

The College of Charleston
Fall 2016

POLI 101.05 - American Government
MWF 12:00-12:50 P.M.
Maybank Hall 307

Instructor	Marguerite Archie-Hudson, Ph.D.
Office Hours	Mon/Wed/Fri - 9:15-10:30 A.M. and by appointment
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Course Description and Objectives

As Americans we are constantly reminded of the benefits, challenges and conflicts of citizenship in our constitutional form of government. The legislative enactments, judicial rulings and executive decisions made by officials that we elect or appoint to public office have broad consequences for how we conduct our daily lives. As major shifts and changes in the political, social and demographic landscapes of America occur, we look to our government for rational, effective responses. The current gridlock in our national government challenges us to consider some thorny questions: why do our government leaders appear to be incapable of finding solutions to the major issues currently before the country, including the domestic and global economy, immigration, education, the environment, voting rights, global conflicts, civil rights, gun control, etc.? Why is our political environment so polarized by party and by ideology - and what is the effect of this gridlock on government's ability to function? We will examine these issues, including our roles as citizens in participating in the debates about the most effective solutions and the leaders most capable of providing leadership.

On Tuesday, November 8, 2016 The American electorate will elect a new President, all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 1/3 of the U.S. Senate. The newly elected American President will instantly be among the world's most recognizable Heads of State, will become the face of America across the world and will lead the country into peaceful or conflict-filled relations with the rest of the world.

Many states will elect Governors and all will elect members of State Legislatures. All of these changes have the potential to change how local state and national governments address the major issues about which Americans are most concerned.

Citizens are increasingly called upon to make choices about the kind of government philosophy and actions they wish to support; an equally important challenge is to be well enough informed to make rational choices.

This class- POLI 101.05- counts towards the College's General Education Social Science requirement. At the end of the semester students should be able to: (a) apply social science

concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions, (b) identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures and decision-making processes of the American political system; (c) evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas; (d) relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates and outcomes in the United States and (e) develop an analytical, social scientific disposition toward American politics. These learning outcomes will be assessed using the grading procedures outlined below with the indicated percentages for each requirement.

Course Requirements

- A. Regular class attendance is expected of all students and will constitute 15% of your final grade. Attendance will be recorded on a daily sign-in sheet. Absences will be excused only if they are officially validated.
- B. Expectation for class participation includes reading assignments prior to class, joining in class discussions, respecting the opinions of others and turning in assignments on time. Late assignments will incur severe grade penalties.
- C. The use of cellphones, I pads, tablets and other electronic devices during class for your personal use is not permitted. Personal computers may be permitted for the exclusive use of taking notes and verification may be required at any time. Failure to observe this policy will result in severe grade penalties and may result in expulsion from the class.
- D. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize office hours and/or schedule appointments to discuss assignments and readings.
- E. Students who are receiving services through the Center for Disability Services, are scheduled to travel with an athletic team or participate in a student government related or other official off-campus activity during the semester must present a letter of verification signed by the appropriate college official.
- F. Students who plan personal (i.e., non-emergency) off-campus trips prior to a scheduled exam (ex. Midterm or Final) will not receive excused absences nor the opportunity to make up the exam.
- G. Each student is required to select a current public issue for research and study during the semester from a list provided by the professor. At the end of the semester students studying the same topic will be required to make a group presentation to the class on the research topic; the presentation will include a group consensus on whether the solution/s proposed by the relevant government institution or agency is an effective response to a contemporary public issue causing disagreement and/or conflict among our citizens.

Grading

Grade will be based on a five part research paper that examines a current political issue, a Midterm Examination, a Final Examination and individual and group class participation as follows:

A.	Research Paper, Part 1	10%
B.	Research Paper, Part 2	10%

C.	Research Paper, Part 3	10%
D.	Research Paper, Part 4	10%
E.	Research Paper, Part 5	10%
F.	Midterm Examination	15%
G.	Final Examination	20%
H.	Class Attendance	15%

Required Textbook

Ginsberg, Benjamin; Lowi, Theodore J; Weir, Margaret and Tolbert, Carolyn J.: **We The People**, (10th Edition), 2014, W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. New York.

You are encouraged to keep abreast of contemporary political and social issues, many of which may be the subject of class discussions. You are also encouraged to share relevant articles, reports, etc. with the class. Several national newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* are available on-line at no charge. Local state and political news is reported in the *Charleston Post Courier* and Columbia's *The State*.

Students are encouraged to utilize the **Center for Student Learning** (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. The Center offers tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills and various workshops. These services are available to you at no extra cost. You may visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843) 953-5635.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

August 2016

Wed	24	Introductions and class overview
Fri	26	Class overview and semester assignments
Mon	29	Who are the Americans? Ginsberg, Chapter One
Wed	31	American Political Culture Chapter One

September

Fri	2	American Political Culture
Mon	5	The Historic Foundations of American Government (Handout)
Wed	7	The Historic Foundations
Fri	9	Framing the U.S. Constitution Ginsberg, Chapter Two
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Mon	12	Framing the U.S. Constitution

Paper One Due

Wed 14	Civil Liberties Chapter Four
Fri 16	The Bill of Rights Chapter Four
Mon 19	Civil Rights Chapter Five
Wed 21	Civil Rights
Fri 23	Federalism and the separation powers (Handout)
Mon 26	Federalism Chapter Three

The Institutions of the Federal Government

Wed 28	The Legislative Branch: Constitutional powers and authority Chapter Twelve
Fri 30	Legislative branch - Constitutional Powers and Authority <u>Paper Two Due</u>

October

Mon 3	Legislative branch - The U.S. Congress- Profile (Handout)
Wed 5	The Executive branch - constitutional powers and authority Chapter Thirteen
Fri 7	

Midterm Examination

Mon 10	
Wed 12	The Office of the Presidency Chapter Thirteen
Fri 14	The Office of The Presidency
Mon 17	The Office of The Presidency
Wed 19	Office of The Presidency
Fri 21	The Executive Branch -Federal Cabinet Departments
Mon 24	The Federal Cabinet Departments
Wed 26	The Federal Cabinet Departments

Fri 28	The Executive Agencies <u>Paper Three Due</u>
Mon 31	The Executive Agencies
November	
Wed 2	Profile of the Federal Workforce Chapter Fourteen
Fri 4	The Federal Budget Chapter Fourteen
Mon 7	Fall Break – No Class
Wed 9	The Federal Court System Chapter Fifteen
Fri 11	The Federal Court System <u>Paper Four Due</u>
Mon 14	The U.S. Supreme Court
Wed 16	The U.S. Supreme Court
Fri 18	Class Presentation – Group One
Mon 21	Class Presentation- Group Two
Wed 23	Thanksgiving Holiday- No classes
Fri 25	Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes
Mon 28	Class Presentation – Group Three
Wed 30	Class Presentation – Group Four <u>Paper Five Due</u>
December	
Mon 5	Last day of classes
Tu 6	Reading Day
Tu 13	Final Examination 12 Noon- 3:00 P.M. Maybank 307

Required Assignments

The purpose of this required assignment is to study a current political issue with the potential for major impact on the lives of Americans. Once you select your topic you will be required to write five papers on the subject and draw a conclusion as to whether (a) the current law or administrative solution is effective in responding to the issue; (b) whether a new law or administrative solution is necessary to solve or mitigate the stated problem; (c) whether the management of this issue should be left to federal, state or local authorities; (d) state your personal opinion on whether you support or oppose the law or administrative solution as you begin your research and (e), whether your opinion became more informed, changed or remain the same at the conclusion of your research- and what factors or information changed your opinion or helped you to maintain your original position. Several students will be researching the same topic and at the end of the semester there will be a group presentation to the class regarding whether the current law/administrative solution solves the identified problem or presents additional problem for government and the public.

You will select your topic from the following:

1. The Death Penalty – Is the death penalty cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the 8th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? Is it discriminatory against minorities and the poor?
2. Gun Control – Is there a need for reform in the laws regarding private ownership of assault weapons by individuals ? Should this issue be decided by the federal government or on a state by state basis?
3. Immigration Policy – Should the current U.S. immigration policy be revised to refuse admission to specific religious groups or nationalities as a matter of national security? If so, what specific religious groups or nationalities should be excluded?
4. The Military Draft and National Security- Is the current American volunteer armed forces sufficient to meet the needs of keeping an adequate military presence in the world's "hot spots"? Should the military draft be re-instated to provide a sufficient fighting force at home and abroad??

Once you have selected your topic you will write five papers on your topic as follows:

- I. **The Death Penalty**
 - a. **Paper One** : Identify the states that currently impose the death penalty and the crimes in each state for it can be imposed. State the position of each of the four presidential candidates on this issue.
 - b. **Paper Two**: Identify the number of inmates on death row in each state and the racial composition of these inmates by state. State the average number of years an inmate remains on death row before execution and the average per year costs to states, if such data is available.

- c. **Paper Three:** Identify the methods of execution utilized by each state and the sources from which the required drugs are secured, if applicable.
- d. **Paper Four:** Describe the work of the Innocence Project, a national advocacy group that investigates the number of inmates on death row who are wrongfully convicted. How many death row inmates did the Innocence Project find to be there in error in the past five years?
- e. **Paper Five-**Based on the above information, do you support or oppose the abolition of the death penalty? State the reasons for your position.

II. **Gun Control Laws** – assault weapons ownership

- a. **Paper One-** Define the term “ Assault weapon”. Identify the major classifications of assault weapons sold in the U.S and the primary use for each classification.; State the number of assault weapons that were sold to private individuals in 2015.
- b. **Paper Two** -State the number of mass killings since January 2015 in which assault rifles were used. If possible, state how many of perpetrators were individuals who bought their weapons through private sales or at gun shows.
- c. **Paper Three-** Summarize the Assault Weapons Ban Law of 2013 introduced by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).
- d. **Paper Four-** Summarize the state laws on background checks and waiting periods, if any,for assault weapons purchases by an individual. State the position of each of the 4 presidential candidates on whether assault weapons should be sold to individuals for private use.
- e.
- f. **Paper Five-** Based on the above information do you support or oppose sale of assault weapons to private individuals? Should the federal law or state laws determine the policy on this issue?

III. **Immigration Policy**

- a. **Paper One** -Explain the 1952 Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 and the reason for its passage by the U.S. Congress. Explain the changes made in immigration policies by the Patriot Act of 2001..
- b. **Paper Two-**Describe the statutory immigration-related responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- c. **Paper Three-** Identify and describe the categories of presence in the U.S. for which an immigrant may apply and/or receive (a) temporary and/or (b) permanent status.
- d. **Paper Four-**Describe the process by which an immigrant applicant becomes a citizen of the United States. Identify the number of persons who apply annually versus the number that is awarded citizenship. Identify the top 5 countries from which immigrants were admitted to U.S. citizenship in 2015.

- e. **Paper Five**-Based on the above information do you support or oppose a change in U.S. immigration laws to exclude specific groups based on nationality and/or religious preferences? State the position of each of the 4 presidential candidates on this issue.

IV. The Military Draft

- a. **Paper One**- Identify the number of countries and/or territories in which the U.S. military currently has troops. Differentiate the categories under which the troops are present, i.e. diplomatic, support, conflict, etc.
- b. **Paper Two**-Describe the current volunteer army in terms of overall troop strength, the current numbers of troop who have served two or more tours of duty and the current level of troops needed to meet the needs of defense at home and abroad according to the Secretary of Defense.
- c. **Paper Three**-According to the Secretary of Defense how many new volunteers are needed to have a fighting force that is sufficient to meet all of the country's deployment needs. Where are additional troops most needed?
- d. **Paper Four**-What is the current number of young men who are currently eligible to be drafted based on the mandatory registration laws. State the position of each of the 4 presidential candidates on this issue?
- e. **Paper Five**-Based on the above information do you support or oppose re-instating the military draft? Give the reasons for your position.

The maximum length for papers 1-4 is 4 double- spaced pages, excluding graphs and appendices.

The maximum length for paper # 5 is 8 double-spaced pages, excluding graphs and appendices.

The MLA style guide should be used for your works cited list.