

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

POL 201  
SPRING 2013

**Instructor:** Holly Jordan, PhD Student, Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought, Virginia Tech; Master of Arts, Religion, University of Georgia

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**Course Description:** This course is a survey of national government and the political process in the United States, with emphasis on the notion of compromise in American government and politics. 3 Credits.

**Textbook:** American Government and Politics Today, 2011-2012 edition, Bardes, Shelley and Schmidt: Thomson-Wadsworth, ISBN 9780538497190.

### Learning Objectives:

The following list of course objectives will be addressed in the course. These goals are directly related to the performance objectives.

1. Describe government national debt problems.
2. Discuss mass-media political functions.
3. Analyze checks and balances.
4. Discuss interest group functions.
5. Discuss contemporary feminist movement.
6. Discuss constitutional rights.
7. Discuss American Government branches advantages.
8. Differentiate free and oppressive governments.
9. Trace US foreign policy stages.
10. Describe major American ethnic group problems.
11. Discuss political party functions.
12. Describe fiscal and monetary policy differences.
13. Describe current juvenile rights.
14. Describe American Government and States' sharing of power concept.
15. Define political terms.
16. Define foreign policy.
17. Contrast liberalism and conservatism.
18. Compare liberalism and conservatism.
19. Compare houses of Congress' basic differences.
20. Analyze political terms.
21. Describe presidential election process.
22. Identify public decision importance.
23. Trace post-Civil War civil rights legislation.
24. Summarize Constitutional convention lead-up events.
25. Outline federal court system.
26. List major American ethnic groups.
27. List freedom of press and speech standards.
28. List democracy's characteristics.
29. List American Government branches' responsibilities.
30. Discuss legislative process.
31. Identify states' revenue sources.
32. Explain Bill of Rights.
33. Identify American colonization patterns.
34. Explore election process.
35. Explain Supreme Court decision significance.
36. Explain right to privacy.

37. Explain public opinion.
38. Explain political terms.
39. Explain political positions.

40. Explain federalism's advantages.
41. Explain federalism.
42. Identify Supreme Court decisions.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes:**

Students, upon completing this course, will be able to:

1. be conversant on the three branches of government
2. understand the importance of political parties, lobbies, and bureaucracy in government.
3. be able to treat persons of different political beliefs with respect.
4. understand how political science can be applied to many other classes in the liberal arts.

### **Course Policies:**

#### *Behavior*

The study of politics is incredibly personal for many people. As such, I will always require you to treat myself and your classmates with respect. Students will never be required to talk about their personal beliefs in this course. That being said, if a student wishes to share anything in their response posts, they will be treated with dignity.

#### *Academic Integrity and Dishonesty*

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. This may include: giving assistance during quizzes or on required work, lack of citations in written writing, not giving attribution to ideas that are not your own, etc. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as academic dishonesty, please contact me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

#### *Attendance*

Students are expected to keep up with the course materials and to turn things in when they are due. Please contact me *before* an issue would keep you from doing your work on time if at all possible. Constant communication with me is essential for doing well in this course. You will never “bug me” by writing me an email.

#### *ADA Statement*

In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College programs and courses will be accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and you are seeking accommodations for this course or your academic program, you will need to contact Robert Eagle, Dean for Academic & Student Services, with the Office of Disability Services at 304-434-8000, extension 223.

### **Requirements:**

Students must complete the readings for the course in the order they appear and on time. Due dates for readings assignments will be posted at the end of this document and in the calendar tool of the

website. Assignments and quizzes may *always* be completed early. Students shall at all times turn in *their own work*.

All assignments must be turned in Microsoft Word or .rtf (Rich Text) format. No other formats will be accepted. *All assignments* must be written following proper spelling and grammar and free of Internet-speak. If a student needs help with spelling and grammar, I will be more than happy to assist them.

Students should strive to complete all work on time. Work that is not handed in on time will lose 10% of their grade on the assignment for every day it is late. Exceptions can be made to this policy if requests are made prior to the scheduled date and time of an assignment, quiz, or test, or if there is a truly mitigating circumstance.

Grades for this course are on a point system. At the end of the semester, the student's grade will be given as a percentage, based on the points earned out of all possible points. The types of graded work in this course include:

- Discussion Posts – Students will have a discussion post due each week. Discussion posts will be a reaction to what they have read that week in the text. They can respond from personal experience, in a respectful way, if they feel that appropriate. Or, they can discuss something that surprised or intrigued them about the reading from that week. Though less formal than the short and long essays, students must remember that these discussion posts are going to be graded as academic writing, so grammar and spelling will still factor into their grade. Please, no Internet-speak on these discussion posts. **Discussion posts should be about 200 words long and are worth 10 points each.** There will be 15 discussion posts this semester, for up to 150 points. Please see the calendar for due-dates for each post.
- Discussion Responses – In addition to posting discussion posts, students will also respond to a *minimum of two* of their peers' posts each week. Responses can be shorter, around 50 words, but still must follow the same requirements for quality as discussion posts. **Students will be graded for their first two responses, which should be about 50-100 words each and will total 10 points.** There will be 15 discussion responses this semester, for up to 150 points. Please see the calendar for due-dates for responses.
- Quizzes – Each week, students will have a quiz on the reading done *that week* in class. They will be 15 multiple-choice questions in length. Quizzes will open on Monday and must be completed by Thursday or Friday (depending on the week) at midnight each week. Students will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz once they begin the quiz. **Each quiz is worth 15 points each.** There will be 15 quizzes this semester, for up to 225 points. Please see the calendar for quiz dates.
- Short Essays – Weekly, students will have to pick a theme within that week's reading that interests them and do some "further research." This might be news articles, encyclopedia entries, blog posts, etc. Students will have to show mastery of the portion of the week's reading that they have chosen as well as documentation of all other info found. These essays should be reflective in nature, showing the instructor how you have approached the material and what you have learned. These essays will be turned in as an Exercise under "Content" on

Blackboard. A sample essay will be posted in the introduction week materials. **Short essays should be 400-500 words each and are worth 20 points each.** There will be 15 short essays this semester for up to 300 points. Please see the calendar for due-dates for each essay.

Students final grades will be a percentage of points earned out of points available: \_\_\_\_/825 points. Students in this course will be graded on the following scale: A: 100-90; B: 89-80; C: 79-70; D: 69-60; F: 59-0

**NOTICE:** There may be minor changes to the syllabus at the discretion of the instructor, and notification of these changes will be made to students in a timely manner.

### **Course Outline**

All assignments posts and discussion posts will be made available to students from the beginning of the course and are due by midnight of the date assigned. Students may complete them at any time before they are due. Quizzes will be made available Monday the week they are due; however, quizzes are timed from the moment of entry, so please set aside enough time to complete these before midnight on the date assigned.

#### **Week One (January 14-18) – Introduction to Online Courses**

- Monday: Syllabus and Online Materials, located on Blackboard. Complete Introduction Module.
- Tuesday: Discussion 1 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 1 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 1 (Why I am Studying Politics) due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 1 over Introduction Module due by midnight (can be done at any this week).

#### **Week Two (January 21-25) – The Democratic Republic**

- Monday: No Class – MLK Day
- Tuesday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 1; Discussion 2 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 2 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 2 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 2 over Chapter 1 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

#### **Week Three (January 28-February 1) – The Constitution**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 2
- Tuesday: Discussion 3 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 3 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 3 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 3 over Chapter 2 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

**Week Four (February 4-8) – Federalism**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 3
- Tuesday: Discussion 4 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 4 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 4 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 4 over Chapter 3 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

**Week Five (February 11-15) – Civil Liberties**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 4
- Tuesday: Discussion 5 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 5 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 5 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 5 over Chapter 4 (can be done at any time this week).

**Week Six (February 18-22) – Civil Rights**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 5
- Tuesday: Discussion 6 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 6 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 6 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 6 over Chapter 5 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

**Week Seven (February 25-March 1) – Public Opinion and Political Socialization; Interest Groups**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapters 6-7
- Tuesday: Discussion 7 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 7 due by midnight in Forums; Thursday: Response 7 due by midnight in Forums
- Thursday: Short Essay 7 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 7 over Chapters 6-7 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).
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**Week Eight (March 4-8) – Political Parties**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 8
- Tuesday: Discussion 8 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 8 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 8 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 8 over Chapter 8 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

**Week Nine (March 11-15) – Spring Break**

### **Week Ten (March 18-22) – Campaigns, Elections, and the Media**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 9
- Tuesday: Discussion 9 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 9 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 9 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 9 over Chapter 9 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

### **Week Eleven (March 25-29) – The Congress**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 10
- Tuesday: Discussion 10 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 10 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 10 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 10 over Chapter 10 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

### **Week Twelve (April 1-5) – The President**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 11
- Tuesday: Discussion 11 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 11 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 11 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 11 over Chapter 10 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

### **Week Thirteen (April 8-12) – The Bureaucracy**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 12
- Tuesday: Discussion 12 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 12 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 12 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 12 over Chapter 12 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

### **Week Fourteen (April 15-19) – The Courts**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 13
- Tuesday: Discussion 13 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 13 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 13 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 13 over Chapter 10 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

### **Week Fifteen (April 22-26) – Domestic and Economic Policy**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 14
- Tuesday: Discussion 14 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 14 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 14 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 14 over Chapter 14 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).

**Week Sixteen (April 29-May 3) – Foreign Policy**

- Monday: Bardes/Shelley/Schmidt, Chapter 15
- Tuesday: Discussion 15 due by midnight in Forums.
- Wednesday: Response 15 due by midnight in Forums.
- Thursday: Short Essay 15 due by midnight in Content.
- Friday: Quiz 15 over Chapter 15 due by midnight (can be done at any time this week).