

Introduction to American National Government
Political Science 001-Summer 2011 LEAP
MTWRF, 11:10-12:25, in 167 Willard Building

Instructor: Kathleen Marchetti
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Office Hours: Monday & Thursday 1:00-2:00 pm
224 Pond Laboratory
Meetings also available by appointment

ANGEL site: <https://cms.psu.edu>

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 citizen and participant in the American political process. This course 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. Thus, you will also 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 should 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 of the three branches of national government;
- Integrate the roles of elections, the media, public opinion, political parties, and interest groups in shaping government policy;
- 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 Book

Morris Fiorina, Paul Peterson, Bertram Johnson, and William Mayer. 2010. *America's New Democracy, 6th Edition*.

Please note that for some classes, you may be asked to read outside information not appearing in the textbook. Any supplemental readings will be available online through the class's *Angel* 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 yourself, your classmates, and your instructor about the material presented in the readings and relevant current events. The class will center around a Power Point presentation where the most important topics from the chapter are highlighted. However, I want the class to be interactive so I will try to break up the lecture with plenty of discussion and in-class exercises. For example, I may ask you to prepare questions about the reading that will structure class discussion or have you break into groups to discuss a topic.

Additionally, I will be incorporating a new interactive feature called iClicker into this course. The iClicker is designed to quickly gather and process data from the class and present it in a graphical manner. This "data" can range from your opinion on a current event to the definition of a key word from the reading. Use of the iClicker in class allows us to discuss topics in a new, visual way and allows me to track your opinions and understanding of course material. More information about how the iClickers will be used in class can be found in the "Attendance and Participation" section of the syllabus.

Please come to class having done the appropriate readings, and ready to think, write and participate. When you read, pay attention to any **bold-face** terms in the reading. If these terms are not defined by the sentence, you can check the book glossary for their definition. The book is written in an informal style that is intended to be more "read-able" than more traditional textbooks. However, this may mean that you need to do a bit of extra research on your own to ensure you understand a concept. Remember, 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 three short papers, one mid-term exam, and one final exam in this course. There are a total of 200 points and your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

First Paper	30 points
Mid-Term Exam	45 points
Second Paper	30 points
Final Exam	45 points
Third Paper	30 points
Class Participation	20 points

The course grading scale is as follows:

A	185+ points	(92.5-100%)
A-	179 -184 points	(89.5-92%)
B+	173-178 points	(86.5-89%)
B	165-172 points	(82.5-86%)
B-	159-164 points	(79.5-82%)
C+	153-158 points	(76.5-79%)
C	139-152 points	(69.5-76%)
D	119-138 points	(59.5-69%)
F	118 or fewer points	(under 59%)

Exams: Each exam will consist of several multiple choice questions and 5-8 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 at the end. The second exam will cover all the topics discussed in class after the completion of the midterm exam. In other words, the second exam is NOT cumulative; you will only be tested in the material covered after the mid-term exam.

Paper Assignments: For the three paper assignments (roughly 3-5 pages) I ask you to apply topics learned in class to current events. You should find a newspaper article from a major news source (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*) and write a short paper showing how the article relates to concepts used in one of the three sections of the class. These three sections, each lasting roughly 10-14 days, structure the course content that your paper assignment will cover. For example, a paper assignment due on the first due date of Wednesday, July 13th could discuss any material covered in Section 1 (June 29th-July 11th). More detailed instructions will be provided prior to the first due date. You should submit your entry by the start of class on the due date. Late entries will be docked two points per day. Please use 12 point font (i.e. Times New Roman), 1 inch margins, and double spacing. Paper Assignment #1 is due on **Wednesday, July 13**, Paper Assignment #2 is due on **Monday, July 25**, and Paper Assignment #3 is due on **Wednesday, August 10**.

Missing Assignments: If you have to miss class, an exam, or a paper assignment due date I ask that you provide me with information according to three valid criteria:

1) Illness or hardship. Please notify me as soon as possible that you cannot make an exam or paper assignment deadline. I prefer that you notify me prior to the beginning of the exam or due date of the assignment but I understand that sometimes emergencies happen and you may not have access to email. You should indicate the reason for your absence, relevant dates including possible make-up days (for exams and papers), and the name and contact information of your academic adviser (email and phone number). I may not be able to grant make-up exam requests or due date extensions if you wait too long to notify me.

2) Official university activities verified by the Provost's office (for example, a prominent speaker on campus).

3) Religious holidays. Please let me know about these early in the course.

Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance in a college class is always important and it becomes even more so in a condensed summer session. Thus, it is my expectation that you come to class every day. If you do need to miss class for some reason, please contact me as soon as possible, preferably in advance of the class you will miss. Excessive absences will negatively affect your participation grade and understanding of course material. I will pass around a sign in sheet for you to initial at the beginning of every class.

Additionally, active participation in class is essential to accomplish the goal of being an informed and engaged political citizen. The 20 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. Here are some things you should do to earn maximum credit for participation:

- Attend class
- Participate openly and regularly in discussions
- Answer the iClicker questions
- Ask questions when you have them – no matter how big or small
- Always 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 two days of class so that an alternate method of evaluation can be arranged.

iClickers

I will be providing the class with a set of free iClickers as part of a pilot study for the new system. You will be using the iClicker system to participate in class discussion and I will also use it to evaluate class participation. We will run through how to use the iClicker during the first week of class and more information on the iClicker system can be found at <http://blogs.tlt.psu.edu/projects/clickers/>. As long as the entire class participates using the iClickers everyday, I will not use a point system for the iClickers. However, if it seems that participation is lacking, I may have to change the iClicker portion of the participation grade to one that is measured by points on an individual basis. Should this occur, I will provide more information about the grading scale for an iClicker point system. Ultimately, it is much easier for the class to simply participate regularly without having to move to a point system.

Academic Integrity

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml

Disabilities

Penn State is committed to providing access to a quality education for all students, including those with documented disabilities. If a student has a disability and wishes an accommodation for a course, it is the student's responsibility to obtain a University letter confirming the disability and suggesting appropriate accommodation. This letter can be requested from the Office for Disability Services found online at <http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/index.html>

or in 116 Boucke Building University Park, PA 16802. To reach the Office for Disability Services by phone call 814-863-1807. Students are encouraged to request accommodation early in the semester so that, once identified, reasonable accommodation can be implemented in a timely manner.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University.

Course Schedule¹

Begin Section 1: June 29-July 11

Wednesday, June 29	Course Introduction
Thursday, June 30	Foundations of American Democracy Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 1
Friday, July 1	The U.S. Constitution Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 2
Monday, July 4	No Class: Happy 4th of July/Independence Day!
Tuesday, July 5	Federalism Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 3
Wednesday, July 6	Federalism Reading: Federalist #10 and Federalist #51
Thursday, July 7	Congress Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 10
Friday, July 8	Congress Reading: Finish Fiorina et al. Chapter 10
Monday, July 11	The Presidency Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 11

Begin Section 2: July 12-July 22

Tuesday, July 12	The Presidency Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 11
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¹ Your learning is my principal concern so I may modify the course schedule as needed to better facilitate your understanding of class material. Any changes to the syllabus or course schedule will be announced in class and via email.

Wednesday, July 13

PAPER NUMBER ONE DUE

The Media

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 6

Thursday, July 14

Exam 1 Review

Friday, July 15

EXAM 1

Monday, July 18

The Courts

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 13

Tuesday, July 19

The Courts

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 13

Wednesday, July 20

Civil Liberties

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 14

Thursday, July 21

Civil Liberties

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 14

Friday, July 22

CLASS CANCELLED TODAY!

Monday, July 25

PAPER NUMBER TWO DUE

Civil Rights

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 15

Begin Section 3: July 26-August 10

Tuesday, July 26

Civil Rights

Reading: Finish Fiorina et al. Chapter 15

Wednesday, July 27

Public Opinion

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 5

Thursday, July 28

Public Opinion

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 5

Friday, July 29

Campaigns and Elections

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 8

Monday, August 1

Campaigns and Elections

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 8

Tuesday, August 2

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Reading: Finish Fiorina et al. Chapter 9

Wednesday, August 3

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Reading: Fiorina et al. Chapter 9

Thursday, August 4

Exam 2 Review

Friday, August 5

EXAM 2

Monday, August 8

Film Viewing: *Wag the Dog*

Tuesday, August 9

Film Viewing and Discussion

Wednesday, August 10

PAPER NUMBER THREE DUE