

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 2051
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Fall 2014**

Kristy McKearn
POLS 2051
TUES 6:00 –8:50pm
116 Stubbs
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Office Hours:
by Appointment (flexible): 225-763-2142 (office)

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the principals, institutions and processes of American politics. This course is designed to provide a foundation that should enable students to understand and critically evaluate the American political system and its form of government. POLI 2051 classes are designed to address the following General Education outcomes:

- A familiarity with the nature and function of the social sciences
- An appreciation of the methods of critical inquiry

The course is divided into three sections. The first section introduces students to the fundamental of policymaking, and explores the constitutional context of politics. We will also examine political participation along with components of the political system (elections, interest groups). The second section reviews the institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policies. The third part of the course examines the policymaking process in the specific areas such as the economy, social welfare, civil liberties and national security. The preponderance of our time will be spent on national-level politics, but aspects of state and local governments will be incorporated throughout the semester.

Required Texts:

One text is required for this course:

George Edwards, Martin Wattenberg, Robert Lineberry, *Government in America*., 2012 Election Edition, 16th Edition, Pearson Education, Inc.

Student Evaluation and Policies:

Grades for the course are based on a student's performance on two in-term exams and a final exam, and one (1) paper. Letter grades are determined on the following scale:

A	90% - 100%	(400 to 360 points)
B	80% - 89%	(359 to 320 points)
C	70% - 79%	(319 to 280 points)
D	60% - 69%	(279 to 240 points)
F	0 - 59%	(Below 239 points)

Paper

There is an 8-10 page (double spaced, one inch margin, 12 point Times New Roman) paper due. The paper will consist of a critique of one of the policy issues covered in class. The bibliography (not counted in the page total) must consist of at least five sources. Web based sources are limited to TWO. In addition, THREE of your non-web based sources must be readings from outside the course. The paper is worth 100 points. **Once completed, you may submit your paper anytime during the semester, but the paper is due in class on November 25th. No late papers will be accepted.**

Exams:

Two exams and one final consisting of 100 points each will be given. The final exam will focus on the last section of material covered; however, material covered earlier in the semester may be drawn upon as well. Please note that any reading not covered in class will still be on the exams. It is the student's responsibility to complete all reading and be prepared to answer any questions about them on the exam.

Makeup exams are only provided for students who can produce a valid excuse (serious illness, family crisis, etc). For problems that can be anticipated, students must let me know in advance of the problem. For problems that crop up at the last minute, students should contact me as soon as it is reasonably possible. *Students who do not meet these conditions will earn a 0 on the exam.* Note that it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with me about makeup exams. Makeups are generally scheduled for the Friday following the date of the missed exam and are *written essay tests*.

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation. For accommodations involving the exams, please contact me about the necessary arrangements well in advance of the testing date.

Assignment Schedule:

First Exam	100 Points	October 14th
Second Exam	100 Points	November 18th
Final Exam	100 Points	December 9th
Paper	100 Points	Due November 25th

Classroom Policy:

Please be considerate of those around you who are trying to listen and take notes. Keep in mind that class will begin promptly at 6:00. Please be on time and seated prior to the beginning of class each day and leave early only for emergencies. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Use of a cell phone or blackberry device including texting is prohibited during class. Turn off all cell phones and blackberry devices prior to the beginning of class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Course Schedule

August 26th	<u>Introduction to Course</u>
September 2nd	<u>Government in America:</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> , Chapter 1 <u>Federalism</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> Chapter 3
September 9th	No class meeting
September 16th	<u>The Constitution</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> Chapter 2
September 23rd	<u>Public Opinion and Political Action</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> , Chapter 6 <u>The Mass Media and the Political Agenda</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> , Chapter 7
September 30th	<u>Political Parties</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> , Chapter 8 <u>Campaign and Voting Behavior</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> , Chapter 9
October 7th	<u>Interest Groups</u> <i>Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy</i> , Chapter 10
October 14th	<u>EXAM 1</u>

- October 21st** Congress
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 11
- October 28th** The Presidency
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 12
- November 4th** The Budget
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 13
- The Federal Bureaucracy
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 14
- November 11th** The Federal Courts
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 15
- November 18th** **EXAM 2**
- November 25th** Economic & Social Welfare Policymaking
PAPER DUE *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 16
- Healthcare, Environment and Energy Policymaking
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 17
- National Security Policymaking
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 18
- December 2nd** Civil Liberties
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 4
- Civil Rights
Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy, Chapter 5
- December 9th** **FINAL EXAM**
8:00pm – 10:00pm

