

American National Government
Political Science 120
Tuesday/Friday, 1:30-2:45pm
304 Denny Hall

Professor: Kathleen Marchetti

Office: Denny 12

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30 – 12:00; Friday: 11:00 – 12:30; and by appointment

Office Hours Sign Up (via Excel in Office 365): <https://bit.ly/2Rorcfy>

Purpose of Course

The chief purpose of this course is to provide you with a basic understanding of the participants, processes, structures and values that make up the American political system. In particular, you will acquire a working knowledge of 1) the values and ideas which form the foundation for American politics; 2) how various actors interact with the political system to achieve those values; 3) the structures and institutions of the United States government; and 4) a basic sense of how these elements come together to form what we call “public policy”.

Course Objectives

In addition, this course is about *your* development as a participant in the American political process. The class is designed to develop your political awareness, acquaint you with the nature of American politics and show you how you can affect issues of importance to you. We will spend some time on the inner workings of the government, such as how a bill becomes a law or how elections work. You will also learn how to gather information about what the government is or is not doing, so that you can judge for yourself how democratic the United States really is and understand which groups and individuals exercise power over public policy. You will develop the ability to think critically about American political events, to put them into context and to formulate cogent arguments about them.

After taking this course, you will be able to:

- Explain the political and historical context in which the U.S. Constitution was written and the how the final document was shaped;
- Describe the political development and purpose of the three branches of national government;
- Analyze and critique the media’s accounts of politics (in print, on television, or online)

- Synthesize the opinions of your peers and actively participate in class discussion on course topics and current events

Course Books

1. Lowi, Theodore, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2017. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Brief 14th Edition. W.W. Norton and Company.

Please note that for most class sessions you will be asked to read outside information not appearing in the textbook. All supplemental readings will be available online through the class Moodle website or will be distributed in class.

Course Requirements

Class Sessions

This course mixes lectures, classroom discussions and independent exercises. Student attendance and participation is required. You will be asked to participate actively in class by listening to class lecture and also having conversations with your classmates and your instructor about the material presented in the readings and relevant current events. Please come to class having done the appropriate readings, and ready to think, write and participate. As you're reading, remember that Google and Wikipedia can be useful for getting some background knowledge about a political event, court case, or the structure of government.

Assignments

There will be two short papers, one mid-term exam, and one final exam in this course. There are a total of 450 points and your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Paper 1	February 26, 2019	100
Exam 1	March 22, 2019	100
Paper 2	April 16, 2019	100
Final Exam	May 13, 2019	100
Class Participation		50
Total		450

The course grading scale is as follows:

A	421+ points	(93.5-100%)
A-	403- 420 points	(89.5-93%)
B+	390 - 402 points	(86.5-89%)
B	372 - 389 points	(82.5-86%)
B-	358 - 371 points	(79.5-82%)
C+	345 - 357 points	(76.5-79%)

C	327 – 344 points	(72.5-76%)
C-	313 – 326 points	(69.5-72%)
D+	300 – 312 points	(66.5-69%)
D	282 – 299 points	(62.5-66%)
D-	268 – 281 points	(59.5-62%)
F	267 or fewer points	(59% or less)

Exams

Each exam will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions that will test your knowledge of facts and understanding of the concepts contained in each section of the course. There will be a total of 2 exams in this class; one at the mid-point of the semester and another during finals week. The second exam will cover all the topics discussed in class after the completion of the first exam. Even though the second exam is scheduled during finals week, it is NOT cumulative; you will only be tested on the material covered after the first exam through the end of the semester.

Paper Assignments

There are two paper assignments (each will be roughly 4-5 double-spaced pages, 12 point Times New Roman font) in the course. Information about each assignment will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date and will generally ask you to develop arguments and connect course topics to broader questions about the American political process. You should submit your paper to the Moodle drop box by 11:59pm on the due date. If you submit a paper late without permission for a deadline extension, your grade will decrease a fraction of a letter grade (e.g., from an A to an A-; an A- to a B+) for every day that it is late.

Missing Assignments

If exceptional circumstances arise and you miss an exam or a paper assignment due date, I ask that you provide me with information according to two valid criteria:

1) Illness or hardship (e.g., death in the family). Please notify me as soon as possible if you cannot make an exam or paper assignment deadline. Ideally, we will correspond prior to the beginning of the exam or assignment due date. You should provide information regarding the reason for your absence, possible dates/times for making up the exam/turning in the paper, and the name and contact information of your academic adviser. I may not be able to grant make-up exam requests or due date extensions if you wait too long to notify me.

2) Religious holidays - please let me know about these early in the semester.

Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance in a college class is always important and it is my expectation that you attend every class session. However, over the course of the semester circumstances may arise (e.g., illness) that prevent you from attending class; as such, you may miss up to two class sessions, for any

reason, without an effect on your final grade. Note that additional absences will negatively affect your participation grade and understanding of course material.

Additionally, active participation in class is essential to accomplish the goal of being an informed and engaged political citizen. The 50 points of your grade that correspond to class participation will not be given automatically based on daily attendance. You will earn points by participating regularly and respectfully. There may also be short assignments completed in class that will contribute towards your participation grade. Here are some things you can do to earn maximum credit for participation:

- ✓ Attend class
- ✓ Participate openly and regularly in discussions
- ✓ Ask questions when you have them – no matter how big or small!
- ✓ Feel free to consider and question, but never disrespect, others' contributions
- ✓ Try not to interrupt or monopolize the conversation
- ✓ Help create discussion openings by which other students may participate
- ✓ Stay on topic

NOTE: If you have difficulty speaking in public or for some other reason do not feel comfortable participating in the manner described above please speak with me within the first few days of class so that an alternate method of evaluation can be arranged.

Office hours and Email

Office hours are a great chance to ask questions or raise concerns you have about lectures, assignments, readings, or political science in general. If you can't make office hours, we can discuss setting up an appointment for another time during the week. Please use the Excel form to schedule a time during office hours: <https://bit.ly/2Rorcfy>

If you need to contact me outside of class, the best way to reach me is via email (marchetk@dickinson.edu). I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours if your email is received Monday-Friday. Emails received over the weekend may take up to 48 hours for a response. I will conduct course-related business via email, so please be sure to regularly check your official Dickinson College email account. Note that I will not summarize lectures, discussions, readings, or missed classes via email – it is best to come speak with me during office hours about any class content.

Technology

Most students comprehend class material to a deeper extent if they participate in class discussions and take notes by hand and I encourage you to do both in this class. Laptops for note-taking is by permission only and you should speak with me about this early in the semester. Cell phones are very distracting to your peers and to the professor, so please refrain from using yours in class. If you need to send a text or make a call under special circumstances, please step outside the room.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

- This class may be recorded for accommodation purposes
- Laptop use is by permission only

Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded equitable access to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical impairment – that would hinder your access to learning or demonstrating knowledge in this class, please contact Access and Disability Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation that Dean and Director Marni Jones will need to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to www.dickinson.edu/access, email access@dickinson.edu, call (717) 245-1734, or go to ADS in the Lower Level of Old West, Room 5.

If you've already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can meet soon to review your Accommodation Letter and complete your Blue Form. If you will need test proctoring from ADS, remember that you will need to provide them with at least one week's notice.

Marni Jones is also the Dean and Director of SOAR: Strategies, Organization, and Achievement Resources, which is a part of Academic Advising, and provides supports for all Dickinson students in the areas of time management, effective reading and study skills, note-taking and notes review strategies, memory-enhancing techniques, and test-taking and preparation. Marni trains student Time Management Strategists who are available to assist students with forging a time management and study strategy plan. Sessions can be scheduled by emailing SOAR@dickinson.edu. Students can also find a wealth of resources, including semester calendars, weekly planners, and the Academic Success Workshop schedule through the [SOAR](#) website.

Academic Integrity

Note that the College's policy on academic integrity governs this course. Please review this policy via the following links: [Community Standards](#), [Academic Misconduct](#) and [Social Misconduct](#). Faculty are required by Dickinson College policy to report any academic misconduct including evidence of plagiarism, even if accidental. Please consult with the writing center if you have any questions about proper citation formats.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Topic 1: Foundations of American Government and Politics

Week 1: January 22, 25

Tuesday

Welcome, syllabus overview

Friday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose*: (pgs. 2-17) Chapter 1: “Making Sense of Government and Politics”

Topic 2: The Constitution

Week 2: January 29, February 1

Tuesday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose*: (pgs. 24-57) Chapter 2: “The Founding and the Constitution”
2. Meyer, David. 2014. *The Politics of Protest*, 2nd Edition. “America and Political Protest: Political Institutions and Dissent”. pp. 8-28. (Moodle)

Friday

1. *Federalist # 10* (Moodle)
2. *Federalist # 51* (Moodle)

Week 3: February 5, 8

Tuesday

1. Excerpt from Fehrenbacher: *The Slaveholding Republic* (Moodle)

Topic 3: Federalism

Friday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 58-83) Chapter 3: “Federalism and the Separation of Powers

Week 4: February 12, 15

Tuesday

1. How to read an academic article: <https://ed.ted.com/on/N1PGnyHL>

Friday

1. Hannah, A. Lee, and Daniel J. Mallinson. 2017. “Defiant Innovation: The Adoption of Medical Marijuana Laws in the American States.” *Policy Studies Journal*. (Moodle)
2. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2018/01/09/why-it-will-be-difficult-for-jeff-sessions-to-put-the-genie-back-into-the-bottle-on-marijuana-policy/>

In Class Film: *The State of Arizona*: <https://envoy.dickinson.edu:5440/video/state-arizona>

Week 5: February 19, 22

Tuesday

1. Finish *The State of Arizona*. Bring to class a 2 page memo regarding how the issue of immigration (as depicted in the film and today’s reading) reflects tensions between national and state governments
2. Marquez, Timothy and Scot Schraufnagel. 2013. “Hispanic Population Growth and State Immigration Policy: An Analysis of Restriction (2008–12)”. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, Volume 43, Issue 3, Pages 347–367. (Moodle)

Topic 4: Civil Liberties

Friday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 84-106) Chapter 4: “Civil Liberties and Civil Rights”

Week 6: February 26, March 1

Tuesday

PAPER 1 DUE

In Class Film: *The Supreme Court: A Nation of Liberties*

Friday

Finish/Discuss *The Supreme Court: A Nation of Liberties*

1. Davis, Darren W. and Brian D. Silver. 2004. "Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 28-46. (Moodle)

Week 7: March 5, 8

Tuesday

Topic 5: Civil Rights

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 107-129) Chapter 4: "Civil Liberties and Civil Rights"

Friday

1. Rauch, Jonathan. "In Defense of Prejudice" (Moodle)
2. ACLU: <https://www.aclu.org/hate-speech-campus>
3. Ma, Alice. 1995. "Campus Hate Speech Codes: Affirmative Action in the Allocation of Speech Rights." *California Law Review*. Pgs. 693- top of 707 only (1- top of 16 only). (Moodle).

March 12, 15 (NO CLASS – Spring Break)

Week 8: March 19, 22

Tuesday

In class – Exam 1 Review

Friday

EXAM 1 (Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Week 9: March 26, 29

Topic 6: The Courts

Tuesday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 240-274) Chapter 8: “The Federal Courts”

Friday

(All on Moodle)

1. “Debating the Issues: Originalism or a Living Constitution?”
2. “Constitutional Interpretation the Old-Fashioned Way”
3. “Our Democratic Constitution”

Week 10: April 2, 5

Topic 7: Congress and Representation

Tuesday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 130-167) Chapter 5: “Congress: The First Branch”

Friday

1. Bratton, Kathleen and Kerry Haynie. 1999. “Agenda Setting and Legislative Success in State Legislatures: The Effects of Gender and Race.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 3 pp. 658-679. (Moodle)

Week 11: April 9, 12

Topic 8: The Presidency

Tuesday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 170-205) Chapter 6: “The Presidency”

Friday

1. Canes-Wrone, Brandice; William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis. 2008. “Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis.” *The Journal of Politics*, 70 (1): 1-16. (Moodle)
2. *Enduring Debate:* (pgs. 212-221) 6.30: “The Power to Persuade” (Moodle)

Week 12: April 16, 19

Tuesday

PAPER 2 DUE

In Class Film: *All the Way*

Friday

Finish/Discuss film: *All the Way*

Week 13: April 23, 26

Topic 9: Elections

Tuesday

1. *American Gov., Power and Purpose:* (pgs. 314-358) Chapter 10: “Elections”

Friday

1. Hershey, Marjorie Randon. 2009. “What We Know about Voter-ID Laws, Registration, and Turnout.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 87-91. (Moodle)

Week 14: April 30, May 3

Tuesday

Course Evaluations, Final Exam Review

Friday

No Class: Study for Final Exam

Final Exam: 9:00am Monday May 13, 2019