal, or another student without proper attribution, is cheating and it is forbidden in academe. Cheating is also talking during an exam, seeking help from another student, using crib sheets, and exchanging notes during exams. Any of these forms of cheating will result in an

automatic grade of “F” for the course, no matter what the quality of your other class work.

**Reading and Assignment Plan:**

- (WK 1)  
1/11 Course introduction and overview. Enjoy reading the Preface and Chapter 1. No weekly paper due.
- (WK 2)  
1/18 Read Chapter 2 –The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution of the U.S. Read also the Federalist Papers No. 10. **Turn in weekly reaction paper today and every Tuesday.**
- (WK 3)  
1/25 Read Chapter 3 – Federalism.
- (WK 4)  
2/1 Read Chapter 4 – The Structural Foundations of American Government and Politics.  
  
2/3 **State of the Union address-themed discussion session**
- (WK 5)  
2/8 Read Chapter 5 – Public Opinion.
- (WK 6)  
2/15 Read Chapters 6 and 7 – The Media, Interest Groups and Corporations. Check out “The Strange Disappearance of Civic America,” by Robert D. Putnam for a critical perspective on group membership (makes an interesting topic for our Thursday discussion).  
  
2/17 **Thursday - Midterm Exam Study Guide handed out.**
- (WK 7)  
2/22 Read Chapters 8 and 9 – Social Movements and Political Parties.  
  
2/24 **Thursday - Midterm Exam.**
- WK 8  
3/1 Read Chapter 10 – Participation, Voting, and Elections.
- (WK 9)  
3/8 Read Chapter 11 – Congress.

- (WK 10)  
3/15 Read Chapter 12 – The President (Check out Barber on “Presidential Character”).
- (WK 11)  
3/22 **Spring break.** (Good time to complete political films assignment).
- (WK 12)  
3/29 Read Chapter 13 – The Federal Bureaucracy.
- 4/5 Read Chapter 14 – The Courts.
- (WK 13)  
4/12 Read Chapters 15 and 16 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (see handout on Standards of Review).
- 4/14 **Thursday – Last day to turn in Political Films Paper**
- (WK 14)  
4/21 Read Chapter 17 – Domestic Policy.
- (WK 15)  
4/28 Read Chapter 18 – Foreign Policy.
- 4/30 Last day of class. No lecture. **Final Exam study guide handed out.** Go home and rest. Prepare for the final exam.
- (WK 16)  
5/2 **Monday** - FINAL EXAM (10:30 AM – 12:30 PM in class). If this conflicts with another exam, note that the Spring 2005 catalog stipulates that the course listed second in the timetable has precedence – see Exam Conflicts, p. 26.