

POS 2041-1778
American Federal Government
University of Florida
Department of Political Science
Spring 2013

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Class Hours

Monday: 8:30 to 9:20am – Pugh Hall #170
 Wednesday: 8:30 to 9:20am – Pugh Hall #170
 Friday: 8:30 to 9:20am – Pugh Hall #170

Office Hours

Monday: 9:30 to 10:30am
 11:30 to 1:30pm
 Wednesday: 9:30 to 10:30am
 11:30 to 1:30pm
 Friday: *By Mutual Appointment*

I. Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the American political system, with specific attention to the institutional aspects of a functioning democracy. The primary goal of this course is to provide students with the knowledge necessary to participate within this system. This type of knowledge includes the ability to interpret the political interactions that occur between citizens, their representative actors within the executive and legislative branches, and more isolated actors such as the bureaucracy, judiciary, and interest groups. A secondary goal of this course is to introduce students to the field of political science. Emphasis will be placed upon simplifying theories and frameworks – the various lenses through which we view political phenomena. This approach is intended to help students identify more advanced political science courses that they find interesting and that will be valuable additions to their academic pursuits.

II. Required Text and Readings

The following text is required and will act as a general resource for course lectures and topics:

Lowi, Theodore J., Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2010. *American Government: Power and Purpose, Brief 11th Ed.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. ISBN 978-0393932997 (pbk.)

ebook available: <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=22682>

This publisher is in the process of creating a new edition, but it always is available from used textbook sources. I would get the cheapest available book in any of the alternative versions, such as the full text or core editions. The text will be supplemented with topical readings from newspapers, journals and books. These materials will be made available to students in Adobe PDF format through the E-Learning system, which provides a web based resource for the course that will act as the current calendar of readings/lectures:

E-Learning: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/> [Gatorlink ID and password]

III. Calendar of Topics

Monday	01/07/2013	<u>First Day</u> Introduction to the Course
Wednesday	01/09/2013	<u>Film</u> “Shay’s Rebellion: America’s First Civil War”
Friday	01/11/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Politics, Social Contracts, and Revolution Lowi, et al – Ch 1 Hobbe’s Leviathan / Lockes’ 2 nd Treatise reading
Monday	01/14/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Constitution Lowi, et al – Ch 2
Wednesday	01/16/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Constitution Lowi, et al – Ch 3
Friday	01/18/2013	<u>Film</u> “A Healthy Constitution”
<i>Monday</i>	<i>01/21/2013</i>	<i><u>M.L.K. Day / No Class</u></i>
Wednesday	01/23/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Participation and Voting Lowi, et al – Ch 10
Friday	01/25/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Participation and Voting
Monday	01/28/2013	<u>Film</u> “Freedom Summer”
Wednesday	01/30/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Political Parties and Realignment Lowi, et al – Ch 11
Friday	02/01/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Political Parties and Realignment
Monday	02/04/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Presidential Campaign Ads
Wednesday	02/06/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Presidential Campaign Ads
Friday	02/08/2013	<u>Exam #1</u>
Monday	02/11/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Executive Lowi, et al – Ch 6
Wednesday	02/13/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Executive
Friday	02/15/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Executive – 2012 Election

Monday	02/18/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Legislative Branch and Process Lowi, et al – Ch 5
Wednesday	02/20/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Legislative Branch and Process
Friday	02/22/2013	<u>Film</u> “Obama’s Deal”
Monday	02/25/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Judicial Branch Lowi, et al – Ch 8
Wednesday	02/27/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Judicial Branch
Friday	03/01/2013	<u>Film</u> “The Supreme Court – The Rehnquist Revolution” (disk 4)
Monday	03/04/2013	<i>Spring Break / No Class</i>
Wednesday	03/06/2013	<i>Spring Break / No Class</i>
Friday	03/08/2013	<i>Spring Break / No Class</i>
Monday	03/11/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Bureaucracy and Interest Groups Lowi, et al – Ch 7
Wednesday	03/13/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Bureaucracy and Interest Groups Lowi, et al – Ch 12
Friday	03/15/2013	<u>Film</u> “Free Speech for Sale”
Monday	03/18/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The Fourth Branch – Media Lowi, et al – Ch 9
Wednesday	03/20/2013	[open date / course overflow]
Friday	03/22/2013	<u>Exam #2</u>
Monday	03/25/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Political Dynamics – Civil Liberties and Rights Policy Lowi, et al – Ch 4
Wednesday	03/27/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Political Dynamics – Civil Liberties and Rights Policy
Friday	03/29/2013	<u>Film</u> “The Supreme Court – A Nation of Liberties” (disk 3)
Monday	04/01/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Political Dynamics – Economic Policy Lowi, et al – Ch 13

Wednesday	04/03/2013	<u>Lecture</u> Political Dynamics – Economic Policy
Friday	04/05/2013	<u>Film</u> “I.O.U.S.A”
Monday	04/08/2013	<u>Lecture</u> International Relations Lowi, et al – Ch 14
Wednesday	04/10/2013	<u>Lecture</u> International Crisis Allison (1969) “Conceptual Models of the Cuban Missile Crisis”
Friday	04/12/2013	<u>Film</u> “13 Days”
Monday	04/15/2013	<u>Film</u> “13 Days”
Wednesday	04/17/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The War on Terrorism Readings on E-Learning
Friday	04/19/2013	<u>Lecture</u> The War on Terrorism Readings on E-Learning
Monday	04/22/2013	<u>Film</u> “The Dark Side”
Wednesday	04/24/2013	[open date / course overflow]
Friday	04/26/2013	<u>Reading Day / No Class</u>
Thursday	05/02/2013	<u>Final Exam</u> ¹ Exam Group 1E 5:30 to 7:30pm Pugh Hall #170

IV. Course Requirements / Grading

The greatest component of the final grade will come from three exams (two periodic examinations and a comprehensive final exam) that will comprise of multiple choice, true/false, matching/definition, and diagram questions. It is important that students make the scheduled exam time, since any make up exam will strictly take an essay form. The writing component of the course is limited to 2 extra credit opportunities, which are short written assignments related to current events and / or course topics. The extra credit will represent a designated number of points toward the first two exam scores. The remainder of the grade will be attributed to a participation measure. Attendance is problematic for a class of this size, but it still important and will be assessed on a random basis. Each class, roughly one-third of the class will have to sign in for attendance. An excused absence will be allowed per university guidelines, but prior notice is mandatory. University guidelines on attendance can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences>

¹ Please note that the time and date of the final examination is scheduled according to the university calendar. No early exams are offered.

I will also post an attendance policy to the E-Learning site with more details. The breakdown of the course grade will be the following:

	Requirement	Weight
1.	Attendance / Class Participation	8%
2	Exam #1	28%
3.	Exam #2	28%
4.	Final Exam	36%

Numerical	Letter
100-92	A
91-88	A-
87-85	B+
84-81	B
80-78	B-
77-75	C+
74-71	C
70-68	C- ²
67-65	D+
64-61	D
60-58	D-
57-0	E

V. Policies and Guidelines

Student Conduct, Academic Integrity, and Policies

Conduct in this class is subject to University of Florida's *Academic Regulations* and *Student Honor Code*, which among other things includes guidelines for academic integrity. Plagiarism and any other forms of cheating will not be tolerated and will be handled according to the appropriate provision of the student honor code that can be found at the below link:

Academic Regulations

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/Pages/academic-regulations.aspx>

Student Honor Code

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Matters of Accommodation

Every effort will be made to make accommodations for those who fall under the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* and the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Please let me know of any issues that may possibly arise in this particular area and we will handle them in a discrete manner according to university guidelines. Additional information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/programs/ada/>

Unanticipated Events and Incomplete Grades

On some occasions, a student will come down with an extended illness, or get called up for military duty, etc. These situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and they usually are resolved by dropping the course or an incomplete grade and working agreement between the student, academic advisor, and instructor. I am extremely reluctant to go forward with an incomplete grade in this course since it is an introduction course with examination grade components. In the event that such substantive cause is present to do so, we will proceed through the guidelines listed at the below link. Otherwise another alternative is the university's medical withdrawal process, which can also be found below:

Incomplete Grades

<http://registrar.ufl.edu/staff/grades.html>

Medical Withdrawal

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/withdrawals/details.php>

² Please note that according to the new UF grading scale a C- is not a satisfactory grade for major / minor or gen ed / Gordon rule courses. This standard means that a 71 is the benchmark for a passing grade in this course