Political Science 1101--American Government: Practices and Values

Professor David R. Jones
Section CTRA, TTh 11:10-12:25, B-3160
Fall 2013

Office: VC 5278; 646-312-4418
Office Hours: TTh 12:30-1:30pm
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Course Description
In this course we will analyze the ideas and values that shaped the drafting of the United States Constitution, the institutional framework it established, the ways in which the American public affects the functioning of these institutions, and how these institutions, in turn, affect the lives of the American public.

Learning Goals for this Course
The successful student will learn to:
1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
4. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of political science.
5. Analyze and explain changes in the scope of federal government from more than one perspective.
6. Evaluate how slavery played a role in the development of the United States government.
7. Identify and differentiate among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government and analyze their influence on the development of U.S. democracy.
8. Analyze and discuss public opinion and voting behavior in the United States, and how they are influenced by age, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other forms of social differentiation.

Course Requirements
1. Attendance is mandatory and you must be on time. Students who are consistently late or have excessive unexcused absences will be dropped from the course.
2. Arrive prepared. Complete the readings (listed below) before the class for which they are assigned.
3. Be respectful in class. Do not have any private conversations once class begins. Turn off all mobile phones and texting devices. No electronic devices (including laptops) are allowed to be on without my prior permission.
4. Check the course’s Blackboard site regularly for updated class notices, dates, readings, and grades.

Assignments and Grading Policies
Three short homework assignments—along with consideration of class participation—make up 10% of your grade. Homework assignments will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. All homework assignments must be typed. Late homeworks will not be accepted. The main portion of your grade consists of 3 in-class exams, each worth 30% of your grade. The exams are closed book and will cover both readings and lectures. If you miss an exam you will fail the course. Makeup exams will not be given, unless approved before the exam. No “extra credit” assignments will be available. If you have any disabilities that need to be accommodated, you must contact Disability Services: 646.312.4590.

Academic Honesty
Baruch College’s policy on Academic Honesty is rigorously enforced in this class. For details on what constitutes academic dishonesty—including cheating and plagiarism—see the school website: www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html. If questions remain, ask me. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse. My policy is to give a failing grade for the entire course if you plagiarize any assignment or cheat on any exam. In addition, I am required by Baruch College to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students office. This report becomes part of your permanent file, and you may be expelled from Baruch.

Required Text
This is the specific edition that your syllabus is based on. Earlier editions are likely to be very similar enough to be sufficient, but I cannot guarantee they will be the same. Copies of this text are available for sale at the campus bookstore and online. Used copies of this edition are fine. You can purchase the e-book version if you like. One copy will be on reserve at Newman Library. Additional readings will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.
You are not required to buy any study guide. Note that the text has a free online study guide and other resources at:
http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/we-the-people8/essentials/

Blackboard Contents
On our Blackboard site you will find many materials useful to you in this class. These include:
- A copy of the course syllabus
- Updates regarding the course schedule and relevant due dates (“Announcements”)
- Advice for note taking and studying for this class (“General Class Info.”)
- Recommended news sources for current events information (“General Class Info”)
- Additional recommended readings for each topic (“Specific Class Topics”)
- Study guides for upcoming exams (“Specific Class Topics”)
- Homeworks, after they are assigned (“Assignments”)  
- Grades posted after each assignment and exam

Questions
I welcome all of your questions related to the class and to American politics in general. Please feel free to raise your hand with a question during class, visit me in my office, email me during the week, or speak with me briefly before or after class.

Course Schedule (All dates are subject to change. All readings are in the textbook unless noted otherwise.)

**Part 1: Foundations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Government and American Ideals</td>
<td>ch. 1 &amp; Declaration of Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>Founding a New Government: Articles of Confederation</td>
<td>pp. 27-36 &amp; Articles of Confederation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>No classes (school closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>The Constitution: Compromises, Outline, and Ratification</td>
<td>pp. 36-45, 52-59 &amp; US Constitution (but not amendments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Representative Democracy; Separation of Powers</td>
<td>pp.45-52 &amp; Federalist 10 &amp; 51</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>ch. 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>pp. 91-114 &amp; Bill of Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Equal Rights</td>
<td>finish ch. 4 &amp; read 14th Amendment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Finish part 1 / Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>First Exam</td>
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**Part 2: Politics**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>ch. 5</td>
<td>Public opinion survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>The Mass Media</td>
<td>ch. 6</td>
<td>Political knowledge quiz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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10/10 Political Participation
   Readings: pp. 217-221

10/15 This class does not meet (all classes follow Monday schedule)

10/17 Political Parties in the Electorate
   Readings: pp. 197-216

10/22 Political Parties as Organizations
   Readings: pp. 200-201 (reread), 224

10/24 Elections – Presidential
   Readings: pp. 221 - end of ch. 7

10/29 Elections – Congressional
   Readings: pp. 275-281

10/31 Interest Groups
   Readings: ch. 8

11/5 Finish part 2 / Review

11/7 Second Exam

Part 3: Institutions and Governance
11/12 Congress – Organization
   Readings: pp. 269-272, 282-288

11/14 Congress – Procedures: Lawmaking & Representation
   Readings: finish ch. 9

11/19 Executive Branch—The Presidency
   Readings: ch. 10

11/21 Executive Branch—The Bureaucracy
   Readings: ch. 11

11/26 The Judicial Branch
   Readings: ch. 12

11/28 No classes (Thanksgiving break)

12/3 Economic Policy
   Readings: pp. 395-403

12/5 Social Welfare Policy
   Readings: finish ch. 13

12/10 Foreign Policy
   Readings: ch. 14

12/12 Finish part 3 / review

12/19 FINAL EXAM 10:30am-12:30pm (same room as class)