



American Federal Government

POS 2041 (3 credit hours)

Spring 2016

Lectures MW 2nd period, Carleton Auditorium
Discussion sections at various times on Thursday and Friday

Instructor, Teaching Assistants, and Office Hours

	classes / sections	email	office	phone	hours
Professor Michael D. Martinez	Lectures (MW 2)	martinez@ufl.edu	208 Anderson	(352) 273-2363	W 1:00 - 3:50 pm (beginning Jan 13)
Ross Cotton	1A96 (R5), 1A99 (R6)	rdcotton@ufl.edu	214 Anderson	--	F 9:35 - 10:25 am
Nicholas Rudnik	101H (R8), 1778 (F2)	narudnik@ufl.edu	214 Anderson	--	W 9:30 - 10:30 am
Stephen Phillips	8938 (F3), 1A92 (F4)	scphillips@ufl.edu	214 Anderson	--	M 10:40 am - 11:30 am
Robert Mermer	1A97 (F5), 2A71 (F6)	rmermer@ufl.edu	214 Anderson	--	R 3:15 - 4:15 pm

I will not hold office hours on any day on which class is cancelled. You may also request an appointment to see me if you've already discussed your concern with your TA. My office is in 208 Anderson Hall, which is a beautifully refurbished building on University Avenue just northeast of Smathers Library and across University Avenue from Chipotle.

Teaching Assistants are responsible for leading discussion sections, some grading, holding office hours to assist students outside of class time, and assigning discussion group participation grades.

Course Description and Requirements

What is political power, and how concentrated is it in the United States? Where does the United States rank on the UN Human Development Index? How resistant to change is the United States Constitution, relative to other national constitutions? What influences some people to be political gladiators and others to be political spectators? How will Americans make up their minds when choosing our next President? If more people favor gun control than oppose it, why is the NRA so powerful? How influential can Chief Justice Roberts be in shaping the Supreme Court?

We will address these and other questions through a survey the structural foundations, political linkage institutions, and governmental institutions in the United States. Our discussions will include some historical references, comparisons and contrasts to other countries' political systems, and comment on current developments. By the end of the course, students should be able to critically evaluate claims about the U.S. political system using empirical evidence.

This course satisfies a Social and Behavioral Science (S) General Education requirement, and is required of all [Political Science](#) and [College of Journalism](#) majors. It is also a prerequisite to many other courses in American politics in the [Department of Political Science](#).

Our normal rhythm will be

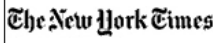
1. Lectures will be on Mondays and Wednesdays in Carleton Auditorium. During lectures, I will present the basic structure of various aspects of the American political system, and I will often provide contrasts and/or critiques of the American political system from a variety of perspectives.
2. A weekly quiz, due at 11:59 pm on Wednesdays on Canvas, will cover the major concepts in the text and other readings. This is intended to ensure that students are keeping up with the lectures and readings, and are prepared for discussion sections.
3. A weekly assignment, also due at 11:59 pm on Wednesdays on Canvas, which may be a short writing assignment or short answer assignment based on accessing materials available on the web.
4. Discussion sections on Thursdays and Fridays will be focused on discussions of weekly readings, assignments, and current applications.

Resources and Readings

Canvas will be the course management system for this course. Make sure that you see this course when you log in to <http://elearning.ufl.edu>. Some readings will be accessible online through links on Canvas.

Greenberg, Edward and Benjamin Page. 2015. *The Struggle for Democracy* (Twelfth Edition; ISBN 013413835X).
This text argues that policy results from a combination of structural, political, and governmental effects. Greenberg and Page also argue that American democracy is evolutionary, and offer numerous comparisons to other political systems.



<p>Periodically, I will assign articles from The New York Times that are relevant to the topics that we are discussing. Those articles may be discussed in lecture or in discussion section, and should be considered required reading for an upcoming test or discussion section. Announcements and links will be provided on Canvas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UF students have a free digital subscription (courtesy of the Provost's Office and Student Government). To retrieve it, go to my.ufl.edu. After signing in, click on "Main Menu," then click on "Quick Links" and finally click on "NY Times." From there, simply follow the directions. Please use your ufl.edu email address when signing up. 	
<p>optional REVEL electronic package</p> <p>Pearson Higher Education includes access to Revel (an electronic package to accompany the Greenberg and Page text) at no additional cost to students. It is also available as a stand alone product (without the printed text) for \$65. Revel is not required for this class, but you may use it as a study guide (or just as an electronic version of the text) if you wish. Revel includes the entire textbook (in both text and audio), plus some videos and simulations, short quizzes, key word reviews, and chapter exams to help students prepare for exams. If you wish to use Revel, here is how to register:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit this link: https://console.pearson.com/enrollment/leckdh 2. Sign in with your Pearson Account. You can either: sign in with an existing Pearson username and password OR create a new Pearson account if this is your first Pearson digital product. 3. Choose your course under 'My Courses' and choose an access option: redeem an access code that you got with the purchase of the textbook or you may purchase access online. There is a free trial if you are waiting for financial aid. <p>You may wish to bookmark https://console.pearson.com to easily access your materials. Pearson recommends using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox, or Safari with this digital product.</p> <p>Again, Revel is not required for this course. No extra credit for doing the assignments in Revel, and no penalty for not doing them. But some students may prefer the convenience of an electronic text, and find the extras and assignments interesting or helpful as a study aide.</p>	

Course Requirements and Grades

First Exam (Wednesday, February 3)	20%
Second Exam (Wednesday, March 16)	20%
Final Exam (Friday, April 29; 12:30 - 2:30 pm, Carleton Auditorium)	25%
Weekly assignments on Canvas	10%
Weekly quizzes on Canvas	10%
Discussion group attendance	5%
Discussion group participation	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

Lower boundaries for grades are:

		B+	85.0%		C+	75.0%		D+	65.0%
A	91.0%	B	81.0%		C	71.0%		D	61.0%
A-	88.0%	B-	78.0%		C-	68.0%		D-	58.0%

Note that 84.97% is less than 85.0%, and is therefore a "B".

Exams

There will be three examinations. The first exam and the final exam will be multiple-choice machine-graded. I will offer sample examination questions as the course proceeds.

The second exam may be of the same format, or alternatively may consist of a series of true-false justify statements and a short essay to be graded by the T.A.s. The format of the second exam will be chosen by the class from these alternatives.

All exams will cover lecture, readings, completed assignments, and articles discussed in class. The second exam and the final exam will emphasize material covered in the second and third parts of the course, respectively, but will build on material previously covered.

On exam days, students will be asked to remove hats, caps, and sunglasses. Initiating or receiving outside communication using a phone or other device during an exam constitutes receipt of outside information, and will result in an immediate failure on that examination. **Please note that sending or receiving messages (including messages via electronic text or phone) during an exam is considered cheating. Do not forget to turn off your cellphone before a test. If you do forget and the cellphone rings, don't answer it. Surrender the phone to an exam proctor, and you can pick it up after the exam is over.**

It is important that you show up on exam day. Absences from exams will only be excused if the student can provide written and verifiable documentation of illness, bereavement of an immediate family member, or a conflicting University or legal obligation.

The date and time for the final exam were assigned to this class by the UF Registrar in order to assure that all students have time to prepare for all of their exams and avoid (most) exam conflicts. Plan to be on campus at this time, and do not ask to take the exam early or late, unless you have an exam conflict that is recognized by the UF Registrar. Please advise parents, spouses, and others who may be making travel plans for you of your final exam schedule. If you have unavoidable plans to be out of Gainesville on April 29, you should consider dropping the course or registering for the online version of the course.

Discussion sections

TAs will assign 15% percent of the course grade based on performance in discussion sections.

5% will be based on attendance in 13 discussion sections. Each student is allowed one unexcused absence from discussion for the attendance portion of the grade, which will be calculated as

$$\text{Attendance grade} = (\text{number of sessions attended} / (12 - \text{number of excused absences})) * 100, \text{ up to a maximum score of } 100$$

10% will be based on the quality of your participation in discussion group, including listening, preparation, quality of contributions, impact on the class, and frequency of participation.

	Strong	Needs Development	Unsatisfactory
Listening	Actively and respectfully listens to peers and TA	Sometimes displays lack of interest in comments of others	Projects lack of interest or disrespect for others (including browsing other materials during class)
Preparation	Arrives fully prepared with all assignments completed, and notes on reading, observations, questions	Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation	Little evidence of having completed or thought about assigned material
Quality of contributions	Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of assignments, previous remarks of other students, and insights about assigned material	Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous remarks of other students	Comments reflect little understanding of either the assignment or previous remarks in class
Impact on class	Comments frequently help move class discussion forward	Comments sometimes advance the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward	Comments do not advance the conversation or are actively harmful to it
Frequency of participation	Actively participates at appropriate times	Sometimes participates but at other times is "tuned out"	Seldom participates and is generally not engaged or absent

TAs may use in class assignments to help determine the level of preparation, or to introduce a discussion topic.

Grading scale for participation component:

- A - Strong in most categories
- B - Participation is strong in some categories but needs development in others
- C - Need for development in most categories
- D - Typically unsatisfactory in several categories
- E - Unsatisfactory in nearly all.

Miscellaneous stuff

If you need to discuss anything about this class, you should bring the matter up with your TA first. In most cases, your TA will be able to help you with your concern. If your TA cannot provide the answers or help that you need, s/he may ask you to come talk to me.

The University of Florida is committed to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, a student should present his/her accommodation letter to me supporting a request for accommodations. The University encourages students with disabilities to follow these procedures as early as possible within the semester.

Please do not phone me or your TA to discuss a grade over the phone. You are welcome to call to schedule an appointment with your TA, but please refrain from asking about your grade directly over the phone. This helps the TAs and me protect your statutory rights to privacy, as we are generally unable to verify your identity over the phone.

Calendar

The following is provided as a guideline to the course. I reserve the right to make adjustments to the calendar if needed, delay particular assignments, or to change them to optional. I will add links to short articles in the electronic media from time to time.

Seq	Dates	Topics	Struggle Chapter(s)
	January 6	Introduction to the course	

	<i>January 7-8</i>	<i>No discussion section: Southern Political Science Association Meetings</i>	
1	January 11	Political Power: Who Governs?	1
2	January 13-22	Constitution: America's Founding Compromise	2
	<i>January 18</i>	<i>No lecture; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>	
3	January 25- 29	Federalism: Vertical fragmentation	3
4	February 1	Structural Foundations: How Well Developed is the United States?	4
	<i>February 3</i>	<i>First Exam</i>	
	<i>February 4-5</i>	<i>First Exam Debrief</i>	
5	February 8-12	Public Opinion and Media: Are We Polarized? If so, is it the Media's Fault?	5 and 6
6	February 15-19	Interest Groups: What Accent the Heavenly Chorus?	7
7	February 22-26	Social Movements: Grassroots or Astroturf?	8
	<i>February 29 - Mar 4</i>	<i>Give me a (spring) break!</i>	
8	March 7-14	Political Parties and Elections: Why Did Al Gore Win an Oscar instead of the Presidency?	9 and 10
	<i>March 16</i>	<i>Second Exam</i>	
	<i>March 17-18</i>	<i>Second Exam Debrief</i>	
9	March 21- March 25	Congress: Do We (Sort of) Love our Congressman, but Hate Congress?	11
10	March 28 - April 1	Presidency: Are there really Two Presidencies?	12
11	April 4 - 8	Bureaucracy: Is our Bureaucracy Tyrannical?	13
12	April 11 - 15	Judiciary: Do Unelected Judges Preserve Democracy?	14
13	April 18 - 20	Civil Rights: The Struggle Continues	16
	<i>April 29 (12:30 - 2:30 pm)</i>	<i>Final Exam</i>	

Other University of Florida Sites

- [Department of Political Science](#)
 - [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#)
 - [Honors](#)
 - [Career Resource Center](#)
 - [University of Florida Home Page](#)
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Thanks for visiting the homepage for this class! If you are enrolled in the class, and would like to introduce yourself electronically, please update your bio on Canvas (pics are welcome)!

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