

Political Science 100
Introduction to American Government
Tuesday 6:30-9:20

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Textbooks

Government by the People: Brief Edition: Magleby, O'Brien Light

Course Objectives

Do we really have three *equal* branches of government in the United States? Why are there just two political parties, most countries have more and how does this structure your political choices? When and how do citizens play an important role in government? For the answers to these and many other fascinating questions, welcome to Introduction to American Government, writing intensive.

Democracy is based on the idea that an informed public can engage in rational discussion that leads to decision-making in public affairs. Therefore we will approach American government as a series of questions worthy of answering. Many of the questions have both a theoretical and a practical component like those posed at the beginning of this syllabus.

With this course in American government our goal is to expand your knowledge of the basic structure of our government, the ideologies which propel politicians and citizens and the complex interrelationship between the two. You will further develop and enhance your critical reading and writing skills.

Course Requirements

Exploration and comprehension require discussion therefore discussion and participation in class are *essential* as is evidence that you have read the required textbook assignments *before* class. There will be three exams, three small writing assignments and one substantive paper.

In Brief

Discussion/Participation – 40 points
Occasional Assignments – 10 points each
Exams – 100 points each, 300 points total
Papers - 150 points total

Honor

The university's Academic Integrity Policy is available via the web at:
<http://www.uncg.edu80/Leg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>

Blackboard

A great deal of information for this course will be posted on Blackboard (Bb). If I make a general announcement, it will be on Bb. A calendar and test schedule is in the "Course Information" folder. Specifications regarding the paper assignments can also be found there. Reading questions are in the "Assignments" folder. We will sometimes use the Discussion Board. I realize not every student has a computer and thus some have less access to Bb. There are computers available in the library, with fewer users early in the

day. It would be a good idea to make a habit of checking in on Bb there on a regular basis.

Course Outline

1. Political Concepts and the Founding of the Republic
2. Important Documents and Debates: The Constitution and the Bill of Rights
3. Federalism
4. Civil Liberties
5. Civil Rights

First Exam

6. Political Socialization and the formation of Public Opinion
7. The Media
8. Interest Groups
9. Political Parties
10. Voting, Elections and Campaigns

Second Exam

11. The Courts
12. The Presidency
13. The Congress
14. The Bureaucracy

Third Exam

Attendance

You should be in class when you take a course. We need you. When you understand the material we need your insights and observations. When the material is difficult, we need your questions. Learning is both an individual and a collaborative experience. Also, there will be in-class assignments that will count toward your final grade. Come to class.

Make-Up Policy

If you cannot take an exam at the scheduled time because of health or personal problems, you may take a make-up exam under the following conditions:

- 1) You must notify me before the exam. If you are going to miss the exam, you will know ahead of time. Send an email, call, do not use carrier pigeons. If you do not let me know before the exam, you will receive a zero for that exam.
- 2) No one may take more than one make-up exam except under extraordinary circumstances.

Plagiarism

This is defined as literary theft, to steal and pass off the ideas and words of another as one's own. (Webster's Ninth New College Dictionary, 1983). It's important not to plagiarize because it is unscholarly and will lead to a zero for the work in question.. A bit of re-wording is not original thinking. And that's one of our goals for this course. When in doubt, cite.

