

Political Science 100: American Politics

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Department of Political Science

Section: 03
Day: MWF
Time: Noon
Room: 212 Graham Building

Instructor: Dr. Thomas H. Little
Office: 411 Graham Building
Office Hours: Monday 2:-3:30
Phone: 334-4360
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The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the people, processes and politics associated with American government. We will, of course, discuss such nuts and bolts features of government as how a bill becomes a law, the powers of the courts and the rules and laws governing elections. However, we will get beyond those things to understand not just the **what** of American politics, but also the **how** and **why**. Why does our legislative process work the way it does? Why are the courts so powerful? Why are elections run the way they are in America? How can we balance the need for security with the rights of individual citizens? How can we ensure the safety of workers without restricting economic growth?

Required Texts

We the People: An Introduction to American Politics, Shorter Sixth Edition (2007) Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi and Margaret Weir (New York: Norton Press).

Student Responsibilities

Participation (5%). Students are expected to participate in class discussions. While the class is designed in a lecture format, students will have ample opportunity to express their ideas and opinions and are strongly encouraged to do so. Class is much more interesting for the students and the instructor with active participation.

Attendance . Obviously, students can only participate if they are present! Much of the exams will come from lecture so such attendance is in the academic interest of the student. It is not necessary for you to inform me that you will miss a particular class period (unless there is an exam scheduled). However, if you expect to miss more than a week of class you may wish to inform the instructor. While attendance will not be taken on a regular basis, the instructor reserves the right to take attendance at any time and adjust grades accordingly.

Exams (25%, 30%, 40%). Your grade will be based upon three exams, each covering a separate section of the course. The exams will be a combination of essays, short answers and definitions. The final exam will NOT be cumulative.

If you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must contact the instructor at least 24 hours before class, or within 24 hours of missing the exam. Students must present a medical excuse in order to reschedule an exam they missed and **make-up exams will be scheduled at the**

convenience of the instructor.

Instructor Responsibilities

Preparation. The instructor is expected to be prepared to teach the class and to be knowledgeable regarding the subject matter to be discussed. You can expect the instructor to accurately answer questions or provide you a source for gaining the particular knowledge you seek.

Availability. The instructor is responsible to make himself available to the students in order to answer questions regarding course material or the nature of the course. The instructor should hold regular office hours and return phone calls and e-mails in a reasonable time.

Fairness. The instructor is responsible to treat the students in a fair and reasonable manner making his expectations clear and holding students to those expectations and nothing more. Students have the right to expect fair tests and grading that is reasonable and reliable.

Promptness. Students can expect the instructor to convene class on time, to return messages in a reasonable time and to return exams and assignments within a reasonable period. I will try to complete all exams within one week.

Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their participation, their papers and their performance on two written exams (*) according to the following weights and the participation project:

Participation		5%
1st Midterm	September 17	25%
2nd Midterm	October 15	30%
Final Exam	December 12 (12:00- 3:00)	40%

* I reserve the right to add extra points for attendance or [pop quizzes] if necessary.

Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment</u>
August 25	Why Does Government Matter?	
August 27,29	What Do We Believe?	Chapter 1
September 1	NO CLASS (Labor Day)!	
September 3,5,8	How Did We Get Here?	Chapter 2
September 10/15	United States is or United States Are?	Chapter 3
September 17	Midterm I	Chapters 1-3
September 19	No Class!!!	
September 22/24	Can the Government do that?	Chapter 4
September 26/ 29	They Can't Do that, Can they?	Chapter 5
October 1/3/6	Do You Really Believe That?	Chapter 6
October 8/10/13	You Want to Voter for Whom?	Chapter 8
October 15	Midterm II	Chapters 4,5,6,8
October 17/20	No Class- Fall Break!!!	
October 22/24/27	Where's the Party?	Chapter 9
October 29/31	Can We Choose None of the Above?	Chapter 10
November 3/5	What Makes Your Interest So Special?	Chapter 11
November 7-14	Can Congress Govern?	Chapter 12
November 17/19	Who Is in Charge Here?	Chapter 13
November 21/24	Can you Stick with Red Tape?	Chapter 14
November 26/28	No Class- Thanksgiving Break!!	
December 1/3	Can Justice be Blind?	Chapter 15
December 5	No Class!!!!	
December 8	Conclusion/ Exam Preview	
December 12	Final Exam	Chapters 9-15