This course is designed to introduce you to the structure and operation of the American system of government, which includes not only the institutions of government that we are familiar with such as Congress and the Presidency, but also the roles that average citizens hold. As such, we will spend time considering not only how government addresses voter concerns, but also how individuals approach the political sphere.

**OBJECTIVES**

Whether you’re taking the class because you are a Political Science major or because Advanced Bowling was full when you registered, this class should be a fun and informative way to think a little more critically about the political world around us. How well do citizens fulfill their roles in a democracy? How do government institutions translate public preferences into policy outcomes? And how well do our government institutions do in producing the outcomes we would like to see? The course should also give you a taste of what political “scientists” actually do.

**GATEWAY IS YOUR FRIEND**

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class on MyGateway (http://mygateway.usml.edu).

**READING MATERIAL**

Class readings will be drawn from three sources:

1. **The introductory American government text:**
   

2. **Assorted academic Political Science articles:**
   
   Some of these readings are assigned material, while other readings are supplemental pieces. All of these readings will be available on MyGateway.

3. **Newspaper articles:**
   
   You will read 3 or 4 newspaper articles a week whose links will be posted on MyGateway.
**REQUIREMENTS**

It is important to keep up with class readings and you should generally aim to complete the weekly readings after the first class meeting in any given week. In addition to the readings, you will also be responsible for the following:

1. **Two midterm exams**: (each midterm is worth 25% of your final grade)

2. **Final exam**: (worth 25% of your final grade)

3. **Quizzes**: (worth 25% of your final grade)
   Quizzes will come from assigned academic and newspaper articles

All exams are non-comprehensive and only cover the book chapters from each section.

**ATTENDANCE**

While you are not required to attend, you also are not required to do well. Attendance and participation can only help your grade. Students that perform well in this endeavor can receive a 1/3 letter grade “bump” of their final grade.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Week of 8/18: Course Startup

Week of 8/25: American Political Culture and Tradition
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 1

Week of 9/1: Establishing a Constitutional Democracy
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 2 & Constitution
   **NO CLASS – Monday 9/1 – Labor Day**
   ***Quiz on Newspaper Articles: Wednesday 9/3***

Week of 9/8: Federalism
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 3

Week of 9/15: Civil Liberties & Equal Rights
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 4 & 5
   ***Quiz on Newspaper Articles: Wednesday 9/17***

Week of 9/22: Public Opinion
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 6
   ***Midterm 1 (Ch. 1-5): Wednesday 9/24***
   ***Monday 9/22 Partial Review Day***

Week of 9/29: Political Participation
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 7

Week of 10/6: Political Parties, Elections & Voting
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 8
   Assigned Articles
Week of 10/13: Interest Groups & News Media
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 9 & 10
   Assigned Articles
   ***Quiz on Assigned Articles & Newspaper Articles: Wednesday 10/15***

Week of 10/20: Congress
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 11
   Assigned Articles

Week of 10/27: Presidency
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 12
   Assigned Articles
   ***Midterm 2 (Ch. 6-11): Wednesday 10/29***
   ***Monday 10/27 Partial Review Day***

Week of 11/3: Supreme Court & Bureaucracy
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 13 & 14

Week of 11/10: Economic and Environmental Policy
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 15

Week of 11/17: Welfare & Education Policy
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 16
   ***Quiz on Newspaper Articles: Monday 11/19***

Week of 11/24: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week of 12/1: Foreign & Defense Policy
   Readings: Patterson Ch. 17

Final: Monday 12/8, 5:30-7:30pm