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Office: BSB 1141. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30-1:30 pm (immediately before class) and by appointment.

Best way to reach me: E-mail.

Class meetings: Class sessions are 1:30 to 4pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays, with the first hour and a half earmarked for lecture and the balance earmarked for discussion. We will take a short break in between the lecture and discussion portion of the class.

Course Description:

Many students begin this course with the assumption that they have studied the subject already, often on the basis of “civics” classes in high school. However, such classes are significantly restricted in scope and in particular can leave you with a very constrained or unbalanced view of the possibilities in our political system and the constraints that system imposes on political choices. I encourage you at the start to set aside your preconceived notions and approach the course with the same open mind you would bring to any new subject, rather than assuming you have “heard that, been there,” already, because, most likely, you have not.

First, you will learn new information. The course materials go behind the heavily government-focused civics approach (three branches of government etc.) to give you a broad look at institutions – not only concrete institutions such as Congress, the Presidency and the judiciary but also social and conceptual institutions like federalism, separation of powers, constitutional government, limited government, civil liberties and rights, popular sovereignty, and other institutions involved in the public policy process. Very often, these institutions depend upon mutual understandings among people in order to function.

This leads to the second course objective: developing understanding, or critical thinking abilities. Here I am speaking not just of understanding this subject, but developing your ability to understand in general. This is consistent with the general mission of the liberal arts and sciences to encourage you to develop the capacity for independent thought, for reflection, for comparing things as they are with things as they might be, and, in an important way, to become a different kind of person than you were when you entered this university. There are some significant differences between people with a college education, particularly in the liberal arts and sciences, and those without. Perhaps the most important is the development of this critical thinking ability, which will serve you well for a lifetime once you acquire it – no matter whether you end up using that critical

thinking in a very practical way to, for example, parse out the flaws in a questionable set of accounts, analyze and fix an otherwise unworkable bid on a construction project, or plan a course of treatment for a patient with apparently intractable symptoms; or in a much more conceptual and theoretical way in, for example, reviewing a legal brief or doing original academic research.

On a specifically practical note, better knowledge about government than is typically communicated in high school is very important to your ability to participate in society as a citizen and make informed decisions ranging from active involvement in political and social groups through the simple process of voting all the way to a conscious decision not to participate in politics. Such knowledge is also very significant for your future role in the workplace because of the large extent to which government intervenes in economics, regulation and social policy. We hope this class will help you that end. It is our experience as instructors in political science that a majority of people enter POLS 101 with big gaps in their understand of how government works and how it affects you, and we aim to inform and enlighten and to enable you to think for yourself about how politics actually works and how politics ought to work.

Keep in mind that this course can generate controversy. In fact, it is one of my main objectives to get past the "don't talk about politics" taboo that afflicts Americans in general. Everybody in the course should feel free to express or analyze any point of view without fear of ridicule or retribution. You are not being graded on the basis of whether you agree or disagree with anybody else's opinions, but on what you learn and how effectively you express it.

Text:

The text for this course is a bundle of *We the People*, by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, and Margaret Weir; and *The Enduring Debate* edited by David Canon, John Coleman and Kenneth Mayer -- both published by W. W. Norton. The book is available at the UIC Student Bookstore. I strongly recommend you purchase it there as we were able to get a better price than what was available on Amazon or through other local stores.

Requirements:

Please be advised that I will not accept late papers or other assignments or administer makeup exams except in cases of documented emergencies. "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 can't make it on the

scheduled date, 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. The same rules apply for turning in written assignments.

Here's a summary of how your grade will be calculated:

Mid-term examinations (two): 15 percent each, for a total of 30 percent. The exams will be half multiple choice and half essay.

Final examination: 20 percent. Same format as midterms. This is not a comprehensive exam. It covers only material from the second midterm on.

Reaction Papers: Two for five percent each. These are included primarily to get you to engage and think about the material, and also to head off any significant issues with your writing well in advance of the main paper.

Political films paper. 30 percent: This assignment is fully described in a handout to be posted on Blackboard during the first week of class, but briefly, it requires you to watch two films that deal with politics, which you will choose from a list I will give you, and then writing a 5-8 page paper about them.

Participation: 10 percent. I will take attendance. Your participation grade will be determined by a combination of attendance and your contribution to the quality of classroom discussions. Anybody who accumulates more than two unexcused absences will see automatic deductions from this portion of the grade. An excused absence is confined to a documented medical emergency or death in the family. In exceptional circumstances, other reasons may be accepted **BUT THEY MUST BE CLEARED WITH ME IN ADVANCE** (obviously, I don't expect you to clear a broken leg in advance). You must participate in class discussions and other activities, which means being prepared and speaking coherently, intelligently, and civilly, recognizing that we need to be free to disagree with each other respectfully so that we can learn from each other. You must be a good classroom citizen, which means not doing things like letting your cell phone or pager make noise, eating in class (a violation of campus rules), talking to the people sitting next to you, arriving late, leaving early, showing a lack of respect for other people or their statements, and other breaches of good manners. Arriving late counts as half an absence.

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Note that all readings and assignments **MUST** be completed by the class date shown. I will allow some flexibility with the first session in case you have not had an opportunity to purchase the text. This is a fast-paced class due to the summer schedule and the reading list is significant, so please be sure not to fall behind. Bear in mind that each class session equals a full week in a normal semester. Nonetheless, some allowances have been made compared to a fall or spring semester class in terms of the amount of required assignments (no “media journal”, fewer reaction papers).

As a study aid, you are also strongly encouraged to make use of practice questions at the end of each chapter in *We The People* and/or practice quizzes that are available on the Blackboard web site for the class. Questions for discussion are given at the end of each section in *The Enduring Debate*.

1. **May 30.** Course introduction and American Political Culture.
 - a. WTP – Read pages 2-35.
 - b. Internet, freely available – Read Federalist Papers 10 and 47 and (optional – though you will need to have it done by June 1) Federalist 51.
2. **June 1.** The Founding and the Constitution.
 - a. WTP – Read Chapter 2 and appendices
 - b. TED – Read Federalist papers 15 and 51, plus the Charles Beard debate – overall, pages 46 through 68.
3. **June 6.** Federalism.
 - a. WTP – Read Chapter 3 (pages 80-117).
 - b. TED – Read all of Chapter 3 (68-101).
 - c. **FIRST REACTION PAPER DUE.**
4. **June 8.** Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (See the handout on Standards of Review).
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 118-154, plus 159-161, and also 162-203.
 - b. **TED** – Read 102-124
5. **June 13.** Public Opinion.
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 210-251.
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 293-310.
 - c. **FIRST MID-TERM** – multiple-choice test administered towards the end of class covering all material through June 8.

6. **June 15. The Media**
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 257-287.
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 311-329.
 - c. **Review** the media ownership web site www.mediachannel.org. The must-see on this site is a chart of media ownership at <http://www.mediachannel.org/ownership/chart.shtml> which fills you in on the high degree of concentration of ownership in the media – a handful of multinational corporations assuming very large market share.
 - d. **Review** the handout on “infotainment”, blogs and the old media (forthcoming) --
7. **June 20. Political Participation and Voting.**
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 288-372. This is a large assignment – focus on the pattern of voter participation (gender, class, ethnic group etc.) and how the US compares to other countries. The latter part includes a section on political parties that is also relevant to the June 22 class.
 - b. **TED** – Pages 330-345 and pages 354-373
8. **June 22. Political Parties, Campaigns and Elections**
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 377-425
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 374-398 and 409 to 419 (all of Chapter 11 except for the Sundquist article)
 - c. **SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE**
9. **June 27. Interest Groups and Corporations**
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 426-465
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 420-468. Note this includes Federalist 10, which we have already covered, but is useful to review at this point.
 - c. **Read** "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," by Robert D. Putnam.
10. **June 29. Congress**
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 466-519.
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 141-174.
 - c. **SECOND MID-TERM** – multiple choice test on course work from June 13 through June 27 class dates inclusive.
 - d. **Note no class on July 4.** At this point we do not have a makeup date, so the syllabus assumes only 15 class sessions rather than 16.

11. **July 6.** The Presidency.
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 520-565.
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 175-205.
12. **July 11.** The Bureaucracy
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 566-613.
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 215-247. Optional – also read the Woodrow Wilson piece immediately before this section; though getting out of date it is useful expression of the motivation behind the impulse to “run government like a business”
13. **July 13.** The Federal Courts
 - a. **WTP** – Read pages 614-655
 - b. **TED** – Read pages 248-292 as well as 646-656 (the *Marbury* and *McCulloch* Supreme Court decisions)
 - c. Read
14. **July 18.** Government, Social Policy, and Economics – Growth and Inequality
 - a. ******Political Film papers due on Tuesday, July 18******
 - b. **WTP** – Pages 656-742
 - c. **TED** – Pages 488-526; pages 543-552; pages 561-598.
 - d. ******Note, major assignment due and large reading list for the class, so please prepare well in advance******
15. **July 20.** Government and Foreign Policy. Final examination.
 - a. **WTP** – Pages 747-785.
 - b. **TED** – Pages 598-641.
 - c. **FINAL EXAM.** This covers material from June 29 through the end of the class. In addition to the multiple choice test there will be a short essay question.