POLITICAL SCIENCE 2051
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Fall 2016

Kristy McKearn
POLS 2051
Thursday 6:00 –8:50pm
116 Stubbs
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Office Hours:
by Appointment (flexible): 225-763-2142 (office)

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the principals, institutions and processes of American politics. This course is designed to provide a foundation that should enable students to understand and critically evaluate the American political system and its form of government. POLI 2051 classes are designed to address the following General Education outcomes:

- A familiarity with the nature and function of the social sciences
- An appreciation of the methods of critical inquiry

The course is divided into three sections. The first section introduces students to the fundamental of policymaking, and explores the constitutional context of politics. We will also examine political participation along with components of the political system (political parties, elections, media, & interest groups). The second section reviews the institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policies. The third part of the course examines the policymaking process in the specific areas such as the economy, social welfare, civil liberties and civil rights. 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.

LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

Required Texts:

One text is required for this course:

George Edwards, Martin Wattenberg, Robert Lineberry, *Government in America:,* 2014 Election Edition, 16th Edition, Pearson Education, Inc.

eTextbook can be found here: https://www.vitalsource.com/referral?term=9780133914870

Student Evaluation and Policies:

Grades for the course are based on a student's performance on two in-term exams and a final exam. Letter grades are determined on the following scale:

A	90% - 100%	(97 or higher = A+, 92 or lower = A-)
B	80% - 89%	(87 or higher = B+, 82 or lower = B-)
C	70% - 79%	(77 or higher = C+, 72 or lower = C-)
D	60% - 69%	(67 or higher = D+, 62 or lower = D-)
F	0 - 59%	

Exams:

Two exams and one final consisting of 100 points each will be given. The final exam will focus on the last section of material covered; however, material covered earlier in the semester may be drawn upon as well. Please note that any reading not covered in class will still be on the exams. It is the student's responsibility to complete all reading and be prepared to answer any questions about them on the exam.

Makeup exams are only provided for students who can produce a valid excuse (serious illness, family crisis, etc). For problems that can be anticipated, students must let me know in advance of the problem. For problems that crop up at the last minute, students should contact me as soon as it is reasonably possible. *Students who do not meet these conditions will earn a 0 on the exam*. Note that it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with me about makeup exams. Makeups are generally scheduled for the Friday following the date of the missed exam and are *written essay tests*.

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation. For accommodations involving the exams, please contact me about the necessary arrangements well in advance of the testing date.

Assignment Schedule:

First Exam	100 Points	September 29th
Second Exam	100 Points	November 17th
Final Exam	100 Points	December 8th

Classroom Policy*:*

Please be considerate of those around you who are trying to listen and take notes. Keep in mind that class will begin promptly at 6:00. Please be on time and seated prior to the beginning of class each day and leave early only for emergencies. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Use of a cell phone or blackberry device including texting is prohibited during class. Turn off all cell phones and blackberry devices prior to the beginning of class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Course Schedule

August 25th	Introduction to Course
September 1st	Government in America: *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 1 Federalism *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy* Chapter 3
September 8th	The Constitution *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy* Chapter 2
September 15th	Public Opinion and Political Action *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 6 The Mass Media and the Political Agenda *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 7
September 22rd	Political Parties *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 8 Campaign and Voting Behavior *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 9
September 29th	**EXAM 1**
October 6th	**FALL HOLIDAY – No Class**
October 13th	Interest Groups *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy*, Chapter 10

October 20st	Congress *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 11
October 27th	The Presidency *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 12
November 3th	The Budget *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 13 The Federal Bureaucracy *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 14
November 10th	The Federal Courts *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 15
November 17th	**EXAM 2**
November 24th	**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY –No Class**
December 1nd	Civil Liberties *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 4 Civil Rights *Government in America: People, Politics, & Policy,* Chapter 5
December 8th	**FINAL EXAM** **8:00pm – 10:00pm**