



AMERICAN POLITICS 2012

Political Science 1100, Introduction to American Politics, Spring 2012

Monday and Wednesday, 9:30 – 10:20 am, Clark 100

Discussion sections also required

WEB SITE: <http://www.umsl.edu/~poldrobe/011/sy011.html>

Professor: Dave Robertson

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 10:30-11:30,

Thursday, 9:00-12:00 noon, & other times can easily be arranged

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Sections A04 (11:00 - 11:50 am, 208 Clark) & A02 (W 12:30 - 1:20 am, 214 Clark)

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Sections A03 (W 11:00 - 11:50 am, 0B242 Benton Hall) & A07 (W 2:00 - 02:50 pm, SSB 201)

Barbara Hosto-Marti, bjhz35@mail.umsl.edu

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Sections A01 (W 11:00 - 11:50 am, SSB 201) & A05 (12:30 - 1:20 pm, Clark 315)

1. WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?

Americans expect a lot out of their government -- we expect it to protect us from terrorists and the effects of natural disasters, to keep the economy running smoothly, to ensure that people are treated fairly, and to make certain that we have quality education, a clean environment, and good roads, among many other things. We also expect government officials to listen to us and care about our complaints. Yet we disagree about *what* problems government should help solve, and *how* government should help solve them. This course provides a fair-minded and thoughtful description of the way this American government deals with our expectations, the reasons that it works the way it does, and the challenge of governing America in the twenty-first century. . We will examine our Constitution, our rights and our liberties; our participation in politics; elections, political parties, interest groups and the media; Congress, the presidency, and the courts; and the ways that government had addressed problems ranging from the financial crisis and unemployment to war and terrorism. This semester, we will use the 2012 presidential primaries, the 112th Congress, and the struggle over spending, taxes, and the deficit, to help explain all these topics.

Our Contract. By enrolling in this course, you and I have agreed to a contract with each other. We'll work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair and respectful of every student and their opinions. We'll be accessible and try our best to return graded materials after no more than a week. By enrolling in the class, you've agreed to (1) attend every class, (2) to participate by asking questions and joining in class discussions, and (3) reading the assigned material and completing written assignments on time. Of all the consumer purchases you make, don't let your University of Missouri education be the one expensive purchase where you expect less for your money.

2. WHAT TEXTS ARE REQUIRED?

- Cal Jillson, *American Government: Political Development and Institutional Change*, 6th edition (New York: Routledge, 2011). ISBN: 978-0-415-88157-9
- Bruce Stinebrickner, *Annual Editions: American Government 11/12*, 41st edition. (New York: McGraw- Hill, 2011). Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-078-05082-4

3. DO I NEED TO ATTEND CLASS and DISCUSSION SECTIONS?

Yes. Attendance is required in class and discussion sections. **MOST LECTURES DO NOT COVER THE READINGS.** The lectures substantially expand on and interpret the reading materials, and provide opportunities to discuss the lectures and books. The discussion sections give you the opportunity to review and discuss the week's material, to discuss the memo assignment, and to explore topics not covered in class. Each section will provide a review prior to each exam.

About half the material on the exams comes from the lectures. In my experience, if you do not attend class regularly, you will perform very poorly on exams. Outlines of the day's lecture are available before each class. The PowerPoint presentations will only be shown during lecture - they will not be made available.

4. WHAT ABOUT THE EXAMS?

There will be four exams (three **in class: February 8, March 5, April 4**; the final exam, **May 9**, will be given from **8:00 am to 9:45 am**). Each exam consists of three parts: 50 modified true/false questions worth 1 point each, 15 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each, and 1 short answer question worth 20 points. The first three tests and about 90% of the final are *not* cumulative. Ten to twelve percent of the points on the final are cumulative; they will consist of questions from the previous three exams. Please plan your activities on exam days so that you are in your seat at the moment class; late arrivals may be required to take a makeup exam. Please do not schedule end of semester travel prior to the final exam. Makeup exams; they will be given only for dire circumstances (vacations are *not* dire circumstances); makeup exams are 80% essay.

It will be essential to attend lectures and to read the material. Again, about half the material for each exam is drawn from lecture; about half is drawn from readings. Current events -- that is, keeping up with the news -- constitutes up to 5% of the points on each exam.

5. HOW ARE GRADES ASSIGNED?

There are 500 total points in the course. Each exam counts for 100 points, or 1/5 of the final grade. The policy decision memo, **due February 27**, counts for 75 points (5 points for the topic paragraph due **April 18**). The grade for participating in your discussion sections is 25 points. The Memo plus the discussion section grade counts for 100 points, or 1/5 of the final grade. You will not be allowed to drop any of your exam grades. Essay make-up exams will be scheduled only if you have a **very serious** problem attending a scheduled test. **This table will let you determine your grade in the course at any time.**

RANGE OF POINTS FOR ASSIGNING GRADES

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Points Needed for Each Exam & the Memo + section grade	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	59 or less
Points Needed for the Final Course Grade	463-500	450-464	433-449	413-432	400-412	383-399	363-382	350-362	333-349	313-332	300-312	299 or less

NOTE: Students are NOT competing with each other for grades. There is NO CURVE for the course overall. Each student can get an A; each can get a D or an F. It's up to you. On the first exam **only**, if the average for the class falls below 75, all the exams in the class will receive the additional points necessary to bring the class average to 75 (Example: Class average on exam 1 is 73; all those taking the exam receive 2 points).

☞ **All** your exams will count in the final grade. In one of two cases, I will drop the lowest grade on the first 3 exams. First, I will drop the lowest grade if one exam score from the first three exams is two full grades below all the rest (that is, 3 As and 1 C). Second, I will drop the worst exam of the first 3 exams if the exams show steady progress of two grades from the first exam to the third and fourth exams (for example, a pattern of D, C, B, A or C, B, A, A). The **final exam cannot be dropped.**

Note that a paragraph about your policy decision memo topic is due February 27. This paragraph is worth **5 points**. The **policy decision memo** is **due April 18**. Information about the memo is detailed further down in this syllabus. Late Papers lose one point per day (that is, each day that ends in the letter "y") - no exceptions.

6. WHEN IS THE READING DUE?

Your reading assignments are listed on the attached class schedule. Except for the first class, I expect you to have read the material before coming to class, and that you will be prepared to discuss it.

7. HOW DO I KEEP UP WITH CURRENT EVENTS?

UMSL students can get a free copy of three daily papers on campus: *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *St Louis Post-Dispatch*. Students in this course should read the national news section of one of these papers each day. The *New York Times* has most inclusive coverage; leaders of both major political parties, and of all ideologies, read the Times. In addition, daily analysis is available in newspapers online such as the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. The *St. Louis Beacon* is an online newspaper that features some of the best reporters in our region. We are very fortunate to have KWMU, the National Public Radio affiliate for St. Louis, located on the UM-St. Louis campus. The *Newshour* shown at 6 PM weeknights on Channel 9 provides in depth coverage and interviews with notable political leaders and analysts. C-SPAN provides live coverage of the U.S. House of Representatives, and C-SPAN II provides live coverage of the U.S. Senate; the C-Span website offers streaming videos of both, and also much other coverage of hearings, major speeches, press conferences, rallies, and historical sites. Two weekly publications provide incomparable coverage of American politics and policy from the inside: [Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report](#) and the [National Journal](#).

The on-line version of this syllabus has links to all these sources and many more. See the on-line syllabus for direct links to many government and politics sites.

8. WHAT ELSE SHOULD I REMEMBER?

I welcome and strongly urge you to ask questions about the material or American government in general. Please ask questions. Please turn off electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, games, metal detectors, etc.) during class. You may take notes on a laptop, and you are allowed to tape record the lecture. When I return your exam, please check to make sure that I have computed your grade correctly. Please be in your seat by the time class begins, and do not hold conversations during class. If you do not understand lecture, if you have further questions about lecture, please don't hesitate to interrupt and ask your question. If I begin to speak too quickly, please tell me to slow down.

Daily Assignments

January 18 (Wednesday): How do American Values Affect American Government?

READ: Jillson, pages 2-22

January 23 (Monday): What Were the Founders Thinking?

READ: Jillson, pages 26-55

Annual Editions, Numbers 4, 11, pages 18-19, 38-40

(Take a look at the U.S. Constitution, Annual Editions, Number 2)

January 25 (Wednesday): Federalism: What Government Should Tackle Public Problems?

READ: Jillson, pages 58-82

Annual Editions, Number 47, pages 183-188

January 30 (Monday): Civil Rights: When Should Government Protect Freedom and Fairness?

READ: Jillson, pages 428-456

Annual Editions, Numbers 10, 15, pages 36-37, 50-51

February 1 (Wednesday): Civil Liberties and Tolerance: Who Should Government Protect?

READ: Jillson, pages 399-425

Annual Editions, Numbers 13-14, pages 43-49

February 6 (Monday): Public Opinion: How do Americans View Government and Politics?

READ: Jillson, pages 86-112

Annual Editions, Number 6, pages 25-27

☞ **February 8 (Wednesday): --- EXAM 1 ---**

February 13 (Monday): How do Americans Participate in Politics and Government?

READ: Annual Editions, Numbers 7-8, 41, pages 28-32, 153-156

February 15 (Wednesday): How do Americans Vote and Why?

READ: Jillson, 215-232

Annual Editions, Number 35, pages 131-132

February 20 (Monday): Why do Political Parties Matter?

READ: Jillson, pages 180-212

Annual Editions, Numbers 32-34, pages 119-130

February 22 (Wednesday): Presidential Elections 2008 & 2012

READ: Jillson, 233-250

Annual Editions, Numbers 36-37, pages 133-145

February 27 (Monday): How Do Interest Groups Affect American Politics?

- **POLICY DECISION MEMO TOPIC PARAGRAPH DUE**
(2-4 sentences + 4 references on the policy issue of your choice)

READ: Jillson, pages 147-176

Annual Editions, Numbers 38-40, pages 146-152

February 29 (Wednesday): How does the Media Affect American Politics?

- READ: Jillson, pages 115-144
Annual Editions, Numbers 42-45, pages 157-173

☞ **March 5 (Monday): --- EXAM 2 ---**

March 7 (Wednesday): What do Members of Congress Do, and Why?

- READ: Jillson, pages 254-265
Annual Editions, Numbers 24-25, pages 85-93

March 12 (Monday): How Does Congress Work

- READ: Jillson, pages 265-288
Annual Editions, Numbers 23, 26, pages 80-83, 94-96

March 14 (Wednesday): What is it Like to be President?

- READ: Jillson, pages 291-303
Annual Editions, Numbers 16, 21-22, pages 55-57, 76-79

March 19 (Monday): How does the Presidency Work?

- READ: Jillson, pages 313-327
Annual Editions, Numbers 17-20, pages 58-75
-

March 21 (Wednesday): How Powerful is Bureaucracy, and How does it Work?

- READ: Jillson, pages 330-361
Annual Editions, Numbers 29-31, pages 104-115

March 26 and March 28: Spring Break - Class does not meet

April 2 (Monday): What does Watergate tell us about the Way American Politics Works?

☞ **April 4 (Wednesday): --- EXAM 3 ---**

April 9 (Monday): Why are American Courts So Powerful?

- READ: Jillson, pages 364-396
Annual Editions, Numbers 12, 27-28, pages 41-42, 97-103

April 11 (Wednesday): How does the Government Try to Manage American Prosperity?

- READ: Jillson, 459-478, 484-493

April 16 (Monday): The Financial Crisis, the Recession, and the Budget Crisis

- READ: Annual Editions, Numbers 5, 48-49, pages 20-24, 189-194

April 18 (Wednesday): Social Welfare: How Does the Government Protect Economic Security?

- **POLICY DECISION MEMO DUE**
- READ: Jillson, pages 478-484
Annual Editions, Numbers 50, 52, pages 195-200, 204-207

April 23 (Monday): Foreign Policy: How does the Government Deal with Other Countries

- READ: Jillson, pages 496-527

April 25 (Wednesday): Foreign Policy and Globalization

- READ: Annual Editions, Numbers 9, 46, 51, 53, pages 33-35, 177-184, 201-203, 208-211

April 30 (Monday): Vietnam / Iraq / Afghanistan

- READ: Annual Editions, Numbers 54-55 pages 212-219

May 2 (Wednesday): Conclusion

☞ **May 9 (Wednesday): --- FINAL EXAM --- / 8:00 am - 9:45 am**

Exam Format and Sample Questions

The exam consists of three sections: 50 modified true/false statements, 15 multiple choice questions, and 1 short answer question.

Section 1: This section consists of 50 true/false questions. Mark the answer to each question on your machine readable answer sheet. For each question, there are only two possible answers. If the answer is true, darken in the space under A on the answer sheet. If the answer is false, darken in the B on the answer sheet. The remaining letters (C,D,E) are irrelevant for this section of the test. Try to spend no more than 20 minutes on this section. Each correct answer is worth 1 point.

Before the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the United States was experiencing a number of serious problems. Which of the following are true?

1. The states were interfering with each others' trade, and some were taxing imports from other states.
2. Under the Articles of Confederation, there was no U.S. Supreme Court.
3. Under the Articles of Confederation, the U.S. had a king with the power of a dictator.

(On the machine-readable answer sheet, you would answer "A" (true) for statement 1, "A" (true) for statement 2, and "B" (false) for statement 3).

Section 2: This section consists of 15 multiple choice questions. For each answer, there is only one correct answer. Select the letter, A, B, C, or D, that best answers the question and mark that answer on your machine readable answer sheet. Try to spend no more than 10 minutes on this section. Each correct answer is worth 2 points.

51. Political _____ refers to our willingness to apply constitutional rights to all members of society.
- a. Faith and credit.
 - b. Gerrymandering.
 - c. Tolerance.
 - d. Participation.

(On the machine-readable answer sheet, you would fill in "C" as the answer for number 51).

Section 3. This section consists of a short answer in response to one of the following questions. The best answers will be clear, concise, and they will use specific examples. Only one question will appear on the exam. This section is worth a maximum of 20 points.

In Federalist 51 (*Annual Editions # 4*) Madison claims that “ambition must be made to counteract ambition.” What does he mean by this, and why does he say it?

(On the exam itself, you would write a few specific sentences answering this question).

The Policy Memo Assignment

☞ (Topic paragraph due **February 27**; Memo due **April 18** ;late memos lose 1 point a day, for each day that ends with the letter "y")

You work for a company that gives advice to political candidates of both parties. Your firm has a contract with the strictly nonpartisan Congressional Research Service to provide a number of five-page memos to help members of Congress from both parties make decisions about critical policy issues. Your firm wants you to choose one specific policy decision that is critical for the United States in the next several years. The legislators need to know (1) why the issue is so important, (2) how the issue has developed over time, (3) what the alternative choices are, (4) who supports and opposes each alternative, and (5) what are the benefits and costs of each alternative. NOTE: You must write memos that are completely fair and speak objectively about all sides of the issue.

First, choose a question about a **national** public policy decision. Turn in a 2-4 sentence paragraph about the issue, why it is critically important, and describe the chief alternatives. Include 4 specific references. Turn this paragraph in on **February 27**. We have to approve your topic. We will return your topic statement to you with comments. **The topic paragraph is worth 5 points.**

I urge you to consult the "CQ Researcher" on the UMSL library site under "Electronic Databases." Students who have gotten excellent grades on memos like this have used the CQ Researcher to choose a topic and to do basic research on it. See also Public Agenda at <http://www.publicagenda.org/> or The Almanac of Policy Issues at <http://www.policyalmanac.org/>]

Then, write a five-page policy decision memo. The memo should explain:

- **Why is this a critically important policy decision for the United States government?**
How many people does this affect? Who are they? Why should the government be involved in this? Be specific.
- **How has the issue developed over time?** What has happened in the past and the present to make it so important to make a choice about this issue now? How did we get where we are?
- **What are the chief alternatives we can choose?**
- **Who supports and opposes these alternatives?** Do the political parties take clear stands on this choice? What interest groups support and oppose these alternatives? How does the public feel about this choice?. Be sure to use public opinion polls if possible.
- **Recommended choice:** In the final paragraph, you can indicate how this choice should be made and explain your reasoning. Be clear, logical and precise.

*Some of the **topics** you might choose include, but are not limited to: **[Original topics not on this list are very strongly encouraged; consult with your TA]***

- Should the U.S. Congress pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution?
- Should the Social Security retirement age be raised?
- Should tax breaks for the oil industry be eliminated?
- Should the U.S. provide more subsidies for wind-powered energy?
- Should medical marijuana be legalized?
- Should the U.S. government invest in a manned space mission to Mars?
- Should the U.S. set a limit on carbon emissions to reduce global warming?
- Should the U.S. government pass another large stimulus package for the economy?
- Should the U.S. government make President Bush's tax cuts permanent?
- Should the U.S. build a much stronger fence along the border with Mexico?

- How can the U.S. protect against identity theft?
- Should the national government set high penalties for racial profiling?
- Should the U.S. government limit tuition increases at colleges and universities?
- Should the No Child Left Behind Act be repealed?
- Should the U.S. withdraw ground troops from Afghanistan?
- Should there be a Constitutional amendment banning abortion?
- Should the U.S. allow oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?
- Should offshore oil drilling near U.S. coasts be banned?
- Should the U.S. ban stem cell research?
- Should the U.S. dramatically increase funding to combat AIDs in Africa?
- Should there be a Constitutional amendment banning the death penalty?

ALL PAPERS SHOULD USE NO LESS THAN 6 REFERENCES. Do not use Wikipedia or other online encyclopedia.

Sources must be indicated in the body of the paper -- for example, (Jillson, 2011: 56) -- and then fully listed in a bibliography at the end.

Here is the appropriate citation style for these bibliographies:

In the text of the memo, if you want to cite a book or article, cite it in parentheses, with author, date, and page number (Jillson, 2011: 123). Then add a bibliography at the end.

The bibliography should list each book, alphabetical by author, with the authors, date of publication, title, place of publication, and publisher listed. Here are examples of a book, an article and a website. You should arrange the items in the bibliography in alphabetical order.

References:

Glazer, Sarah. 2006. "Video games." *CQ Researcher*, November 10, 937-960. Retrieved March 1, 2007, from CQ Researcher Online, <http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre2006111001..>

Jillson, Cal. 2011. *American Government: Political Development and Institutional Change*, 6th edition. New York: Routledge .

Taylor, Stuart. 2005. "Coercive Interrogation: Can Anyone Straighten Out This Mess?" *National Journal Buzz Column* (December 16, 2005), <<http://nationaljournal.com/taylor.htm>>, accessed January 2, 2006.

Due date: April 18

Penalty for late memos – 1 point per day (weekends included), no exceptions

The Memo Assignment is worth 75 points of the 500 total points for the course.

(The memo topic paragraph is worth 5 points of the 75)

Rewrites: Must be turned in by the time of the final exam.

Here are the Criteria for grading the memos:

Thought & Effort (20%)

It is obvious that you put time, effort, and thought into this assignment?

Utility (20%)

- *It this memo useful to the candidate?*
- *Is your tone fair-minded, serious, and logical? Have you been fair to both sides?*
- *Is your information up-to-date?*

Content (40%)

- *Did you answer all the questions clearly and specifically?*
- *Do you use clear evidence to support your assertions?*
- *Do you have a clear train of thought?*

Structure & Style (20%)

- *Did you cite your evidence? Is your bibliography appropriate?*
- *Do you have an introductory paragraph that states what your paper is about and does, and a conclusion?*
(The introduction is the last part of the paper you should write)
- *Did you use appropriate grammar and correct spelling and punctuation?*

Criteria not used for grading:

The political content of the last paragraph of the memos - these can be liberal, conservative, independent, partisan, non-partisan, or your own unique perspective. The political views expressed in the paper have no effect on the grade.

☞ Plagiarism

PLAGIARISM means taking the written ideas of someone else and presenting them in your writing as if they were your ideas, without giving the author credit. Plagiarism (a word which comes from the Latin word for kidnapping) is deceitful and dishonest. Violations that have occurred frequently in the past include not using quotation marks for direct quotes and not giving citations when using someone else's ideas; using long strings of quotations, even when properly attributed, does not constitute a paper of your own. Plagiarism in written work for this class is unacceptable. The University's Student Conduct Code classifies plagiarism as a form of academic dishonesty. Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, punishment can include receiving no credit for the assignment, failing the course and referral for university disciplinary action.