

Syllabus, Policy Sheet and Course Outline

American National Government (POLS 1101, §§ 6, 8 and 16)

Instructor: John Van Doorn, Ph.D.

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Hours: M & W, 11:30 a.m. - 12:25 p.m.;

M & W., 1:50 – 3:15 p.m., and by appt.

U.W.G., Fall, 2009

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Course E-mail: **WebCT** (see URL, below)

Note: If the matter is urgent, please call either department number; I will check e-mail only in the late afternoon.

Section 6/CRN 81250 meets: M. and W. 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m., Humanities Hall, 312

Section 8/ CRN 81252 meets: M. and W., 5:30 p.m – 6:45 p.m. Pafford Bldg., 112

Section 16/CRN 82015 meets M. and W., 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m., TLC, 1-203

“Politics is a good thing” -- Dr. Larry Sabato

“Politics is the art of the possible, the next best thing” – Otto von Bismarck

“Politics is the struggle for justice” – Dr. John D. Van Doorn

Course Objectives and Good Study Skills

This course provides an introduction to the American political regime, and is designed to accomplish six primary purposes:

1. Acquaint students with the fundamentals of structure and function of both formal (e.g. the Congress, Presidency and Supreme Court), and informal American political institutions;
2. Introduce students to fundamental civil liberties and civil rights;
3. Help students identify and understand the mediating institutions in American politics;
4. Introduce the fundamentals of public policy formulation, and the importance of public policy to our daily lives as citizens;
5. Compare U.S. politics to other leading democratic systems in order to highlight key differences and similarities with those systems; and,
6. Understand the connection between participatory citizenship and healthy communities both locally and globally, and,
7. Help students develop the ability to think critically and analytically about politics.

It is important to note here that you are in college to *learn*, not to be taught; there is a critical difference! In order to learn, you must take an active role in your own education. In order to understand and absorb the lecture, you should come to class prepared; this means about *6 hours of study per week* outside of class. You should outline—not just highlight—your textbook. Utilize all of the supplemental study materials provided for you online, including my “Lecture Review Guides” found on WEBCT. Please engage *critically* with the material you encounter in this course. Ask yourself if what you read and hear in class helps you understand politics. Above all, if you have questions, please ask them, whether it is in class, during my office hours, or via email.

Texts

The following texts are required:

Barbour, Christine, and Gerald C. Wright. 2009. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics*. Third Brief Edition. Washington, D.C.: The CQ Press [abbreviated below as "KTR"]. ISBN: 978-0-87289-935-3

Congressional Quarterly Researcher. 2009. *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy*. Tenth Edition. Washington, D.C.: C.Q. Press. [abbreviated below as "CQR"]. ISBN: 978-1-60426-513-2

See also **WEBCT** for frequent course updates and additional readings; available at: <https://m.view.usg.edu/webct/entryPage> Follow the login instructions on this website; you can change your password after initial login. Please note that this is an independent website, so that it will function even when the C.S.U. website is down.

These texts are available for purchase at the U.W.G. bookstore, directly from the publisher, and on-line book sellers. It is strongly recommended that you utilize the practice quizzes, flashcards and study guide that accompany the KTR text (see the URL on the text's back cover, then follow the links to this text, then "Jump To" the appropriate chapter, or "Study Guide" and then the "Test Yourself" link in the left column on the web-page).

Requirements and Grading

There will be three mid-term exams (the lowest of which will be dropped) and a final examination (non-cumulative). Please see the course outline for exam dates. Both types of exams will feature multiple-choice questions (50 questions on the midterm and 50 questions on the final). You may bring a 4" x 6" card with you into the final exam only. Please see the policy on make-ups, below. Quizzes will contain both multiple choice and true/false questions. Some quiz and test questions will be drawn from the on-line study guide, cited above.

Please note that this is primarily a lecture course. However, you are urged to participate in class with questions *directly* relevant to the material assigned or lecture material, and during special discussion periods held once per week. Your participation grade will be based on the *quality* (not quantity) of your participation and questions in discussions. Please respect the contributions of other members of class.

A total-point system will be utilized in this class in which your grade at any point in the semester is determined by adding up the total points that you have accumulated, divided by the total points possible at that point. You are urged to keep up with you total point scores. In order to assist you with keeping up with your progress in the course, two grade reports will be delivered, one at midterm, and the other just before the end of the term. A word of *caution*: use the "Regular Average" on the reports (not the Extra-Credit Average) in estimating your grade. The grading tasks break down as follows:

<i>Task Name</i>	<i>Total Possible</i>	<i>Percent Your scores:</i>
Midterm Examinations (2 @ 100 pts. each): (3 will be given; the lowest dropped)	200 pts.	40 % _____
Final Examination (non-cumulative):	100 pts.	20 % _____
Group Presentation of a Policy Issue (see below)	100 pts.	20 % _____
In-class writing assignment from CQR	60 pts	12 % _____
Quality of Participation/collaborative exercises:	<u>40 pts.</u>	<u>8 %</u> _____

TOTALS	500 pts.	100 %	_____
Extra-Credit Quizzes (3)	(30 pts.)	(5%)	_____ / _____ = _____
GRAND TOTAL:			_____ / 500 = final grade

A= 450-500 pts.; B= 400-449; C= 350-399; D= 300-349; F= Below 299

Absences and Test Makeup Policy

Good attendance will boost grades, especially in borderline cases. I will take roll in *every* class, and this information will have a bearing on your participation grade. **Absences during exam dates *must be explained to the instructor***, preferably beforehand, or within the same date by phone, e-mail or messenger. If you miss two or more exam dates without a *bona fide* excuse, *you will be dropped from the course with a “WF.” You will also be dropped from the course* if you miss:

1. the entire first week and a half of class,
2. more than 6 classes—you will be dropped on the 7th absence.

Except on exam dates, other absences need not be explained, since all other absences will be counted as an absence.

Makeup work will only be administered to students with valid and *documented* excuses (e.g., death in the immediate family, medical emergency) on the same date: **Wednesday, December 2nd**, from 10 – 12 a.m. in Pffrd. 140. Students are responsible for assignments given during their absence. No "make-up" work will be allowed without a valid excuse. Make-up tests will be *all essay* in format. There will be *no* extra-credit work given other than the quizzes listed above.

Late Assignments

Class-work is due during the class hour for which it is assigned. After the class period in which the assignment is due, there will be a letter grade per day penalty. Turn late papers into my mailbox in the office of the Political Science & Planning Department (Pafford Bldg., Rm. 140). The department is open 8:30 a.m. to about 4:30 p.m. *After 4:00 p.m. on the Friday following the due date no work will be accepted* without a valid excuse (death in the immediate family, medical emergency). Please talk to me *beforehand* if are having problems with your work.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism includes more than just failure to put quotation marks around a phrase used verbatim. It also includes failure to cite the proper source for borrowed words or *ideas* in the text of your paper at the place where the borrowing occurs. Paraphrases, as well as quotes, must be documented. If in doubt, cite! Intentional plagiarism will result in serious penalties, including an “F” in this course. Please see the Student Handbook for the policy on academic dishonesty. Further guidelines, including examples of what does and does not constitute plagiarism, may be found at the following URL (web address): <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Cheating is also prohibited (see the Student Handbook). All work assigned to individuals must be done by the individual student without any assistance from any person other than the course professor (with the exception of preparation for exams). During exams, keep your answers covered. If you become aware of any cheating in this course, you have a duty to report it to your professor.

Students with Disabilities

All reasonable attempts will be made to accommodate those students who are physically challenged. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

If you have a documented disability as described by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 933-112 § 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and would like to request academic and/or physical accommodations, please contact me as early in the course as possible. Course requirements will not be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided as appropriate.

Class Courtesy and Use of Electronic Devices

All students are expected to remain seated (with the exception of personal emergencies), and to be courteous to one another and to the professor, during the class period. Students are expected to ask questions or make comments *only* on the material currently under discussion.

The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, pagers, CD players, beepers and the like, is strictly prohibited during class, unless you are an on-call doctor, paramedic, or member of the military on active duty. Unless you fit one of these categories, all cell phones and electronic devices *must* be turned completely off (not on “silent” mode) and stored out of sight during the class period. The use of an electronic device during an exam constitutes cheating and will be treated as such (see *Student Handbook*).

Students will receive one caution, and one warning, of failure to adhere to these guidelines, and may be dismissed from the class on or after the third infraction. Students who fail to adhere to the behavioral expectations outlined by instructor may be subject to additional discipline in accordance with procedures described in the *Student Handbook*.

Important Dates

EXAMS

1. MIDTERMS: See course outline, below
2. FINAL: **See the *Scoop* for final exam times during the week of Dec. 7 – 11.**

Other Dates of Note:

Oct. 6th: deadline to withdraw without the penalty of a “WF” grade;

Oct. 15th and 16th: Fall Break (no classes)

Dec. 2nd: last day of class

Dec 7 - 11: final-exam period

Dec. 14th: Final Grades will be posted on-line (after 9 a.m.)

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Weeks 1-3: Overview of Politics, the Founding Era and the Constitution (Aug. 17 – Sep 2.)

Readings: KTR: Chapters 1 and 2, and the “U.S. Constitution” (reprinted in KTR, A-3, pp. 486-499) and “Declaration of Independence” (reprinted in KTR, A-1, pp. 483-485);

Lecture: Definitions of key terms. Thinking critically about politics.

Critical Questions: What is politics? What is power? What are institutions? Who rules? What

does “citizenship” mean? Is it possible to study politics “scientifically”? What is the “fact” vs. “value” distinction upon which Political Science rests? What were the main arguments and plans discussed at the Constitutional Convention (see WebCT)?

EC Quiz One, Aud. 26 (Covers Chapter One, Week 1)

Week 4: Federalism (Sept. 7 - 9)

Readings: KTR: Chapter 3, all, and *Federalist* # 10 and 51, (reprinted in KTR, Appendix A-4 & 5, pp. 474-482). **Section 6 only:** “Confronting Warming” from the C.Q.R.

Questions: What if the U.S. had a parliamentary system? Could state/local levels do a better job than the national level of the regime?

Group 1 Class Presentation: Sept. 9th: Should the national or local level of the regime be in charge of education? Discussion of “Student Aid” from the C.Q.R. (see WebCT for details).

MIDTERM ONE, Sept. 9; Covers Weeks 1-3

Weeks 5-6: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (Sept. 14 - 23)

Readings: KTR, et al.: Chapters 4 and 5

Group 2 Discussion: Sept. 23: “Affirmative Action” from C.Q.R. See WEBCT for details.

Question: Was the Constitution color and gender neutral?

Week 7-8: The Congress (Sept. 28 – Oct. 7)

KTR, et al., Chapter 6

Group 3 Class Presentation: Oct 7th, “Financial Bailout.”

Question: Why did the Founders call Congress the “First Branch”?

MIDTERM TWO, Sept. 30, Covers Weeks 4-6

Weeks 9-10: The Presidency and the Bureaucracy (Oct. 12 - 21)

Reading: KTR, Chapters 7 and 8

Group 4 Class Presentation: Oct. 21st: “Closing Guantánamo.” See WEBCT for details.

Week 11: The Judiciary (Oct. 26 - 28)

Reading: KTR, Chapter 9, and *Federalist* # 78 (on WebCT), *Graz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*, all available on-line (see WEBCT).

Question: What is the danger of excessive use of judicial review in a democracy?

PARTICIPATION AND MEDIATION IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Week 12-13 : American Political Culture, and Public Opinion (Nov. 2 - 11)

KTR, Chapter 10.

Group 5 Presentation: Nov. 11th: “Confronting Warming” from the C.Q. Researcher. See COUGAR-VIEW for details. **Section 6 only:** “Vanishing Jobs” from C.Q.R.

Question: What are the strengths and weaknesses of using political surveys?

MIDTERM THREE, November 4, Covers Weeks 7-11

Week 14-15: Parties, Interest Groups, and Elections

(Nov. 16 - 30)

KTR, Chapters 11-12

Group 6 Class Discussion: November 23: “Gun Rights Debate” from the C.Q. Researcher. See WEBCT for details.

Questions: Are parties “indispensable” for democracy? Does the U.S. need a third party? Are interest groups “representative”? Can the Internet and polls replace elections?

No Class November 25th (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 16: Course Wrap-Up

(Dec. 2)

Review for Final Examination (Non-cumulative; Covers Weeks 12-16).

Final Exam Schedule:

Section 6, Wed., Dec. 9, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Section 8, Mon., Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Section 16, Fri., Dec. 11, 2 - 4 p.m.