

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN A GLOBAL ERA

### COURSE TEAM

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**Instructors** office hours: M,T: 5-6pm; also by appointment  
 Bryan Gervais ([bgervais@gvpt.umd.edu](mailto:bgervais@gvpt.umd.edu)) sections **0101, 0103, 0105**  
 Christina Heshmatpour ([cheshmatpour@gmail.com](mailto:cheshmatpour@gmail.com)) sections **0106, 0107, 0108**  
 Matthew Spino ([matthewspino@gmail.com](mailto:matthewspino@gmail.com)) sections **0102, 0104, 0109**

### COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to our American Government and Politics Learning Community! GVPT 170 is a team-taught course that meets twice in a large lecture setting on Mondays and Wednesdays (1-1:50pm) and the third meeting is a 50-minute discussion session on Thursday or Friday. Please consult your schedule for your discussion section that designates time and classroom location. The course team works closely to coordinate the weekly lectures and discussion readings and assignments. *Be advised that the syllabi topics, readings, guest speakers and special activities, may be subject to change. Consequently, you should regularly check for weekly updates on our course website [www.elms.edu](http://www.elms.edu).*

This course is interdisciplinary in nature and theoretically and current-events driven. The course texts, daily reading of the newspaper, required and suggested viewings and the synthesis provided in lecture and discussion, will facilitate your learning in this course. We invite each of you to engage this semester in a continuous dialogue about the state of American democracy comparatively and globally.

### COURSE GOALS

- \*an appreciation for competing theoretical perspectives in the study of American government and politics
- \*an understanding of American political development from a comparative perspective
- \*the capacity to critically evaluate the news of the day especially the coverage of ‘the race for the presidency’ and the Iraq war
- \*an understanding of the impacts of culture and media on American political behavior
- \*your maturation as a global citizen through a critical understanding of policy issues

### COURSE EXPECTATIONS

We ask you in both lecture and discussion to help us create and sustain *a learning community* by:

- \* *respecting each other’s points of views*
- \* *valuing collaborative learning in lecture, discussion and with special projects/events*
- \* *maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity ([www.umd.edu/honorpledge](http://www.umd.edu/honorpledge))*
- \* *acknowledging the special nature of the large lecture classroom*
- \* *attending lecture and discussions on a regular basis*
- \* *meeting all deadlines and requirements in a timely manner*

You can expect the following of the GVPT 170 course team:

- \*to return your assignments and tests in a timely manner
- \*to be available for consultation
- \*to respect your involvement in the course

### COURSE TEXTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Bruce Steinbrenner, ed., [American Government Annual Editions 09/10](#).

John Rourke, [You Decide](#) (course packet: text; study guide; and 10 issues in American government)

**Daily reading of an internationally respected newspapers** ([www.lib.umd.edu/guides/news\\_sources.html](http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/news_sources.html))

**GRADING AND EVALUATION**

Your grade in this course is based on the following:

- 30%** discussion group writing exercises and quizzes (both announced and unannounced)
- 10%** discussion group participation
- 40%** 2 hourly examinations
- 20%** comprehensive final examination

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

A fully functioning *learning community* depends on the presence and contributions of every one of its members in the large lecture class as well as the Thursday and Friday discussion sections.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

UMCP has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at UMCP for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, or plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>.

**ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

We are happy to work with you if you need special arrangements. Please note that a written request for accommodations is required. Please have the appropriate paperwork for test taking at DSS given to Dr. Vietri a week prior to all examinations. Thank you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding UMCP disability documentation, please contact Disability Support Services at 314-7682.

**COURSE EVALUATION FALL 2009**

Your participation in the evaluation of this course through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at UMCP. CourseEvalUM will be open to you to complete your evaluation of GVPT 170 effective December 1 through December 13. Please go directly to the website ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) to complete your evaluation. Thank you.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS, VIDEOS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

*Every effort will be made to have lectures posted before class on [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)*

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>August 31</b>     | <b>Welcome, Introductions and Course Expectations</b><br><b>Reading:</b> skim texts and carefully review the syllabus  |
| <b>September 2</b>   | <b>Origins of American Political Principles and American Exceptionalism</b><br><b>Reading:</b> <a href="http://www.elms.umd.edu">www.elms.umd.edu</a><br>Annual editions, p. xviii-4<br><b>Viewing:</b> Bacevich "End of American Exceptionalism" ( <a href="http://www.democracynow.org">www.democracynow.org</a> ) |
| <b>September 3,4</b> | <b>Discussion group meetings: Are Americans different?</b><br><b>Reading:</b> Annual editions, pp 20-28<br>Rourke, pp. 78-91   |
| <b>September 7</b>   | <b>Labor Day holiday, no class</b>   |

- September 9**      **The U.S. Constitution as an Eighteenth Century Document**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 4-19
- September 11,12**      **Discussion group topic: Is the Constitution an 18<sup>th</sup> century document?**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 33-43  
Rourke, pp. 2-15
- September 14**      **American Federalism**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 174-179  
Rourke, pp. 200-229
- September 16**      **Political Culture, Political Socialization and Public Opinion (Immigration)**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp.164-169; 109-111  
Rourke, pp. 60-77
- September 17, 18**      **Discussion group topic: Why Federalism is Contentions**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions  
Rourke, pp. 16-31
- September 21**      **The Old and New Media**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 133-140; 144-145; 150-151  
Rourke, pp. 92-105
- September 23**      **Interest Groups**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 128-132
- September 24,25**      **Discussion group topic: Interest Group Politics**  
**Reading:** Annual Editions, pp 126-127  
Rourke, pp. 106-119
- September 28**      **Social movements and political change**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 29-32; 64  
Rourke, debate 23 online: <http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide>  
debate 24 online <http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide>
- September 30**      **Political Parties in America**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual editions, pp.104-108
- October 2,3**      **Discussion group topic: Political Parties and Elections**  
**Reading:** Annual Editions, pp. 111-117  
Rourke, pp. 120-147

- October 5**                    **2008 elections: sea change for American politics?**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions: pp. 118-125; 141-143; 146-153
- October 7**                    **First examination**
- October 8,9**                **Discussion group topic: first exam and writing assignments**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)
- October 12**                **Congress and its Members**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 77-83
- October 14**                **Congressional Policymaking**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 72-77
- October 15, 16**            **Discussion group topic: What's Wrong with Congress?**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 83-87  
Rourke, pp. 148-159
- October 19**                **Evolution of American Presidential Power**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)
- October 21**                **President as Policymaker**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual editions, pp. 51-63; 65-71
- October 22, 23**            **Discussion group topic: Is the President too powerful?**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 67-71  
Rourke, pp. 160-175  
online debate 21 <http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide/>
- October 26**                **The Federal Bureaucracy as an Institution**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 94-103
- October 28**                **The Federal Policy Making Process and the 50 states**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned>
- October 29, 30**            **Discussion group topic: the federal bureaucracy and the president**  
**Reading:** Rourke, pp. 176-189
- November 2**                **The Courts in the America Federal System**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 88-93  
**View:** *Sotomayor Nomination Sparks Debate* ([www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law/jan-june09/sotoanalysis\\_05-26.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law/jan-june09/sotoanalysis_05-26.html))

- November 4**                    **Second Examination**
- November 5,6**                **Discussion: second examination and writing laboratory**
- November 9**                **The Policy Role of the Federal Judiciary: Civil Rights**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Rourke, pp. 48-59; 230-249
- November 11:**              **Judicial Policy: Civil Liberties**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 46-47  
Rourke, pp. 32-47
- November 12,13**            **Discussion group topic: Are judicial review and judicial activism obsolete?**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 44-45  
Rourke, pp. 190-199
- November 16:**              **Characteristics of the U.S. public policy process**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)
- November 18:**              **Economic Policy**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 101-103; 157-163; 180-184  
Rourke online, debate 22 (<http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide/>)
- November 19,20:**        **Case Study: Health Care Policy Reform**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 170-173  
Rourke online, debate 19 (<http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide/>)
- November 23**                **Energy and Environmental Policy**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Rourke onlineebate 20 (<http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide/>)
- November 25**                **Happy Thanksgiving-no lecture today**
- November 30**                **Education Policy**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Rourke, pp. 250-269
- December 1**                **National Security Policy**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 189-197
- December 2,3**                **Discussion group topic: national security and the fragility of democracy**  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Rourke, pp. 270-289

- December 7      **Wars of Necessity, Wars of Choice**  
Reading: [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Rourke, online debate 25 ([www.ablongman.com/YouDecide/](http://www.ablongman.com/YouDecide/))
- December 9      **America in a Global Era**  
Reading: [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
Annual Editions, pp. 185-188
- December 11, 12      **Discussion group topic: ‘Guns v Butter’ for the Millenials?**  
Reading: [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)
- December 14      **Dr. Vietri’s Final Exam Review (details TBNA)**
- DECEMBER 15      FINAL EXAMINATION IN CLASSROOM 1:30-3:30 pm**

