

AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
University of South Carolina

POLI 201
Fall, 2005
Office Hours, Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 - 10:30 a.m. and by appointment

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Government and politics touches every aspect of our lives. Yet, many – some would say most – Americans lack even the most basic knowledge of how our national government operates. The goal of this course is to provide you with a fundamental understanding of American government and politics and with some of the analytical tools that you will need to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of political institutions and behavior. This course is designed to introduce the student to the contemporary study of the institutions and processes of American national government. Students will be expected to develop an understanding of American government and convey this understanding through class participation, written assignments, and four examinations. In order to stimulate class discussion and learning, you will be expected to complete the assigned readings *before* class sessions.

REQUIREMENTS:

Texts: The following text has been ordered through the Russell House Textbook Store and is required for this course:

Kernell, Samuel and Gary C. Jacobson. 2005. *The Logic of American Politics*, 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press. (K&J)

Some readings are available electronically on the course webpage:

<http://www.cla.sc.edu/poli/faculty/gomezbt/poli201.htm>
(Simply click on the electronic version of the course syllabus)

Assignments and Grading:

- 1) Students are to read all required material before class sessions.
- 2) Examinations: Three section exams (20% each) and final exam (25%)
- 3) Participation: Class Attendance and 13 web-based Written Assignments (15%)

Undoubtedly, some of you will find the material covered in this class difficult to grasp. The readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments have been compiled to make understanding American politics an easier task. However, if at any time you feel confused by the material, please feel free to seek my help during office hours or by appointment.

All assignments and exams are to be completed on the assigned dates. No make-up exams or incompletes will be given for this class, except under the most extreme circumstances.

REQUIRED READINGS

Foundations

- 18 Aug What is Politics? What is Government?
- 23 The Logic of Collective Action
- K&J, Chapter 1
- 25 The Logic of Political Institutions
- K&J, Chapter 1
- 30 “*We Hold these Truths to be Self-Evident*”—Ideology and the Founding of the Democratic Republic
- Lecture (notes will be provided on the course webpage)
- 01 Sep NO CLASS – AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION MEETING
- 06 The First American Government: *The Articles of Confederation*
- K&J, Chapter 2
 - *The Articles of Confederation* (see course webpage)
- 08 “*In Order to Form a More Perfect Union*” – The United States Constitution
- K&J, Chapter 2
 - The United States Constitution (Appendix of K& J)
 - *The Federalist Papers* # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of K&J)
- 13 “*In Order to Form a More Perfect Union*” – The United States Constitution
- K&J, Chapter 2
 - The United States Constitution (Appendix of K& J)
 - *The Federalist Papers* # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of K&J)
- 15 Federalism
- K&J, Chapter 3
- 20 “*Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death:*” Civil Liberties
- K&J, Chapter 5
- 22 “*Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death:*” Civil Liberties, cont.
- K&J, Chapter 5

- 27 *Free at Last?: Civil Rights*
 • K&J, Chapter 4
- 29 *Free at Last?: Civil Rights, cont.*
 • K&J, Chapter 4

04 Oct **EXAM 1: FOUNDATIONS**

Institutions

- 06 Congress: Examining the Electoral Connection
 • K&J, Chapter 6 (pp. 161-178)
 • Mayhew, (R)
- 11 Congress: Decision-making and Legislative Organization
 • K&J, Chapter 6 (pp. 178-207)
- 13 *Fall Break!!!*
- 18 Congress: Decision-making and Legislative Organization, cont.
 • K&J, Chapter 6 (pp. 178-207)
- 20 The American Presidency
 • K&J, Ch. 7
- 25 The American Presidency, cont.
 • K&J, Ch. 7
- 27 “*And Justice For All:*” The Federal Judiciary
 • K&J, Chapter 9

01 Nov **EXAM 2: INSTITUTIONS**

Democracy at Work: The Public’s Influence

- 03 Public Opinion
 • K&J, Chapter 10
- 08 Public Opinion, cont.
 • K&J, Chapter 10

- 10 Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
 • K&J, Chapter 11
- 15 Voting, Campaigns, and Elections, cont.
 • K&J, Chapter 11
- 17 American Political Parties
 • K&J, Chapter 12
- 22 American Political Parties, cont.
 • K&J, Chapter 12
- 24 *Thanksgiving Break!!!*
- 29 **SECTION EXAM 3: DEMOCRACY AT WORK**
- 28 Last Day of Class

FINAL EXAMINATION – Wednesday, December 7, 2005 @ 2:00 p.m.