

**Political Science 101
American Politics**

Fall 2002

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Office: Damen Hall 914
Hours: M-W-F 10:30-12:00
M-W 1:30-3:00
and by appointment

Course Outline

This is a survey course on American government and politics. In addition to covering the major subjects of American politics, this semester we focus on American elections. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class and to read a daily newspaper, such as the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* or *Chicago Sun-Times* for information on current developments in American politics and government. The format will be a combination of lecture and discussion.

Course Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course students should be able to demonstrate:

1. an ability to describe basic survey information about American politics (e.g. Who votes?).
2. the capacity to think systematically and analytically about American politics, policies, and problems (e.g. What might motivate someone to vote?).
3. an understanding of key explanations for political processes and outcomes in the American political system (e.g. Why do some groups vote more regularly than others?).
4. the capacity to conduct research to find information and explanations on the American political system (e.g. Where are voting statistics found?).

A Note On Academic Honesty: See the attached statement from the Department of Political Science. If you have any questions, please check with the instructor or your Dean.

Course Requirements: (Extra credit work is not available.)

1. Three tests 75 %

Each test will cover a specific set of course topics listed below. Makeup quizzes will be given only with the approval of the Dean's office.

2. Campaign or Election reports. 25 %

Prepare a 10-page paper in which you report on a specific campaign or election that you have researched (or in which you participated) during the semester. This may include any state or local race, or your experience as an election monitor or judge. The papers will be due on November 25. More details on the paper assignment will be handed out in class.

Grading. Final grades will be determined by averaging all requirements:

- A 90-100
- B+ 85-89
- B 80-84
- C+ 75-79
- C 70-74
- D+ 65-69
- D 58-64
- F less than 58

Readings:

Gitelson, Alan, Robert Dudley, and Melvin Dubnick, *American Government* (6th ed.), Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2001. (includes Kimball, "The Exceptional Election.")

Wayne, Stephen, *Is This Any Way to Run a Democratic Election?* 2nd ed., Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2003.

Daily newspaper (*New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* or *Chicago Sun-Times*)

Lecture/Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

Week:	Topic:	Reading Assignment:
	<u>An Overview</u>	
Aug 26	1. The American Political System	Gitelson, Chap. 1, 2
Sept 2	2. Key Political Concepts	Gitelson, Chap. 1, 2
Sept 9	3. Intergovernmental Relations	Gitelson, Chap. 3
Sept 16	4. Public Policies	Gitelson, Chap. 14, 15
	<u>Political Participation</u>	
Sept 23	5. Public Opinion	Gitelson, Chap. 5 Wayne, Chap. 1

Sept 30	Test 1 (covering Aug. 26-Sep. 27)	
Sept 30	6. Participation and Representation	Gitelson, pp. 196-201 Wayne, Chap. 2, 3
Oct 7	7. Political Parties	Gitelson, Chap. 6 Wayne, Chap. 4
Oct 14	8. Campaigns	Gitelson, pp. 178-196 Wayne, Chap. 5, 7
(Oct 14-15 Fall Break)		
Oct 21	9. Media and Communications	Gitelson, Chap. 9 Wayne, Chap. 6, 8
Oct 28	Test 2 (covering Sept. 30-Oct. 25)	
Oct 28	10. Elections	Gitelson, pp. 202-209 Wayne, Chap. 9 Kimball, "The Exceptional Election"
Nov. 4	11. Interest Groups	Gitelson, Chap. 8
	<u>Political Institutions and Actors</u>	
Nov 11	12. Congress	Gitelson, Chap. 10
Nov 18	13. The Presidency	Gitelson, Chap. 11
Nov 25	14. The Bureaucracy	Gitelson, Chap. 12
Dec 2	15. The Courts	Gitelson, Chap. 13
Dec 9 10:20 am	Test 3 (covering Oct. 30-Dec 2)	