

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Political Science 101
Section 6 (T/TH: 12:15-1:40)
Section 2 (T/TH: 1:40-2:55)
Fall 2022

Instructor: Claire Wofford, J.D., Ph.D.

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Office Hours: By appointment

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I. OBJECTIVES

This 3-credit hour class is intended to provide students with an understanding of the basic history, structure, theoretical justifications, and operation of the American government system. Emphasis will be placed upon recognizing the relationships between current political issues and long-standing dilemmas in government and on the similarities and/or differences between the normative and empirical aspects of our national government. The class is also designed to increase students' grasp of politics in order to augment their interest in the American political system.

As defined by the Department of Political Science, upon completion of the course, a student should be able to: 1) Identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures, and decision-making processes of the American political system; 2) Evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas; 3) Relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates, and outcomes in the United States; and 4) Develop an analytical, social science disposition toward American politics.

General Education Learning Requirements

As part of a general education learning outcome, students can apply social science concepts, models, or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions, or social institutions. This outcome will be assessed in an essay question on the final exam. This question will constitute 20% of the exam; the exam will constitute 25% of your final grade.

Course Prerequisites

None.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS

Each student must purchase/borrow:

Abernathy, Scott F. 2020 *American Government: Stories of a Nation*, 2nd ed. CQ Press: Thousand Oaks, California (hereinafter "Abernathy")

The R.E.A.C.H Act requires that students read the following documents in their entirety: the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, 5 of the Federalist Papers: #1,#10, #51,#68, #78,, the Emancipation Proclamation, and one additional document foundational to the African-American freedom struggle- I have a Dream.

Additional readings are assigned and will be posted on OAKS. It is the **student's** responsibility to check email and OAKS regularly for information about any changes in course material, class schedule, or exams.

Please **read the assigned material listed in the syllabus prior to the class session.**

III. EVALUATION

Grades will be based upon three in-class examinations (two mid-terms and one final), one in-class presentation/debate, class participation, and reading quizzes. The first exam will constitute 15% of the final grade, the second 20%, and the final 25%; the debate 15%, class participation 15%, and reading quizzes 10%. Details for each of these are listed below.

These assignments correspond with the above learning objectives in the following way:

Objective	Assignment(s)
Identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures, and decision-making processes of the American political system	Exams (Objective, Identification, and Short Answer Questions); Class Participation; Reading Quiz
Evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas	Exams (Identification and Short Answer Questions); Short Paper; Class Participation; Debate
Relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates, and outcomes in the United States	Exams (Short Answer Questions); Short Paper
Develop an analytical, social science disposition toward American politics	Exams (entire); Short Paper, Class Participation; Debate

Examinations (60% of final grade)

The **three examinations** will be a combination of objective (multiple choice and true/false), identification, short answer, and essay. The final exam will not be cumulative. Examinations must be taken at the scheduled time unless arrangements have been made with the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the exam. Make-up exams will only be offered once and will be more difficult than the regular test.

Debate Sessions (15% of final grade)

The course will also require participation, as part of a small group, in a **formal** in-class debate on a particular “hot topic” in American politics. Instructions for the debate will be forthcoming and group assignments and readings will be posted as soon as the class list is finalized. Please be aware that ALL students must complete the assigned debate readings and that **audience members will be required to participate** via voting and/or peer evaluations.

Class Participation (15% of final grade)

Class participation is **highly** encouraged, as reflected in its contribution to the final grade. The grade will be based upon how actively you participate in the course. Active participation means that, at a minimum, you come to class having completed the reading(s) assigned for that day. You will be evaluated based upon both the frequency and substance of your involvement in class discussions.

Reading Quizzes (10% of final grade)

To ensure students are reading the text prior to class, there will be a weekly reading quiz that must be completed. The quiz will be posted on OAKS at least 24 hours before the relevant class session and **MUST** be completed before class.

Pop Quizzes

I also reserve to right to give random pop quizzes if it appears that students are not reading the material or coming to class well-prepared. If instituted, these quizzes will be factored into your class participation grade.

Grading Scale

The grading system is based upon the following scale: 93-100% A; 90-92 A-; 87-89% B+; 83-85% B; 80-82% B-; 77-79% C+; 73-76% C; 70-72% C-; 67-69% D+; 63-67% D; 60-62% D- 0-59%: F. **Extra credit is not permitted (subject to one exception – see below).**

IV. ATTENDANCE AND CLASS BEHAVIOR

Attendance is **required** for all classes. Attendance will be taken during every in-person class. Only documented illness (subject to exception for Covid-related absences), family emergency, or institutional permission constitute excused absences. Please let me know of any such absences in advance whenever possible; if you will be missing class for a school-related reason (activity, athletics etc.), you must let me know twenty-four hours before your absence.

Any student with a **Covid-related absence should inform me as soon as possible**. The student and I will make reasonable accommodations/arrangements as needed. My classes are built on mutual respect and trust, and I expect that you will be honest and truthful about

the cause of your absence(s). Masks are required for class; any student refusing to wear a mask will not be permitted in the classroom

As tardiness disrupts the classroom environment, any student who is **late more than two times will have their participation grade dropped by 10%**.

The rules of the student code of conduct apply in this class. Appropriate behavior is always required. Students may not speak while other students or the instructor is speaking. Classroom debate is highly encouraged, but students are expected to conduct themselves with decorum and respect.

Laptops are not allowed during in-person class sessions. Use of cell phones during class is strictly prohibited. Turn phones off before entering the classroom/Zoom session.

V. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index>.

VI. DISABLED STUDENTS

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me at least **one week before accommodation is needed**.

VII. INCLEMENT WEATHER, PANDEMIC OR SUBSTANTIAL INTERRUPTION OF INSTRUCTION

If in-person classes are suspended, I will announce to students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools

VII. ASSIGNMENTS AND LECTURE TOPICS

Please note that I reserve the right to alter these assignments as necessary. Notice of such changes will be provided in advance and students are expected to alter their reading as necessary. Updated syllabi will be posted on OAKS.

SECTION ONE: THE FOUNDATION OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

A. Session 1: Tuesday, August 23rd

Topic: Introduction to the Course & Each Other

Reading: Syllabus

Additional Assignment: None

B. Session 2: Thursday, August 25th

Topic: Who Cares About Politics?

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 3-10

Additional Assignments: Complete reading quiz #1

C. Session 3: Tuesday, August 30th

Topic: The Articles of Confederation: Ooops!

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 31-40; 530-535 (skim Articles I-VII and Amendments 1-10 of the U.S. Constitution)

Additional Assignments: Complete reading quiz #2; watch “Intro to Debate Video” (available at); watch “Intro to Speechmaking” video (OAKS); read “Instructions for Debate” (OAKS) and “Debate Grading Rubric” (OAKS)

D. Session 4: Thursday, September 1st

Topic: The Greatest “Hundred Days” or “By Elites, for Elites”

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 40-52

Additional Assignments: Complete Reading Quiz #3; Read op-eds and begin research (OAKS; **Debate #1 Groups Only**)

E. Sessions 5: Tuesday, September 6th

Topic: Debate #1

Reading: Debate #1 readings (OAKS)

F. Session 6: Thursday, September 8th

Topic: What’s New is Old Again: Ratification Debates

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 52-59; 540-543

Additional Assignments: None

G. Session 7: Tuesday, September 13th

Topic: Federalism Then and Now, Part 1

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 63-68

Additional Assignments: Complete reading quiz #4

H. Session 8: Thursday, September 15th

Topic: Federalism Then and Now, Part 2

Reading: Abernathy: 68-81

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #5

I. Session 9: Tuesday, September 20th

Topic: Federalism Then and Now, Part 3

Reading: Abernathy: 81-88

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #6

J. Session 10: Thursday, September 22nd

*****EXAM #1*****

PART TWO: THE INSTITUTIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

K. Session 11: Tuesday, September 27th

Topic: Congress: The “Most Dangerous” Branch? (Part 1)

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 323-330

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #7

Extra Credit Opportunity: Attend Constitution Day Talk (4 pm; RITA 101)

L. Session 12: Thursday, September 29th

Topic: Congress: The “Most Dangerous” Branch? (Part 2)

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 340-353

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #8; Read op-eds and begin research (OAKS; **Debate #2 Groups ONLY**)

M. Session 13: Tuesday, October 4th

Topic: Congress: The “Most Dangerous” Branch? (Part 3)

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 331-339

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #9

N. Session 14: Thursday, October 6th

Topic: Congress: The “Most Dangerous” Branch? (Part 4)

Reading: None

Additional Assignments: None

O. Session 15: Tuesday, October 11th

Topic: Debate #2

Reading: Debate #2 Readings (OAKS)

P. Session 16: Thursday, October 13th

Topic: The Presidency: The “Power” of One Man (Part 1)

Readings: Abernathy, pp. 357-372

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #10; Read op-eds and begin research (OAKS; **Debate #3 Groups ONLY**)

Q. Session 17: Tuesday, October 18th

Topic: The Presidency: The “Power” of One Man (Part 2)

Readings: Abernathy, pp. 377-382

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #11

R. Session 18: Thursday, October 20th

Topic: Debate #3

Reading: Debate #3 Readings (OAKS)

S. Session 19: Tuesday, October 25th

Topic: The Bureaucracy: A Necessary “Evil”

Reading: Abernathy, pp. 385-392; 400-409

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #12

T. Session 20: Thursday, October 27th

*****EXAM #2*****

U. Session 21: Tuesday, November 1st

Topic: The Judiciary: No Sword, No Purse, No Power?

Readings: Abernathy, pp. 412-439

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #13; Read op-eds and begin research (OAKS; **Debate #4 Groups ONLY**)

V. Session 22: Thursday, November 3rd

Topic: Debate #4

Reading: Debate #4 Readings (OAKS)

PART THREE: CONNECTING THE PEOPLE TO THE POWERFUL

NO CLASS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH – FALL BREAK

W. Session 23: Thursday, November 10th

Topic: Public Opinion: A Finger to the Wind?

Readings: Abernathy, pp.183-207

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #14

X. Session 24: Tuesday, November 15th

Topic: Political Participation: The Lion or the Lamb?

Readings: Abernathy, pp. 155-179

Additional Assignments: complete reading quiz #15; Read op-eds and begin research (OAKS; **Debate #5 Groups Only**)

Y. Session 25: Thursday, November 17th

Topic: Debate #5

Readings: Debate #5 Readings (OAKS)

Additional Assignments: Read op-eds and begin research (OAKS; **Debate #6 Groups Only**)

Z. Session 26: Tuesday, November 22nd

Topic: (Don't) Show Me the Money: The Maze of Campaign Finance

Readings: Abernathy, pp. 275-276; 312-313; 343-344

NO CLASS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH – THANKSGIVING

AA. Session 27: Tuesday, November 29th

Topic: Debate #6

Readings: Debate #6 Readings (OAKS)

BB. Session 28: Thursday, December 1st

Topic: Catch-Up

Readings: None

*****FINAL EXAM –SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH AT 1:00 (Section 6) OR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8TH AT 1:00 (Section 2)*****