Spring 2-1-2007

PSC 100S.02: Introduction to American Government

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PSC 100, SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
Spring 2007  
MWF 11:10-12:00, Social Science 352

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Office Hours: Monday 3-5; Wednesday 12-1 and 3-4; and by appointment
Political Science Department - 350 Liberal Arts; phone 243-5202

Teaching Assistant: Jill M. Hanson  
Office: Corbin 345  
e-mail: jill.hanson@umontana.edu
Office Hours: Monday 12-1; Wednesday 10-11

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study of government and politics in the United States, 
to enable you to better understand political events and processes as they occur, and to provide you with 
information you can use to become more involved and effective in the political process. We will emphasize 
the roles played by the people in national politics, the different values and interests people have, and 
people’s influence on political decisions. Exploring the roles people play in politics – as we study the 
fundamental elements of American government, dynamic political processes, and political institutions – we 
can understand politics in greater depth, better evaluate how well our political system functions, and more 
accurately understand the U.S. political system’s strengths and potential for improvement.

In addition to addressing these topics, this course satisfies the General Education Social Sciences (S) 
requirement. The goal of this requirement is to enable you to 1) describe the nature, structure, and historical 
development of human organizations and/or relationships, 2) comprehend the role of theory in explaining 
social phenomena, 3) generate and/or interpret social science data, 4) assess and evaluate the significance of 
social science phenomena.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:
This course builds on the knowledge gained from each part of the course, which means that your investment 
in keeping up with the course material will pay off in terms of how much you will learn and how interesting 
class will be for you. This requires that you do the readings before each class that you’re prepared to 
contribute to class discussion and questions – even in a large class such as this one, intelligent questions and 
discussions are important to learning.

It is also very important to keep up with political events, which helps in understanding the course material. 
The best way to do this is to read news coverage of politics in a major national newspaper on a daily basis. 
The New York Times and The Washington Post are two of the best for political news coverage, and both 
have free websites. The Wall Street Journal has somewhat less political news, and is only available free 
online at Factiva, through the UM Mansfield Library website.

There will be two midterm exams (each worth 25% of the course grade) and a third exam during finals week 
(worth 30% of the course grade), as well as one research and analysis paper (worth 20% of the course grade) 
which will be due after spring break.

Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:
A = 93-100  B+ = 87-89.9  C+ = 77-79.9  D+ = 67-69.9  below 60=F
A- = 90-92.9  B = 83-86.9  C = 73-76.9  D = 63-66.9
B- = 80-82.9  C- = 70-72.9  D- = 60-62.9

* Makeup exams will be permitted only if I have been notified prior to the missed exam and only if I
agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency.
* All three exams and the research paper must be completed in order to pass the course.
* Check your calendar now to make sure you do not have anything that conflicts with the exams.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I. Foundations of American Politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22-26</td>
<td>A. American Political Culture</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 5 -7</td>
<td>C. Federalism</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 9 -14</td>
<td>D. Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Chapter 4, Appendix pp. A16-A20 (Amendments to the Constitution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 16 -23</td>
<td>E. Civil Rights</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19, Monday</td>
<td>NO CLASS TODAY DUE TO PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY</td>
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FEBRUARY 26 - MONDAY (TENTATIVE DATE) EXAM #1 – BRING SCANTRON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part II. Politics, Dynamic Forces, and Political Processes</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 28 - March 5</td>
<td>A. Public Opinion</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7 - 12</td>
<td>B. The Media</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14 - 16</td>
<td>C. Political Participation</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 19 - 23</td>
<td>D. Political Parties</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26 - 30</td>
<td>NO CLASS DUE TO SPRING VACATION</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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APRIL 9 - MONDAY (TENTATIVE DATE) EXAM #2 – BRING SCANTRON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 11 - 16</td>
<td>F. Groups and Interests</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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Part III. Formal Institutions

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18 - 23</td>
<td>A. Congress</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
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</table>

MONDAY, APRIL 23. RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 25 - 30</td>
<td>B. The Presidency</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2 - 4</td>
<td>C. Federal Courts</td>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
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FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 10:10 A.M. – BRING SCANTRON