

The College of Charleston  
Fall 2017

**POLI 101.1- American Government**

MWF 12 Noon-12:50 P.M.

Maybank 307

Instructor	Marguerite Archie-Hudson, Ph.D.
Office Hours	Mon-Wed 1:30 – 4:30 P.M. and by appointment
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**Course Description and Objectives**

American Government this semester will focus on the delivery of government services at the federal, state and local levels to the 320 million citizens government officials are sworn to serve in a variety of complex and complicated institutional arrangements.

In November 2016 the American people elected a new President, all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 1/3 of the U.S. Senate. For the first time in recent history Americans elected a President with no experience in government at the federal, state or local level.

Many states elected new governors and all 50 states elected or re-elected members of State Legislatures. All of these electoral changes have the potential to make major changes in how government at every level address the major issues about which Americans are most concerned.

These issues include the domestic and global economy, immigration, education, the environment, voting rights, global conflicts, civil rights, domestic and international terrorism, among others. How government will respond to these issues continue to be of public concern.

POLI 101-1 this semester will focus on the three major branches of government at the federal and state level and the political leaders and administrative agencies responsible for finding solutions to problems and common ground among a diverse and divided electorate.

This class 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. Students are required to sign a daily attendance sheet to verify attendance.
- B. Expectations for class participation include reading assignments prior to class, joining in class discussions, respecting the opinion of others and turning in assignments on time. Late assignments will incur severe grade penalties.
- C. Use of electronics in class is not permitted. The exception is the use of personal computers for note-taking in class. A violation of this prohibition will be considered a violation of the College's Honor Code and may be subjected to sanctions.
- 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 (non-emergency) off-campus trips prior to a scheduled exam ( Mid-term or Final) will not receive excused absences nor an opportunity to make up the exam.
- G. Students are encouraged to utilize the Center for Student Learning (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. These services are available to you at no extra cost. Visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843)953-5635.

### **Grading**

Grades will be based on three research papers on current public issues before government, a Midterm Examination, a Final examination and class participation as follows:

a. Research Paper 1	20%
b. Research Paper 2	20%
c. Research Paper 3	20%
d. Midterm Examination	15%
e. Final Examination	20%
f. Class participation/attendance	5%

### **Required Textbook**

Ginsburg, Benjamin; Lowi, Theodore J; Weir, Margaret; and Tolbert, Carolyn J: **We The People**, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, W.W. Norton and Company, N.Y.

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 cost. Local state and political news is reported in the *Charleston Post and Courier* and Columbia's *The State* newspaper.

### **Course Outline and Reading Assignments**

#### **August 2017**

Wed 23	Introductions and Semester Overview
Frj 25	Review of Semester Research Assignments

Mon 28                   Who are the Americans?  
Ginsburg, Chapter One

Wed 30                   American Political Culture  
Chapter One

**September 2017**

Fri 1                     American Political Culture

Mon 4                   Major Theories of Government

Wed 6                   Major Theories of Government

**The Historic Foundations**

Fri 8                     The Historic Foundations of American government (Handout)

Mon 11                  The Historic Foundations of American government

**The United States Constitution**

Wed 13                  Framing the Constitution  
Ginsburg, Chapter Two

Fri 15                  Framing the Constitution

Mon 18                  The Bill of Rights  
Chapter Four

Wed 20                  The Bill of Rights

Fri 22                  The Bill of Rights

Mon 25                  Civil Liberties

Wed 27                  Civil Liberties

Fri 29                  Civil Rights

**October 2017**

Mon 2                  Civil Rights

Wed 4                  Civil Rights  
**Research Paper One Due**

Fri 6	Federalism
Mon 9	Federalism
Wed 11	<b>MidTerm Examination</b>
	<b><u>The Institutions of the Federal Government</u></b>
Fri 13	The Executive Branch – Constitutional authority and powers of the President Chapter Thirteen
Mon 16	<b><u>Fall Break</u></b>
Wed 18	The Executive Branch – Constitutional authority and powers of the President
Fri 20	Executive Orders and Signing Statements
Mon 23	The Executive Office of the President
Wed 25	The Executive Office of the President
Fri 27	The Federal Cabinets
Mon 30	The Federal Cabinets <b>Research Paper 2 Due</b>
<b>November 2017</b>	
Wed 1	The Executive Agencies
Fri 3	The Executive Agencies
Mon 6	The Regulatory Agencies
Wed 8	The Regulatory Agencies
Fri 10	The Government Corporations
Mon 13	The Government Corporations
Wed 15	The Legislative Branch- Constitutional Powers and Authority
Fri 17	The Legislative Branch – The U.S. House of Representatives
Mon 20	The U.S. Senate <b>Research Paper Three Due</b>

Wed 22                    **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Fri 24                    **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Mon 27                    The Federal Judiciary

Wed 29                    The Federal Judiciary

**December 2017**

Mon 4                    The Federal Judiciary

Tu 5                      Reading Day

Wed 13                   **Final Examination**  
Noon- 3 P.M.  
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**Required Research Assignments**

The purpose of these research papers is to provide the opportunity for you to study three current political issues that are before the U.S. government for debates and decisions. Each has engendered a great deal of public attention and conflict. The three topics on which you will write papers are the following:

1. Should transgender persons be allowed to serve in the U.S. Military?
2. Should public monies be appropriated from the federal budget to build the border wall?
3. Should the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals law be repealed so that children who were brought to the U.S. by their parents be deported?

For each of the above issues you will be required to discuss the following:

- A. Explain why this is an issue currently before the U.S. Government
- B. Explain the magnitude of the problem – statistics, impact, etc.
- C. Identify the federal agency that has jurisdiction over this issue.
- D. Identify the law or laws that govern this issue.
- E. Make a recommendation regarding how this problem should be solved.

You will be given a specific template for the writing of these papers.