

POLI 2051: Introduction to American Government

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Office: 310 Stubbs Hall
Office Hours: virtual, by appointment

Final exam:
December 8-10

Aim of the Course:

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of American government and politics and critically engage the class with issues and themes related to the American political system. We will examine the fundamental components of American government including representation, political institutions, mass participation, and the policy-making process. Students will end the course familiar with the decision making-process in the American political system.

Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations, and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BOR Area of Social/Behavioral Sciences and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of Inquiry and Analysis.

Structure of the Course:

The course will be divided into two units, with an exam given at the end of each unit. To reinforce information and to ensure students are keeping up to date with the course materials, quizzes will be given on eleven occasions throughout the course. All quizzes and tests are online via moodle or email. Quizzes may be in different formats each week (multiple choice, forum posts, etc). No makeup quizzes or exams will be given. Finally, students will complete one video project due October 30th. Since the format of this course is asynchronous, lecture videos will be uploaded on Mondays and quizzes will open the following Friday. Treat these videos as you would regular class attendance. That is, watch them early each week as if you were attending the class at a set time. Students are responsible for keeping up with all information and announcements within the lecture videos. I will try to include an introduction to each week's video with topical discussions and announcements. Weekly lessons are a combination of lectures and discussions.

Grading:

The class is out of 400 points total

2 exams (100 points/25% each)

11 quizzes, drop the lowest (10 points/2.5% each)

1 video project (100 points/25%)

Grading scale:

A+ = 100-97 / A = 96-93 / A- = 92-90

B+ = 89-87 / B = 86-83 / B- = 82-80

C+ = 79- 77 / C = 76-73 / C- = 72-70

D+ = 69-67 / D = 66-63 / D- = 62-60

F = 59 and Below

Text:

The Struggle for Democracy: 2018 Elections and Updates Edition (ISBN: 978-0135202760).

Additional readings will be posted to Moodle.

Exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer or essay questions. There are two exams total, one midterm and one final. The final exam is not cumulative and will focus on material covered since the midterm exam. If you have questions about either exam or about the material before an exam, please do not hesitate to email me or set up a virtual meeting.

A **video project** leading up to the 2020 Presidential election is due October 30th. Students will sign up to cover one state (from a set list) and record a presentation on relevant information to that state's electoral results on November 3rd. Presentations should include an overview of results from the 2012 and 2016 elections, statewide demographic information, any recent demographic changes, major industries in the state, and information on the state's governor and senators. More information to come. If you are unable to complete this project due to a disability please contact me about an alternate research paper option.

Students also have the opportunity to complete one bonus assignment. At any time during the semester, students may watch the documentary "13th" and write a short response paper of approximately 300 words to be emailed to me for an additional eight bonus points (2% of the final grade). The paper should be on what the student liked, disliked, agreed with, disagreed

with, what stuck out, what was shocking, what wasn't shocking, etc. The documentary can be found on Netflix or on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8&t=2s>

Late work will not be accepted. I do not take attendance as this is an asynchronous course, but missed quizzes cannot be made up without a university-excused absence. If there is anything from the readings or lecture that is unclear, if you have any questions, or if you just want discuss a topic in more depth please do not hesitate to email me or schedule a virtual meeting during office hours.

Student Obligations:

It is your responsibility to keep up with course material including lectures, chapter readings, and any additional material assigned. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask. The only way I can know which items you are struggling with is if you bring them to my attention. I am more than happy to go over unclear topics again for clarification. As a student it is also your responsibility to do your own work. Under no circumstances will cheating be tolerated. Any cheating or plagiarism will be immediately reported to the dean of students.

Students with Special Needs Policy:

If you have special needs that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible, and see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Services so that such accommodations may be arranged. The Office of Disability Services is located in 115 Johnston Hall and may be reached at 225- 578- 5919.