

Introduction to American Government  
POL 102  
Summer I, 2008  
Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-4:55pm  
Location: Harriman Hall 116

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“We hold these Truths to be self-evident,  
that all men are created equal,  
that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,  
that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;  
that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men,  
deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,  
that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends,  
it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it,  
and to institute a new government, laying it's foundations on such principles,  
and organizing its powers in such form,  
as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”  
*The Declaration of Independence, 1776*

## 1 Introduction

This course will provide students with an introduction to American politics and government. The course will focus on three areas: foundations of American government, institutions, and American political behavior. By the end of the course, students will have a more complete understanding of the way government operates as well as the effect rules and institutions have on behavior. Time will also be spent exploring ways for individuals to actively engage the political process.

## 2 Required Texts

There is one required texts for this course which is available at the campus bookstore and online:

- James Q. Wilson. 2007. *American Government: Brief Edition*. Eighth edition. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

It is important that students purchase the correct edition (8th: Brief Edition) of *American Government* as other editions contain extra or out-dated material. Supplementary material will be posted on Blackboard or distributed via e-mail if necessary. All class communication will be sent to the e-mail address on file with the university. Students are expected to check this account daily.

### 3 Course Requirements

*Attendance and Participation:* Students are expected to attend every class unless the absence is excused due to a documented medical emergency or the death of an immediate family member. In the event of an excused absence, students are expected to notify the instructor ahead of time or, in the case of a medical emergency, as soon as possible after class. Due to the truncated nature of summer sessions, each class meeting is the equivalent of a week of classes in the spring or fall. As such, attendance will count for 10% of the course grade. Each student will be allowed one unexcused absence. Further unexcused absences will result in penalties. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. If the instructor notices deserters during the class period, attendance will be taken at the end of class as well. Only those students present for both sign-ins will be counted as present. Signing in someone other than yourself, or asking someone else to sign you in, is considered academic dishonesty.

Beyond attendance, students are expected to have completed the assigned reading before class. Again, since there are only twelve class meetings, it is imperative that everyone be familiar with the material before each class begins. Completing the reading before class also allows students to engage in thoughtful discussion and makes class more interesting. The quality of class participation will be considered when computing the student's final grade.

*Unannounced Quizzes:* In order to ensure students are keeping up with the reading, there will be several unannounced quizzes. Any material covered up to and including that day's material (textbook readings and lecture) is fair game for a quiz. Note that quizzes may be given at any time during the class period and there are no make-up quizzes. Students will be allowed to drop their lowest quiz grade.

*Examinations:* All work will be graded on an 0-100 scale. Scores of 100-94 receive an "A"; 93-90 an "A-"; 89-87 a "B+"; 86-84 a "B"; 83-80 a "B-"; 79-77 a "C+"; 76-74 a "C"; 73-70 a "C-"; 69-67 a "D+"; 66-64 a "D"; 63-60 a "D-"; and below 60 an "F." Grades will consist of 3 exams and an attendance grade. The first two exams include only the material covered in that section of the course. The final exam will be cumulative. Make-up exams will only be offered under extraordinary circumstances, i.e. a death in the family or medical emergency. Proper documentation is required. Note that simply visiting a doctor is not sufficient. There must be written documentation stating that the student was physically incapable of taking the exam. All make-up exams must be completed within one week (7 days) of the original exam date. This window will only be increased for the most extreme cases. Failure to schedule a make-up exam within the allotted time will result in a grade of zero for the exam.

*Extra Credit:* Opportunities to participate in research projects may arise during the term. I will notify you of these opportunities as they become available. Participation is strictly voluntary and you will be awarded extra credit applied to your final grade commensurate with the time it takes for the average participant to complete the study. That is, **one** point will be awarded for every **hour** it takes the **average** subject to complete the task, e.g. an experiment it takes the average subject thirty minutes to complete would earn you one point while an experiment it takes the average subject two hours to complete would earn you two points. You are permitted to participate in as many extra credit opportunities as are offered within the Political Science department.

*A final word on grading:* Grades will only be rounded up in the case of decimals, e.g. an 85.4 will round to an 86. An 89.0 *will not* be rounded to a 90. This policy is non-negotiable. Since the potential for extra credit is limited only by the number of opportunities offered, you are encouraged to participate if you are concerned your final grade may be borderline.

- *Exam 1:* (25%)
- *Exam 2:* (25%)
- *Final Exam:* (30%)
- *Unannounced Quizzes:* (10%)
- *Attendance* — (10%)

## 4 Americans with Disabilities Act

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

## 5 Academic Integrity

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

## 6 Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

## 7 Course Schedule

*\* This syllabus serves a general plan for the course; deviations announced by the instructor may be necessary.*

Mon. June 2nd: *Introduction, Founding, and Constitution*  
Ch. 1 & 2; Constitution (A 4); Federalist #51 (A 28); Federalist #10 (A 22)

Wed. June 4th: *Constitution Con't, Federalism*

Ch. 2 & 5; Constitution (A 4)

Mon. June 9th: *Civil Rights*  
Ch. 4

Wed. June 11th *Civil Liberties*  
Ch. 3

Mon. June 16th: **EXAM I**

Wed. June 18th: *Congress*  
Ch. 9

Mon. June 23rd: *Executive, Bureaucracy*  
Ch. 10 & 11

Wed. June 25th: *Judiciary*  
Ch. 12

Mon. June 30th: **Exam II**

Wed. July 2nd: *Public Opinion, Campaigns*  
Ch. 6 & 8

Mon. July 7th: *Campaigns Con't, Parties and Interest Groups*  
Ch. 8 & 7

Wed. July 9th: **FINAL EXAM**