AMERICAN POLITICS 2015
Political Science 1100, Introduction to American Politics, Spring 2015
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
email: daverobertson@umsl.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 10:30-11:30, Thursday, 9:00-12:00 noon, & other times can easily be arranged
Phone, 314-516-5855
Office, 801 Tower

Teaching Assistants
• Joseph Anthony, office: 809 Tower / ph: 314-516-5283 / email: kar39@mail.umsl.edu
• Tyler Chance, 910 Tower / ph: 314-516-5539 / email: trc6df@mail.umsl.edu
• Eric Vorst, office: 902 Tower / ph: 314-516-5849 / email: ericvorst@mail.umsl.edu

1. WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?
Americans expect a lot out of their governments. They expect these governments to keep the economy running smoothly, to protect the nation from foreign threats, to help them recover from natural disasters, to ensure that people are treated fairly, and to make certain that we have quality healthcare and education, a clean environment, and good roads, among other things. They also expect government officials to listen to them and care about their problems. Yet we disagree about what problems government should help solve, and how government should help solve these problems.

This course aims to provide a fair-minded and thoughtful understanding of why American government works the way it does, and the challenge of governing the United States in the twenty-first century. We will closely track the new 114th Congress, the seventh year of President Obama’s term, key decisions of the courts, and the actions of Missouri and other states. We will examine the United States Constitution; rights and liberties; participation in politics; political parties, elections, interest groups and the media; Congress, the presidency, and the courts; and the ways that American government has addressed problems like slow economy, immigration, social welfare and globalization.
Our Contract. By enrolling in this course, you and I have made a contract with each other. I'll work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair and respectful of every student and their opinions. I'll be accessible and try my 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. You are paying for and receiving a University of Missouri class. 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?

3. DO I NEED TO ATTEND CLASS & 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 for each class are available through this syllabus on the evening before class. Just scroll down to "Daily Assignments" and then click on the title of the class for the day. For example, for the first class on January 26, you would scroll down to:

January 26 (Monday): *What Were the Founders Thinking?*
and click on "What Were the Founders Thinking?"
The Powerpoint presentations will **only** be shown during lecture - they will **not** be made available online.

4. WHAT ABOUT THE EXAMS?
There will be four exams (three in class: February 11, March 9, and April 8; the final exam, May 13, 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 will be given only for dire circumstances (vacations are not dire circumstances); makeup exams consist of 10 multiple choice questions and 4 short answer questions.

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 about 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 April 22, counts for 75 points (5 points for the topic paragraph due March 2). I urge you to use CQ Researcher for help in developing your memo ideas. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D-</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Points Needed for Each Exam &amp; the Memo + section grade</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
<td>299 or less</td>
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| 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 | F |

**NOTE:** You are NOT competing with other students for grades. There is NO CURVE for the course overall. Each student can get an A; each student 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 three exams. First, I will drop the lowest grade if one exam score 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). **NOTE:** The final exam grade cannot be dropped.

A paragraph about your policy decision memo topic is due March 2. This paragraph is worth 5 points. The policy decision memo is due April 22. 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.

We will grade the memos and return them to you at the last section meeting. You can revise the memo and resubmit it for a grade adjustment on the day of the final exam.
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 such as the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, and the Wall Street Journal. A wealth of newspapers and news sources can be found at Newslink. You can look at the front pages of hundreds of newspapers from around the world daily at the Newseum. The St. Louis Beacon is an on-line newspaper that features some of the best reporters in our region. We are very fortunate to have St. Louis Public Radio, the National Public Radio affiliate for St. Louis, located on the UM-St. Louis campus; here's the link to St. Louis Public Radio. 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 site 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 National Political Index has links to many other political sources. There are many sources available for keeping up with day to day politics. Taegan Goddard’s Political Wire, CNN/Time's AllPolitics, Real Clear Politics are very good sites.

For Missouri politics, see johncombest.com, the St. Louis Public Radio Page, the Post-Dispatch's Political Fix, The Kansas City Star Politics Page, Missourinet, and Stateline.

The on-line version of this syllabus (http://www.umsl.edu/~poldrobe/011/sy011.html) 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 21 (Wednesday): Introduction to American Government

READ: Jillson, pages 1-23

January 26 (Monday): What Were the Founders Thinking?

READ: Jillson, pages 25-56
Annual Editions, Number 1.4, pages 35-37
(Take a look at the U.S. Constitution, Annual Editions, Number 2)

January 28 (Wednesday): Federalism: What Government Should Tackle Public Problems?

READ: Jillson, pages 59-86
Annual Editions, Numbers 1.11, pages 55-57

February 2 (Monday): Civil Rights: When Should Government Protect Freedom and Fairness?

READ: Jillson, pages 434-464
Annual Editions, Number 1.13, 1.16, pages 62-64, 71-73

February 4 (Wednesday): Civil Liberties and Tolerance: Who Should Government Protect?

READ: Jillson, pages 404-432
Annual Editions, Number 1.7, 1.14, pages 45-48, 65-67


READ: Jillson, pages 89-116
Annual Editions, Number 2.15, pages 138-140

February 11 (Wednesday): — EXAM 1 —
February 16 (Monday): How do Americans Participate in Politics and Government?
  o **Last day to drop a course** or withdraw from school without receiving a grade or to place a course on Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis
  o **READ:** *Annual Editions*, Number 1.12, 3.8, 3.12, pages 58-61, 192-196, 214-216

February 18 (Wednesday): How do Americans Vote and Why?
  o **READ:** Jillson, 225-244
    *Annual Editions*, Numbers 3.6, pages 156-159, 180-182

February 23 (Monday): Political Parties: Why are Americans so Divided Today?
  o **READ:** Jillson, pages 188-222
    *Annual Editions*, Numbers 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, pages 160-172, 175-179

February 25 (Wednesday): Why did the 2012 Presidential Election turn out the way it did?
  o **READ:** Jillson, 244-262
    *Annual Editions*, Numbers 3.7, pages 183-191

March 2 (Monday): How Do Interest Groups Affect American Politics?
  o **POLICY DECISION MEMO TOPIC PARAGRAPH DUE**
    (2-4 sentences + references to 4 books or articles on the policy issue of your choice)
  o **READ:** Jillson, pages 154-185
    *Annual Editions*, Numbers 3.10-3.11, pages 206-213

March 4 (Wednesday): How does the Media Affect American Politics?
  o **READ:** Jillson, pages 119-151
    *Annual Editions*, Numbers 3.13-3.15, pages 217-228

March 9 (Monday): — **EXAM 2** —
March 11 (Wednesday):  What do Members of Congress Do, and Why?
   o  READ: Jillson, pages 264-276
      Annual Editions, Numbers 2.10-2.11, pages 122-127

March 16 (Monday): Why is Congress so Gridlocked and Divided?
   o  READ: Jillson, pages 276-297
      Annual Editions, Numbers 2.8-2.9, pages 113-121

March 18 (Wednesday): What is it Like to be President?
   o  READ: Jillson, pages 300-312
      Annual Editions, Numbers 2.3, 2.5 pages 84-96, 102-104

March 23 & 25: Spring Break - Class does not meet

March 30 (Monday): How does the Presidency Work?
   o  READ: Jillson, pages 313-337
      Annual Editions, Numbers 1.15, 2.1, pages 68-70, 76-80

April  1 (Wednesday): How Powerful is Bureaucracy, and How does it Work?
   o  READ: Jillson, pages 339-366
      Annual Editions, Numbers 2.17-2.19, pages 144-151

April  6 (Monday): What does Watergate tell us about the Way American Politics Works?
   o  Links to the Watergate Scandal / Washington Post's Watergate Retrospective

April  8 (Wednesday): — EXAM 3 —
April 13 (Monday):  Why are American Courts So Powerful?
  o  READ: Jillson, pages 369-396
     Annual Editions, Number 2.12, pages 128-130

April 15 (Wednesday):  Courts and Policy-Making
  o  READ: Jillson, 396-402
     Annual Editions, Numbers 2.13-2.14, 2.16 pages 131-137, 141-143

April 20 (Monday):  Markets, Government, and American Prosperity
  o  **Last day a student may drop a course.** Instructor’s approval is required. A grade of EX or F will be assigned.
     READ: Jillson, 466-476
     Annual Editions, Numbers 1.5, 4.1-4.2, pages 38-42, 232-239

April 22 (Wednesday):  Why does the US Manage American Prosperity the Way It Does?
  o  **POLICY DECISION MEMO DUE**
     READ: Jillson, 476-487, 494-502
     Annual Editions, Numbers 1.9, 2.4, pages 51-52, 97-101

April 27 (Monday):  Why Does the Government Protect Our Economic Security the Way it Does?
  o  READ: Jillson, pages 487-494
     Annual Editions, Numbers 3.4, 4.4, pages 173-174, 246-249

April 29 (Wednesday):  Foreign Policy and Globalization I
  o  READ: Jillson, pages 505-518
     Annual Editions, Numbers 2.2, 2.7, 4.6-4.7, pages 81-83, 108-112, 252-263

May 4 (Monday):  Foreign Policy and Globalization II
  o  READ:  Jillson, pages 519-538
     Annual Editions, Numbers 1.6, 1.10, 4.3, pages 43-44, 53-54, 240-245

May 6 (Wednesday):  Conclusion
  o  READ:  Annual Editions, Number 4.8, pages 264-266

May 13 (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. According to Jillson, which of these was a participant in the U.S. Constitutional Convention and an author of the Federalist?
   a. John Stuart Mill.
   b. Thomas Paine.
   c. John Locke.
   d. James Madison.

*On the machine-readable answer sheet, you would fill in 'd' 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.

1. In class, we discussed the three questions about civil rights that the Constitution did not answer. Describe each of these questions, and explain how each was answered in the decades after the Constitution was ratified. Be sure to explain Jim Crow, *Plessey v. Ferguson*, and *Brown v. Board of Education* in your answer.

*You would write the answer in the space provided on the exam.*
The Policy Memo Assignment

(Topic paragraph due March 2; Memo due April 22; 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 March 2. 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.” Many 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? 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? What government policies affect this problem? How did we get where we are?
- What are the chief policy alternatives we can choose?
- Who supports and opposes these policy 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 policy 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: [Other, Original topics not on this list are very strongly encouraged; consult with your TA]

- Should the US stop providing military equipment to state and local police departments?
- Should the US limit the National Security Agency’s surveillance efforts to gather electronic information?
- Should the US require drug testing for all welfare recipients?
- Should the US guarantee “net neutrality”?
- Should the US government ban “fracking”?
- Should the US raise gasoline taxes to provide more funds for highways?
- Should the U.S. government impose a tax on carbon emissions to reduce climate change?
- Should the U.S. force the largest banks to break up into smaller banks?
- Should the U.S. provide a major new program for early childhood education?
- Should the US Constitution be amended to require a balanced federal budget?
- Should the U.S. government legalize gay marriage nationally?
- Should the U.S. government ban genetically modified food?
- Should the Electoral College be eliminated?
- Should citizens be allowed to decide how to invest their Social Security funds?
- Should the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (‘Obamacare’) be repealed?
- Should there be a national identity card?
- Should the Social Security retirement age be raised?
- Should a national law tightly regulate access to handguns?
- Should tax breaks for the oil industry be eliminated?
- Should the U.S. provide more subsidies for solar energy?
- Should marijuana be legalized nationally?
- 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. use military force against Iran to stop its nuclear program?
- 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. 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.

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, 2013: 56) – and then fully listed in a bibliography at the end.

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, 2013: 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.

Here is the appropriate citation style for these bibliographies at the end of the paper:

References:


Due date: April 22, 2015
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 7.5)
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?

**Usefulness (20%)**
- Is 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. Here is the student conduct code explanation of plagiarism:

1. The term plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: (i) use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with footnotes, citations or bibliographical reference; (ii) unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials; or (iii) unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.

Plagiarism in written work for this class is unacceptable. The University classifies plagiarism as a form of academic dishonesty. Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, punishment can include receiving no credit for the assignment. NOTE: the University requires the instructor to report all cases of plagiarism for university disciplinary action.