

AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Florida State University

POS 1041
Spring, 2011
Office Hours, Tuesday and Thursday
9:00 – 10:00 a.m. and by appointment

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Government and politics touches every aspect of our lives. Yet many—some might 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 FSU Bookstore and is required for this course:

Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, and Thad Kousser. 2008. *The Logic of American Politics*, 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press. (KJK)

Selected readings will be placed and can be downloaded from the class Blackboard site. These additional readings are also required.

Assignments and Grading:

- 1) Students are to read all required material *before* the class session for which they are assigned.
- 2) Examinations: Three section exams (20% each) and final exam (25%)
- 3) Participation: Class Attendance and 13 Blackboard Writing Assignments (15%)

Your final grade will be determined by the following scale:

	B+ = 89 – 87	C+ = 79 – 77	D+ = 69 – 67	
A = 100 – 93	B = 86 – 83	C = 76 – 73	D = 66 – 63	F = 59 – 0
A- = 92 – 90	B- = 82 – 80	C- = 72 – 70	D- = 62 – 60	

Examinations

Examinations are closed book and may consist of some combination of objective, short answer, or essay questions. The unit examinations will cover all the material from lectures, class discussions, and readings on the unit being tested. The final exam, which will be given during the examination period scheduled by the university, will be cumulative (covering lectures, class discussions, and readings from the entire semester).

Blackboard Writing Assignments

There will be 13 section assignments over the course of the semester. Each of these assignments corresponds to a chapter in your textbook (chapters 2-14), and each is **due no later than two (2) days after we conclude our discussion of the corresponding chapter**. For example, if we conclude our discussion of Congress on a Tuesday, you have until Thursday evening at 11:59 p.m. to complete the assignment. **Late assignments will NOT be accepted!** Each of the section assignments will be Internet-based. For each topic, visit a few (or all) of the Internet sites that I have provided, look at some of the information on them, and learn more about how that theory, political group, or governmental agency works. A *well written, single paragraph* answer to each of the questions will suffice. All assignments will be submitted via Blackboard.

The section assignments will count toward your class participation grade, which is 15% of your final class grade. The more assignments you complete, the higher your grade!

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class. Absences from class due to illness and participation in formally sanctioned University events will only be excused with sufficient (e.g., University Health Services Excuse Forms) documentation. Documentation must be provided within 48 hours of the absence. Students who cannot physically provide such documentation within the 48-hour period (due to illness etc.) must do so as soon as possible and must include sufficient documentation supporting the claim that they could not physically deliver the original documentation in the 48-hour period. The instructor reserves the right to determine what is considered "sufficient documentation." Class attendance sheets will occasionally be passed out during class. If any student is determined to be misrepresenting either their or someone else's attendance in class, all students involved in such misrepresentation shall receive a zero for the semester participation and attendance grade.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED EXAMS

Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student is explicitly granted permission *prior* to the completion date. Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if you find it necessary to turn in an assignment late.

Missed exams will receive a grade of zero except in cases of demonstrated, appropriate, and verifiable emergencies or tragedies or where the student has *prior* approval from the instructor. In cases of missed exams excused by the instructor, a makeup exam will be rescheduled at the convenience of the instructor.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. All academic work must meet the standards contained in the Academic Honor Code, published in the *Florida State University Bulletin* and *The Student Handbook*. Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing academic work.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Student Disability Resource Center, 97 Woodward Ave. South (Student Services Bldg.), 850-644-9566, or on the web at <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

The Liberal Studies Program at Florida State University has been designed to provide a perspective on the qualities, accomplishments, and aspirations of human beings, the past and present civilizations we have created, and the natural and technological world we inhabit. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for **Liberal Studies Area III, History and Social Science**, and in combination with your other Liberal Studies courses, provides an important foundation for your lifelong quest for knowledge.

OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY

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 (and interesting) 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.

Required Readings

(The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.)

Foundations

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 04 Jan | What is Politics? What is Government? |
| 06 | NO CLASS – ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION |
| 11 | The Logic of Collective Action <ul style="list-style-type: none">• KJK, Chapter 1 |
| 13 | The Logic of Political Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• KJK, Chapter 1 |
| 18 | “ <i>We Hold these Truths to be Self-Evident</i> ” – Ideology and the Founding of the Democratic Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture (Notes will be provided in Blackboard Library) |
| 20 | The First American Government: The <i>Articles of Confederation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• KJK, Chapter 2• The <i>Articles of Confederation</i> (see Blackboard Library) |

- 25 “*In Order to Form a More Perfect Union*” – The United States Constitution
- KJK, Chapter 2
 - The United States Constitution (Appendix of KJK)
 - *The Federalist Papers* # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of KJK)

- 27 “*In Order to Form a More Perfect Union*” – The United States Constitution
- KJK, Chapter 2
 - The United States Constitution (Appendix of KJK)
 - *The Federalist Papers* # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of KJK)

- 01 Feb Federalism
- KJK, Chapter 3

- 03 “*Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death*” – Civil Liberties
- KJK, Chapter 5

- 08 “*Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death*” – Civil Liberties, cont.
- KJK, Chapter 5

- 10 *Free at Last?* – Civil Rights
- KJK, Chapter 4

- 15 *Free at Last?* – Civil Rights, cont.
- KJK, Chapter 4

17 **EXAM 1: FOUNDATIONS**

Institutions

- 22 Congress: Examining the Electoral Connection
- KJK, Chapter 6 (pp. 247-273)
 - Mayhew, (Blackboard Library)

- 24 Congress: Decision-making and Legislative Organization
- KJK, Chapter 6 (pp. 273-309)

- 01 Mar Congress: Decision-making and Legislative Organization, cont.
- KJK, Chapter 6 (pp. 273-309)

- 03 The American Presidency
- KJK, Ch. 7

08 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!!!

10 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!!!

- 15 The American Presidency, cont.
 • KJK, Ch. 7
- 17 “*And Justice For All*” – The Federal Judiciary
 • KJK, Chapter 9

22 **EXAM 2: INSTITUTIONS**

Democracy at Work: The Public’s Influence

- 24 Public Opinion
 • KJK, Chapter 10
- 29 Public Opinion, cont.
 • KJK, Chapter 10
- 31 Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
 • KJK, Chapter 11
- 05 Apr Voting, Campaigns, and Elections, cont.
 • KJK, Chapter 11
- 07 American Political Parties
 • KJK, Chapter 12
- 12 American Political Parties, cont.
 • KJK, Chapter 12
- 14 The “Fourth Estate” – Politics and the Media
 • KJK, Chapter 14
- 19 **SECTION EXAM 3: DEMOCRACY AT WORK**
- 21 Last Day of Class

FINAL EXAMINATION – Thursday, April 28, 2011, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.