

University of Maryland  
Introduction to American Government  
GVPT 170; Section YS41  
Summer Session II-C  
Meets daily from 10:00am – 1:00pm in Tydings 1101

Instructor: Brittany Bramlett  
[bbramlett@gvpt.umd.edu](mailto:bbramlett@gvpt.umd.edu)

### Description of the Course:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the foundations and organization of American Government. First, we will cover the beginnings of American government through examining the Constitution and the challenges faced by the Founders. For the second part of the course, we will learn about the formal institutions in American government and the interaction between these branches. Third, we will broaden our definition of government institutions and consider the role of less formal institutions, and finally, we will look at how the electorate responds to and fits into the American system of government.

### Required Readings:

*American Government: Roots and Reform* (2009 or 10th edition), Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-65219-8

Other readings and course documents will be made available online via Blackboard.

### Course Outline and Reading Assignments

#### **Week 1: Foundations of Government**

Monday, July 12<sup>th</sup>

*Course Introduction and Roots of American Government* (see pgs. 2-16 in text)

Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>

*The Constitution*

- Assigned reading: Chapter 2 from textbook (pgs. 30-62; review 64-93 Annotated Constitution)
- Presentation reading: *Federalist No. 51* (in your text book appendix)

Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>

*Federalism & State and Local Government*

- Assigned reading: Chapters 3 & 4 from textbook (pgs. 94-104; 122-138)
- Presentation reading: Chapter 3 “The Small Republic” from Herbert J. Storing’s *What the Anti-Federalists Were For* (provided by Prof. Bramlett)

Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup>

*Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*

- Assigned reading: Chapters 5 & 6 from textbook (pgs. 152-169; 180-186; 192-203)
- Presentation reading: Henry David Thoreau's "On Resistance to Civil Government" (available online)

Friday, July 16<sup>th</sup>

- **Exam 1**
- Assigned reading: selections from William Zinsser's *On Writing Well* (Provided by Prof. Bramlett)
- Paper writing workshop

## **Week 2: Institutions of American Government**

Monday, July 19<sup>th</sup>

*Congress*

- **Short paper 1 due**
- Assigned reading: Chapter 7 from textbook (pgs. 234-270)
- Presentation reading: Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation" *American Political Science Review* 97 (November): 515-528 (Available ELMS)

Tuesday, July 20<sup>th</sup>

*The Presidency*

- Assigned reading: Chapter 8 from textbook (pgs. 272-303)
- Presentation reading: Rudalevige, Andrew. 2006. "The Contemporary Presidency: The Decline and Resurgence and Decline (and Resurgence?) of Congress: Charting a New Imperial Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 36:506-524. (Available on ELMS)

Wednesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>

*The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy*

- Assigned reading: chapter 9 from textbook (pgs. 306-332)
- Presentation reading: McCubbins, Mathew D. and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science*, 28 (February): 165-179. (Available on ELMS)

Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>

*The Judiciary*

- Assigned reading: chapter 10 from textbook (pgs. 334-361; 367-373)
- Presentation reading: Casper, Jonathan D. 1976. "The Supreme Court and National Policy Making" *American Political Science Review*, 70 (March): 50-63. (Available on ELMS)

Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **Exam 2**
- Assigned reading: Review APA style/citation guide (available online)
- Paper writing workshop

### **Week 3: Political Behavior**

Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, July 27<sup>th</sup>

*Political Parties, Interest Groups, & Media*

- Assigned reading: chapters 12, 16, & 15 (pgs. 406-407; 413-418; 429-434; 551-563; 566-571; 579-586)
- Presentation reading(s):
  - American Political Science Association, Committee on Political Parties. 1950. "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties: Summary of Conclusions and Proposals" *American Political Science Review*, 44 (September): 1-14. (Available on ELMS)
  - Hall, Richard L. and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006 "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review*, 100 (February: 1): 69-84.

Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>

*Voting and Elections & The Campaign Process*

- **Short paper 2 due**
- Assigned reading: chapters 13 & 14 (pgs. 448-460; 465-476; 478-483; 495-498)
- Presentation reading: Lijphart, Arend. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma." Presidential Address, American Political Science Association, 1996. *American Political Science Review*, 91:1-14. (Available on ELMS)

Thursday, July 29<sup>th</sup>

*Political Socialization and Public Opinion*

- Assigned reading: chapter 11 (pgs. 376-401)
- Presentation reading: Paul Allen Beck and M. Kent Jennings. 1991. "Family Traditions, Political Periods and the Development of Partisan Orientations." *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (August 1991) pp. 742-763. (Available on ELMS)

Friday, July 30<sup>th</sup>

- **Exam 3**
- **Class presentations**

## Course Requirements

Your course grade will be calculated based on how you do on the following assignments. You will have daily reading **quizzes**, which will cover material directly from the readings. During the course, you will take three **exams**, which will cover material in the readings and covered during class. Individual students or students in pairs will take on the **reading presentations**. The student(s) will read the assigned presentation reading prior to the class period and prepare a brief (5-10 minute) synopsis of the reading for the rest of the class. You will receive a **participation** grade, which means that you are graded on your class attendance, engagement with the lecture and readings, and discussion of the material with the rest of the class. You will have **one short paper** due at the beginning of the second week and a **second short paper** during the middle of the last week of class. The second paper will build off the first, and your **presentation** will provide you with the opportunity to share your ideas from the second paper.

Additional details regarding paper format and assignment requirements will be discussed and provided in class. Below is the breakdown of the assignments and how they count toward your final grade.

Daily reading quizzes	10%
Exam 1	10
Exam 2	10
Exam 3	10
Reading presentation(s)	10
Participation	15
Short paper 1	10
Short paper 2	20
Presentation	5

### Missed Assignments and Paper Deadlines

Paper assignments should be turned in at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Papers turned in after the beginning of class will receive a penalty of 1/3 of a grade (for example, an A paper would become an A- paper). If the paper is turned in after the due date, then the grade will decrease by a full letter grade for every additional day. No exceptions will be made for problems with computers or printers. Plan accordingly. Extensions will only be granted for medical or family emergencies, which can be verified.

### Academic Integrity

As a student in this course and at the University of Maryland, you are expected to join an academic community where honesty is taken very seriously for scholarly work. Dishonest work involves taking one's words as your own (plagiarism), cheating, and/or assisting another student in dishonest work. Dishonest work will cause you to fail the course and will be reported, which may result in suspension or dismissal. You can find the Honor Pledge and additional information about it here:

[http://studentconduct.umd.edu/info/students/a\\_honorpledge.aspx](http://studentconduct.umd.edu/info/students/a_honorpledge.aspx)

### Blackboard

You will need to access the course Blackboard page in order to obtain important course information and documents. To login to your Blackboard account, you should go to the main ELMS page: <http://elms.umd.edu>.

### Students with Disabilities

If you are registered with Disability Support Services (DDS), please let me know on the first day of class. You will need to provide the UMD DSS accommodation form to me no later than the second day of class. I will do my best to work with you and adapt assignments as necessary.

### Classroom Etiquette

You will need to silence and put away all phones and electronic devices prior the start of class. We are together for three hours, and I ask that you respect that time and leave the texting and email checking for after class. You may bring a laptop to take notes during lectures, but I ask that you put them away when we turn to other activities.

In addition, I ask that you treat each other and myself in a respectful manner.

Disagreeing with another student during discussions is fine, but you should always respond with civility.