

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
POL: 790:104:15
Spring 2015
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Class Time:

Tuesday and Thursdays
7:15 – 8:35 pm
Hickman 101

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday
6:15 – 7:15 pm
Hickman 303

Course Description: This course provides an overview of American Government and will be divided into three main themes: (1) Constitution in Theory and Practice, (2) The Role of Citizens in our Democracy, and (3) American Public Policy. Constitution in Theory and Practice will focus on the basic principles of our government along with how it was created and evolved through our history. This will include a focus on the actual functioning of the American system, as well as its influences and applications that are not clearly spelled out within its founding documents. Role of Citizens will focus on how people learn what they want, how people are able to influence government, and how government learns what its people want. Public Policy will expose you to some of the most important policy debates that our nation has and continues to face. It will become clear that they are all interrelated – Economic, Social, and Foreign policy all affect one another in quite interesting ways.

Required Text: Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore Lowi and Margaret Weir. We The People: An Introduction to American Politics. Full 10th Ed. Norton Publishing, 2014.

**The book will be made available at the Rutgers Book Stores, but in case you prefer buying it online, here is a link. Make sure you buy the “Full” version w/policy chapters.*

http://www.amazon.com/People-Full-Tenth-Benjamin-Ginsberg/dp/0393937038/ref=sr_1_cc_7?s=aps&ie=UTF8&qid=1419270786&sr=1-7-catcorr&keywords=we+the+people+10th+edition

**Our textbook’s publisher has created a website with study guides, practice exams and other materials that you may find helpful throughout the semester.*

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/we-the-people10/full/>

Course Requirements: The class periods will consist of lectures that emphasize both the assigned readings and relevant current events. Each scheduled lecture period will have a reading(s) assigned to it. The expectation is that you will have completed that assignment prior to the lectures. The lectures are designed to bring together the information presented in the textbook and summarize it in a sensible manner. The lectures will not replace the need to read the book, nor will reading the book replace the

material presented in lecture. Both will present novel information about American Government that you will be expected to know.

Class Conduct: The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the right of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Student conduct, which disrupts the learning process, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action or removal from class per university policy.

Behaviors that interfere with effective teaching and learning, such as late arrival, leaving for the bathroom, early departures without instructor permission, talking to each other during the lectures, sleeping, playing with cell-phones, etc. will not be tolerated.

Absences: Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Grading: Grades will be based upon the three (3) exams given during the semester. Each will be worth 33.3% of your final grade. The exams (including the final) will not be cumulative – they will only cover the material covered since the previous exam. If for any reason (medical or family emergency) you are unable to take an exam as regularly scheduled, you must obtain a note from your Dean in order to take a make-up exam and contact me immediately to let me know that you are unable to take the exam as scheduled. Absence from an exam because of travel plans will not be excused. No exceptions to this policy will be made.

Sakai: Our class Sakai website will have a variety of resources to help you throughout the semester. You will find recommended readings, assigned readings that are not in the text book, and other useful information (found in the “Resource” section). The Sakai site also contains a discussion forum and chat room. Please use these areas to post materials you may find to be helpful to others as well as any questions you may have about the course. If you have a question, chances are that other people will as well, so please post them in the chat room so everyone can benefit from them. I check the chat room periodically and will answer any questions then. Please also scan through the chat room to see if others have already asked your question.

To access the class Sakai website, (1) sign on to sakai.rutgers.edu, (2) sign in using your RU screen name, and (3) click on the class tab at the top of the page.

Syllabus

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. *If you are absent from class, it's your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were absent.*

Tuesday (1/20) - Introductions/Overview of Course

Thursday (1/22) - The Founding and the Constitution

- *We the People – Chapter 2*
- *Dahl – Chapter 2 (selections)*

Tuesday (1/27) – Evaluating the Constitution

- *Dahl – Chapter 2 and 3 (selections)*
- *Shalom – Selections*
- *Kingdon - America the Unusual – Chapter 2*

Thursday (1/29) – Civil Liberties

- *We the People – Chapter 4*

Tuesday (2/3) – Civil Rights

- *We the People – Chapter 5*

Thursday (2/5) – Federalism

- *We the People – Chapter 3*

Tuesday (2/10) – Judiciary

- *We the People – Chapter 15*
- *Watch Video – Principles of Constitutional and Statutory Interpretation (Recommended) <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/289637-1#>*

Thursday (2/12) – Congress

- *We the People – Chapter 12*
- *Mayhew – The Electoral Connection – Chapter 1 (Selections)*

Tuesday (2/17) – Presidency

- *We the People – Chapter 13*
- *Kernell – Going Public – Chapter 1 & 2*

Thursday (2/19) – Review and Catch-Up Day

Tuesday (2/24) – Exam I

Thursday (2/26) – Political Culture/Ideology

- *We the People – Chapter 1*
- *Shalom – Chapter 2*

- *Kingdon - America the Unusual – Chapter 3*
- *Shalom – Chapter 5 & 6 - Democratic Socialism and Other Ideologies (Recommended)*

Tuesday (3/3) – Ideology - Conservatism

- *Shalom – Chapter 3 – Conservatism*

Thursday (3/5) – Ideology - Liberalism

- *Shalom – Chapter 4 – Liberalism*

Tuesday (3/10) – Public Opinion/Political Socialization

- *We the People – Chapter 6*
- *Hershey – Chapter 6 (Party Identification)*

Thursday (3/12) – Media

- *We the People – Chapter 7*

Tuesday (3/17) SPRING BREAK

Thursday (3/19) SPRING BREAK

Tuesday (3/24) – Political Participation

- *We the People – Chapter 8*
- *Hershey – Chapter 5 (Party Activists)*

Thursday (3/26) – Interest Groups

- *We the People – Chapter 11*
- *Maisel and Brewer – Chapter 4 (Interest Groups)*

Tuesday (3/31) – Political Parties

- *We the People – Chapter 9*

Thursday (4/2) – Review and Catch-Up Day

Tuesday (4/7) – Exam II

Thursday (4/9) – Economic Policy I

- *Shalom – Chapter 11*
- *We the People – Chapter 16 (Recommended)*

Tuesday (4/14) – Tax Policy/Welfare

- *Shalom – Chapter 13*
- *We the People – Chapter 17*

Thursday (4/16) – Social Policy/Crime Policy

- *Shalom – Chapter 16*
- *Review We the People Chapter 17*

Tuesday (4/21) – Foreign Policy

- *Shalom – Chapter 17*
- *We the People – Chapter 18*

Thursday (4/23) – Review and Catch-Up Day

IMPORTANT DATES/INFO

Snow Closings – <http://campusstatus.rutgers.edu>