

Poli Sci 101: American Government

Instructor: John Altick, PhD

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Time/Location: Maybank 111, MWF 1-1:50

Office hours by appointment & before/after class.

General Education Social Science Learning Outcome: **Students apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions.**

This outcome will be assessed for the purposes of General Education through the memos discussed below.

Course Summary:

Welcome to American National Government. The purpose of this course will be to introduce the essential concepts, purposes, and practices of American National Government. We will cover the historical context, and the theoretical and philosophical goals and objectives of our Constitutional system of democratic/republican governance along with the institutional apparatus and practices of American government as it has progressed over time. We will also cover the numerous “unofficial” but integral aspects of American politics like the role of the media, interest groups, party politics, political movements, political culture, etcetera.

Grading: There will be four equally weighted components of the over-all grade: **Two** equally weighted tests. **One** presentation on a topic of your choice related to American politics. **One** combined grade for THREE 2pg memos.

Tests: Combination of short-answer and essay questions. Details discussed in class.

Presentation: Groups of 1-3 on a topic of students choice related to American Government. Purpose is to be VERY specific / particular on an issue, event, theme of American government and give a lecture to class on your topic. The idea is to be more specific and detailed than we get in class on a particular topic. Expected research is to be equivalent to a 7-10 pg research paper.

Memos: Three 2pg memos on articles relating to American politics. Acceptable sources are periodicals such as The Economist, Time Magazine, US News & World Report, Newsweek, etc, or academic journals available on-line through library webpage. Memos will engage the general social-science learning outcome: **Students apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions.** With this in mind, students will be expected to apply theoretical concepts to practical political American political issues and critically engage these issues in their memos.

Texts: American Government and Politics Today (**AGP**)

American Political Thought (**APT**)

Schedule:

Part One: Introduction, Historical Context, The Constitution, Philosophical Themes/Objectives

1. AGT: Chp 1-2 & The Constitution
2. Democratic and Liberal traditions: Locke and Rousseau readings via Cit-Learn
3. APT: chp 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, & 16 (Founding Era)
4. APT: chp 18, 24, 26, 28, 30, 42, 49, 52, 58, 60, 91, 92

MIDTERM: Week of 10/3-10/7

Part Two: American Government, Institutions, Participants, and Practices

Federalism: AGP: Chp 3

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights: Chp 4-5

Parties, Media, and Elections: Chp 6-8

Congress: Chp 9

Presidency: Chp 10

Judiciary: Chp 12

Foreign Policy: Chp 14

Final Exam

Note: Students are expected to abide by the CofC honor code.