

Political Science 2052
Honors American Government
Fall 2016

Dr. Hogan
POLI 2052, Section 1
TTH 10:30 – 11:50
284 Lockett

Office Hours: Mon. 9-11 am (or by apt.)
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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of American government and politics. The first part of the course examines the ideological, historical, socioeconomic, and constitutional contexts of politics in the United States. The second part explores components of the political process including interest groups, political parties, and elections. The third part focuses on the institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policies. 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.

As a General Education Course, POLI 2052 is designed to address the following General Education outcomes: “*LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.*”

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university’s definition of work required for each credit hour: “not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester.” Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom (for this class it means reading, studying, and working on the course assignments).

Required Reading Materials

Two books are available for purchase in the bookstore:

- *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy* -- **Revel Access**, 16th Edition, 2016 (by George C. Edwards, and Martin P. Wattenberg, Pearson: ISBN: 9780133951301).
- *Engines of Liberty: The Power of Citizen Activists to Make Constitutional Law*, 2016 (by David Cole, Basic Books, ISBN: 9780465060900)

In addition there are several other readings listed on the syllabus. These readings can be downloaded from the course Moodle site.

Student Evaluations and Policies

Grading

The final grade for this course will be determined by a student’s performance in the following areas:

Participation	10%
Writing Assignment	20%
Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	25%
Final Exam	25%
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TOTAL	100%

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

F <60	D- 60-62	D 63-66	D+ 67-69	C- 70-72	C 73-76	C+ 77-79	B- 80-82	B 83-86	B+ 87-89	A- 90-92	A 93-96	A+ 97 ≥
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Participation

Classes are generally conducted using a lecture-discussion format so it is necessary to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for every class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do so, it is necessary to complete the readings *in advance* and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. Participation is determined by two equally weighted components:

- **Self-Reported Class Participation:** During each class period I will ask questions about the day's readings and will expect to receive answers. If you have questions about the readings or comments about the substantive topics in the course, please ask them. I will track your participation based upon your self-reported participation. If you have participated in the day's class either in asking questions, answering questions, or providing comments, please hand in a sheet of paper at the end of class indicating what your contribution was for that day (briefly restating your question, answer, or comment). It is expected that you will participate on 6 different days during the course of the semester. If you provide substantive comments or ask questions (that a reasonable person would say enlightened the discussion) on 6 separate days, you will receive 100% for this portion of your participation grade (if you participate 5 times your score will be 83%, 4 times 67%, and so on).
- **Class Activities:** Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or take part in a class exercise. Your performance on these activities will be counted as a component of your overall participation grade. There will be several opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you satisfactorily complete all of them, you will receive 100% for this component of your participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, 80% is a grade of 80, etc. Note for quizzes and some activities a grade is given, so to "satisfactorily complete" the activity is to correctly answer the questions asked.

Writing Assignment

Students are required to write a review of *Engines of Liberty: The Power of Citizen Activists to Make Constitutional Law* by answering a series of questions that will be provided at least two weeks prior to the review's due date (November 15).

Exams

There are two in-term exams and a final (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or essay questions. Note that makeup exams are only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please make the necessary plans well in advance of the exam dates.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Rules

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort not to be late. Be seated and ready to begin at the appropriate time and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident

will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

In an effort to provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). A penalty for handing in the paper late is assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points (5 points for missing the deadline, and 5 points for each 24-hour period thereafter). Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return to the university, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course's Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a doctor's note, etc.).

Graded Work

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I will return your paper and your exams to you in class. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance. Please note, however, I will not estimate your current grade for you (the percentage that each grade counts toward your final average is provided earlier on the syllabus).

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule

- August 23** ***Introduction to the Course***
- *No reading assignment.*
- August 25** ***Approaches to Studying American Politics***
- Reading #1: Chapters from *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answers: How Common Sense Fails Us* by Duncan J. Watts, 2011, New York: Crown Publishing (Preface, Chapters 1 & 2).
 - Reading #2: Noel, Hans. 2010. "Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't," *The Forum*, Volume 8, Issue 3: 1-19.
- August 30** ***What is American "Democracy"?***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 1
 - Reading#3: "Democracy"
- ****Last day to drop classes without receiving a W****
- September 1** ***Origins of American Government***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 2
 - Reading#4: Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution (and Amendments)
- September 6** ***Debate over the Constitution***
- Reading #5: The Federalist #10 and #51
- September 8** ***Ratification of the Constitution***
- Reading#6: "The Constitution"

- September 13 ***Federalism***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 3
- September 15 ***Public Opinion and the Media***
- *Government in America*, Chapters 6 and 7
- September 20 **Exam #1**
- September 22 ***Public Opinion and the Media Continued***
- Reading #7: “Partisanship and Political Animosity in 2016,” Pew Research Center, June 22.
- September 27 ***Interest Groups***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 10
- September 29 ***Political Parties***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 8
- October 4 ***Presidential Nomination Contests***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 9
- October 6 **Fall Holiday**
- October 11 ***General Elections for President***
- Reading #8: Brooks, David. 2014. “Death by Data” *New York Times* November 3.
 - Reading #9: Cockburn, Andrew. 2016. “Down the Tube: Television, Turnout, and the Election-Industrial Complex,” *Harper’s Magazine*, April.
- October 13 ***Voting Behavior: Turnout and Candidate Choice***
- No reading assignment.
- October 18 ***Legislatures***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 11
 - Reading#10: “Representation”
- October 20 ***The Presidency***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 12
- October 25 **Exam #2**
- October 27 ***Bureaucracies***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 14
 - Reading#11: Excerpt from James Q. Wilson’s *Bureaucracy*
- November 1 ***The Judiciary***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 15
 - Reading #12: Alicia Parlapiano, “When the Eight-Member Supreme Court Avoids Deadlocks, It Leans Left,” *New York Times* (June 27)
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/27/us/eight-member-supreme-court.html?action=click&contentCollection=U.S.&module=RelatedCoverage®ion=EndOfArticle&pgtype=article>
- November 3 ***Civil Liberties Policy***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 4
- November 8 ***Civil Rights Policy***
- *Government in America*, Chapter 5

- November 10 *Civil Rights Policymaking*
▪ No reading assignment.
- November 15 *Changes to Constitutional Law*
▪ *Engines of Liberty* (entire book)
*******Book Review Due at the Beginning of Class*******
- November 17 *Taxing and Spending Policymaking*
▪ *Government in America*, Chapter 13
- November 22 *Economic and Social Welfare Policymaking*
▪ *Government in America*, Chapter 16
- November 24 Thanksgiving Holiday
- November 29 *National Security Policymaking*
▪ *Government in America*, Chapter 18
- December 1 *Summation and Review*
- December 5 Final Exam in this classroom on Monday from 10:00-NOON.