Fall 9-1-2005

PSC 100S.02: Introduction to American Government

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Political Science 100  
Introduction to American Government  
Fall 2005, North ULH 101  

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Office: Corbin 347  
Hours: T 2:30-3:30 and Wed 3-4 

Course Content  
This course is an introduction to American government and politics. It is designed to 
provide a foundation for studying and participating in American politics. This class 
stresses a sophisticated understanding of American political institutions—the rules of the 
game—and the behavior they induce. It also introduces students to the ideas and practice 
of modern political science.  

Required Texts  
There are two required texts: *Principles and Practice of American Politics* by Kernell 
and Smith (KS), and the *Logic of American Politics* by Kernell and Jacobson (KJ). In 
addition, I will periodically provide supplemental readings drawn from contemporary 
politics, e.g. newspaper articles. Students are strongly encouraged to read these extra 
readings as soon as possible, since they may be the topic of class discussions. Course 
examinations will draw on the textbook readings, supplemental assignments, and class 
lectures.  

Students are required to read all assigned readings, attend all lectures, take two exams, 
and complete two short writing assignments. The grade breakdown is:  

Midterm: 20%  
Two Writing assignments: 20% each  
Final: 40%  

Class Rules  
Turn your cell phones and pagers off. Show up on time and don’t leave early. 
Participate in class discussions. Convince me that you love to learn.  

Make-up exams are allowed in the event of illness or death in the family with 
documentation. There are no excuses for late papers; start papers early and protect 
yourself against computer failures.  

I regrade papers under these conditions: 1) you must wait at least 24 hours before 
requesting a regrading; 2) you write “I request a regrading” and sign your name. *Grades 
may be adjusted up or down.*
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>Introduction to the Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 6 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Politics as a science. Basic concepts and questions of politics.</td>
<td>KJ 1</td>
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<td>Sept. 13 &amp; 15</td>
<td>Founding the Constitution. How can people rule themselves without tyranny?</td>
<td>KJ 2; KS 2-1, 2-2</td>
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<td>Sept. 20, 22</td>
<td>The Constitution</td>
<td>KJ 3, 5; KS 2-3; 3-2</td>
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<td>Oct 4 &amp; 6</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Read Ahead</td>
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<td>Oct 18 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Elections 3. Parties and interest groups.</td>
<td>KJ 12, 13; KS 12-1, 12-2, 13-2</td>
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<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>Midterm.</td>
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<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>Governing Overview.</td>
<td>KS 10-1, 14-2</td>
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<td>Nov. 1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>KJ 10, 14</td>
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<td>Nov. 8 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>KJ 6; KS 6-1, 6-2, 6-3</td>
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<td>Nov. 15 &amp; 17</td>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>KJ 7; KS 7-2, 7-3</td>
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<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>KJ 8; KS 8-1, 8-2</td>
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<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>Nov. 29 Dec. 1</td>
<td>Judiciary &amp; Constitutional Politics</td>
<td>KJ 9; KS 9-1, 9-2, 5-2</td>
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<td>Dec. 6, 8</td>
<td>Reform Options</td>
<td>KJ 15; KS 1-5, 10-3</td>
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<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Final 3:20 – 5:20</td>
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