

Spring 2-1-2018

PSCI 210S.01: Introduction to American Government

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Brewer, Adam Mark, "PSCI 210S.01: Introduction to American Government" (2018). *Syllabi*. 7909.
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COURSE SYLLABUS

PROFESSOR

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 9:30am-10:30am, Tuesday/Thursday 12:30pm-1:30pm, or by appointment

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(The Course Calendar is at the top for your convenience. Please refer to it and Moodle frequently throughout the semester for all due dates, assignments, and class objectives)

COURSE CALENDAR

Part I: The Parameters of the American Political System

Week 1: Citizenship

Preliminary Preparation- Dalton PDF Reading (On Moodle)

Monday, Jan 22nd

Objective- Establish class teams and organization of the course.

Wednesday, Jan 24th

Objective-Identify and understand basic terms of Political Science. Distinguish and apply the various elements of Robert Putnam's theory of citizenship & democratic decline.

Workbook 1 Due 11:59pm Thursday Night!

Friday, Jan 26th

Readiness Assessment 1 Today In Class!

Objective- Complete First Readiness Assessment

Postliminary Reflection- None

Week 2: The Constitution

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 2 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Jan 29th

Objective-Distinguish and apply the various elements of Russel Dalton's theory of citizenship & evolution of American Democracy
Discuss Book Club Assignment

Workbook 2 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Jan 31st

Readiness Assessment 2 Today In Class!

Objective- Illustrate the history and politics behind the impetus and creation of the U.S. Constitution.

Friday, Feb 2nd

Team Project 1 Today In Class!

Objective-Zombie Apocalypse Simulation

Postliminary Reflection- Watch "A More Perfect Union" Film. Link (On Moodle)

Postliminary Question Sheet 1 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 3: Federalism (Hold first Book Club Meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 3 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Feb 5th

Objective- Distinguish between the basic elements and foundational cases of the American Federalist system.

Workbook 3 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Feb 7th

Readiness Assessment 3 Today in Class!

Objective- Reconstruct the evolution of Federalism through U.S. history and demonstrate understanding of the various perspectives of federal power v. state power.

Friday, Feb 9th

Objective- Apply perspectives of federalism to the issue of marijuana legalization.

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 1

Book Club Question Sheet 1 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 4: Federalism Case Studies

Preliminary Preparation- Sanctuary City link (On Moodle)

Monday, Feb 12th

Objective- Apply perspectives of federalism to the issue of same-sex marriage.

Wednesday, Feb 14th

Team Project 2 Today In Class!

Objective- Discuss the issue of federalism and sanctuary cities.

Friday, Feb 16th

Individual/ Team Exam #1 Today In Class!

Objective- Take Exam.

Postliminary Reflection- Watch “The Culture High” Documentary. Link (On Moodle)

Postliminary Question Sheet 2 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Part II: The Role of the Courts, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights

Week 5: The Supreme Court (Book Club Meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 9 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Feb 19th

No Class! President’s Day.

Workbook 4 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Feb 21st

Readiness Assessment 4 Today In Class!

Objective- Describe the constitutional, legislative, and case precedent norms that inform the workings of the American judicial system.

Friday, Feb 23rd

Objective- Interpret the significant role Supreme Court Justices play in the American political system and the way they interpret cases that come before them.

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 2

Book Club Question Sheet 2 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 6: Civil Liberties

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 4 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Feb 26th Objective-Identify and understand the various elements of a court case and be able to explain the nomination process for a judge.

Workbook 5 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Feb 28th

Readiness Assessment 5 Today In Class

Objective- Describe and apply 1st Amendment case law precedent correctly to real life cases.

Friday, Mar 2nd

Objective- Describe and apply symbolic speech case law precedent correctly to real life cases.

Postliminary Reflection- Watch "Shouting Fire" Documentary. Link (On Moodle)

Postliminary Question Sheet 3 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 7: Civil Liberties (continued) (Book Club Meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation: Watch YouTube Clip and read link on Westboro Baptist Church (On Moodle)

Monday, Mar 5th

Team Project 3 Today In Class!

Objective- Discuss free speech/religion and the Westboro Baptist Church.

Wednesday, Mar 7th

Objective- Describe and apply Establishment Clause case law precedent correctly to real life cases.

Friday, Mar 9th

Objective- Describe and apply Free Exercise Clause case law precedent correctly to real life cases. * Participation Survey*

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 3

Book Club Question Sheet 3 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Team Participation/ Attendance applied to your midterm grade

Week 8: Civil Rights

Preliminary Preparation: Ch. 5 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Mar 12th

Objective- Describe and apply 4th Amendment case law precedent correctly to real life cases.

Workbook 6 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Mar 14th

Readiness Assessment 6 Today In Class!

Objective- Reconstruct the history of race in the United States including important events, cases, and limitations on the rights of minorities.

Friday, Mar 16th

Objective- Identify the various forms of discrimination in the past and currently that continue to characterize racial tensions in the United States.

Postliminary Reflection- Watch "13th" Documentary. Link (On Moodle)

Postliminary Question Sheet 4 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 9: Civil Right (continued) (Book Club Meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation- None

Monday, Mar 19th

Objective- Identify the different types of Affirmative Action and the arguments for and against the use of Affirmative Action in hiring and admissions decisions

Wednesday, Mar 21st Objective-Describe and apply sexual harassment case law precedent and federal guidelines to real life cases.

Friday, Mar 23rd **Individual/ Team Exam #2 Today In Class!**
Objective- Take Exam

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 4
Book Club Question Sheet 4 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Part III. American Political Institutions (Formal and Informal)

Week 10: Spring Break (Start reading Hamilton's book for your next Book Club Meeting)

Preliminary Preparation- None

Monday, Mar 26th No Class!

Wednesday, Mar 28th No Class!

Friday, Mar 30th No Class!

Postliminary Reflection- None

Week 11: The U.S. Congress

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 6 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Apr 2nd Objective-Understand the basic Constitutional norms that establish the powers and limitations of the U.S. Congress including how a bill becomes a law

Workbook 7 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, April 4th **Readiness Assessment 7 In Class Today!**
Objective-Demonstrate what and how both racial and partisan gerrymandering work and how they influence election outcomes for members of the national and state legislatures

Friday, April 6th Objective- Identify the major differences between the House and Senate

Postliminary Reflection- Watch "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" Film. Link (On Moodle)
Postliminary Question Sheet 5 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 12: The U.S. Congress Cont. (Book Club Meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation- How to Write a Bill link. (On Moodle)

Monday, Apr 9th **Team Project 4 Today In Class! (All week long)**
Objective- Congress Simulation

Wednesday, Apr 11th Objective- Congress Simulation

Friday, Apr 13th Objective- Congress Simulation

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 5
Book Club Question Sheet 5 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 13: The Presidency

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 7 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Apr 16th Objective- Finish Simulation and start the Presidency

Workbook 8 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Apr 18th

Readiness Assessment 8 In Class Today!

Objective- Identify the five major hats worn by the President and the implications of such roles on the presidential exercise of power

Friday, Apr 20th

Objective- Summarize presidential approval rating trends of the modern presidency and the theories used to explain presidential greatness

Postliminary Reflection- Watch "Lincoln" Film. Link (On Moodle)

Postliminary Question Sheet 6 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 14: Informal Institutions (Book Club Meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 11 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Apr 23rd

Objective- Explain the lobbying tactics used by interest groups, how they form, and their impact on the American political system

Workbook 9 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, Apr 25th

Readiness Assessment 9 In Class Today!

Objective- Reconstruct the evolution of political parties in the United States and explain the positives and negatives of the two-party system and the binary spectrum of political ideology

Ideology In Class Activity

Friday, Apr 27th

Objective- Identify, classify, and understand the various ideologies pertinent to the American political system

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 6

Book Club Question Sheet 6 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 15: Elections (Hold your last Book Club meeting this week)

Preliminary Preparation- Ch. 12 Barbour and Wright

Monday, Apr 30th

Objective- Distinguish between different primary election systems and understand the process of presidential candidate nominations and campaigns

Workbook 10 Due 11:59pm Tuesday Night!

Wednesday, May 2nd

Readiness Assessment 10 In Class Today!

Objective- Describe how the Electoral College works, its positives and negatives, and unique circumstances facilitated by the system such as the most recent presidential election in 2016

Friday, May 4th

Team Project 5 Today In Class!

Objective- Discuss Jonathan Haidt's "The Righteous Mind"

Postliminary Reflection- Complete Book Club Question Sheet 7

Book Club Question Sheet 7 Due 11:59pm Saturday night!

Week 16: Final Exam Week

Monday, May 7th

Final Team/Individual Exam #3 In Class 10:10am-12:10pm

Objective- Synthesize notions of civil engagement with the idea of bridging social capital and explain how democracy can persist amidst growing levels of partisanship *Participation Survey*

Final Team Participation/ Attendance applied to your final grade

DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This is a political science course that uses major theories and concepts in the field as a framework to define and explore the United States' system of government. A famous political scientist named Harold Lasswell once defined politics as "the process of who gets what, when, and how." Much of our discussion will be centered on this idea as we look at the creation of the U.S Constitution, Federalism, Civil Liberties (to name a few) and other topics pertinent to American system of government. Some of the other concepts that correspond with this idea of politics include questions such as: What does it mean to be a citizen? What is democracy? What is power, who holds it, and how is it obtained? How have shifts in power transformed the nature of our government? Together, we will unlock the answers to these questions while gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of the major institutions that affect our lives each day. Additionally, as one of your first courses in political science, it is my hope to familiarize you with the possibilities available regarding future careers for political science (or similar field) graduates.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the different theories of citizenship and democracy and the role they play in our current political system
- Develop an ability to analyze aspects of the U.S. Constitution (specifically federalism) and how it applies to current day issues
- Become familiar with the U.S Supreme Court and the expansive role it plays in Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- Understand the powers exercised by all three branches of government as formal institutions in our constitutional system
- Understand the importance of informal institutions such as political parties and interest groups and how they impact public opinion and voting behavior
- Gain a deeper understanding of the electoral system in the United States

COURSE OUTLINE AND GRADES

Workbooks: There will be 10 Workbooks that you will complete individually at home throughout the semester. These Workbooks will be completed in conjunction with the preliminary preparation reading for the corresponding week. Workbooks will ask you to define various terms in your own words and provide analysis and critical thought to the concepts taught in the readings. This assignment will normally be due Tuesday nights.

Readiness Assessments: There will be 10 Readiness Assessments completed in class throughout the semester. These assessments will gauge your understanding of the preliminary preparation readings. They will be divided into two parts. First, you will take the assessment individually and then as a team. For the team portion, you will be given time in class to consult with your team to identify the correct answers. Assessments will consist of five multiple choice questions and are closed book. A thorough reading of the chapter will enable you to more successfully complete these assessments. When you choose to not complete the reading, you are letting your team down.

Postliminary Question Sheets: You will be given the opportunity to watch 6 films/documentaries this semester that will enhance and add value to what we have studied during the week in class. The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with a chance to reflect on course concepts in a different way and expose students to important historical and contemporary films/documentaries. These will be completed individually at home but it is strongly encouraged that you get together with others to view and discuss these films. Each film will have a question sheet that you will fill out and submit on Moodle normally due Saturday night.

Book Club Meeting and Question Sheets: For this assignment, you will be forming a Book Club group that you will meet with every two weeks outside of class. Before each Book Club meeting, you will read two chapters from *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt and come ready to discuss it with your club members. Later in the semester, one of your Book Club meetings will be for your third book, *How Congress Works and*

Why You Should Care by Lee Hamilton. For each week you meet, I will provide a question sheet with discussion questions that you will discuss in your meeting. Meetings should be about 30 minutes (but can go longer if needed). After the meeting, you will then individually answer the questions in written format, indicate to me that you attended the meeting and completed ALL (that means no skimming) the reading before your scheduled time to meet. You will receive 10 points for completion of the whole reading, 10 points for attending the Book Club meeting, and 5 points for completing the worksheet and submitting it on time on Moodle Saturday night. As such, each book club week will equate to 25 points. Upon creating your team (we will do this in class), make assignments for who will bring the treat each week to share with team members. This will make the book club meetings more fun!

Exams: There will be three exams in class that you will take individually throughout the semester. They will consist of matching questions, multiple choice questions, and short answer writing questions. You will be provided a study guide a week before the exam to review. If time, we will have a period for review and questions the class day before the exam. You are expected to come to class on exam day. Please review the course calendar now to ensure that no vacations or other activities are scheduled for exam days (especially for the end of the semester). No exceptions will be made except for emergencies and illness.

Team Participation/ Attendance: This portion of your grade includes in-class participation and attendance. Each team will elect a team leader that will take attendance each day. Team members will be able to assess their team mates twice during the semester. It is expected that you attend every day and contribute to class and team discussions. Half of your Team Participation/Attendance score will show up in the gradebook at mid-term and the other half at the end of the semester when I have had a chance to get a feel for each student's contributions. As a rule of thumb, if you don't talk in class, it is likely that you will not be eligible for all of the participation points. You must attend every class period of the semester. Up to two emergency absences are allowed for emergencies, illness, etc. (use them wisely) but a third absence will reduce your participation grade by 15 points, a fourth absence will reduce your participation grade by another 15. A fifth absence will cause you to lose all of your participation points. A sixth absence will result in failure of the course altogether. Tardies are treated as ½ of an absence. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late are counted absent and leaving during class (not returning) is treated as a tardy. If you are ill, please don't attend class.

GRADING SCALE AND WEIGHTS

A	93%-100%	10 Workbooks	200 points	20%
A-	90%-92%	10 Readiness Assessments	100 points	10%
B+	87%-89%	6 Postliminary Quest. Sheets	120 points	12%
B	83%-86%	7 Book Club Question Sheets	140 points	14%
B-	80%-82%	3 Exams	300 points	30%
C+	77%-79%	5 Team Projects	50 points	5%
C	73%-76%	Team Part. / Attendance	90 points	9%
C-	70%-72%			
D+	67%-69%	Total	1000 points	100%
D	63%-66%			
D-	60%-62%			
F	59%-below			

COURSE READINGS

1. Christine Barbour and Gerald C. Wright. 2016. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics* (Brief 7th edition).
2. Jonathan Haidt. 2013. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are divided by Politics and Religion*
3. Hamilton, Lee H.. 2004. *How Congress Works and Why You Should Care*.
4. Some readings will be supplied as links or files on Moodle

CLASS POLICIES

NOTE ON THE LEARNING MODEL FOR THIS COURSE

Following these process steps, the class will appear as such:

Preliminary Preparation- I will provide you with readings/other prep materials and assignments that give you a base knowledge for our lectures, discussions and class activities each day. Ideally, these materials will enable you to carry on an informed conversation in class.

Teach Each Other- In this course, you will have the opportunity to discuss your learning with classmates on a regular basis. I will give you opportunities to critically think about the course material and discuss it with a group of students who will act as your team for the semester. Additionally, we will have full class discussions where we will explore a variety of topics.

Postliminary Reflection- Upon learning about a topic, you will be given the opportunity to reflect upon your learning by completing several reflection activities. These activities will assess your learning and allow you to demonstrate to me your newfound understanding.

NOTE ON TECHNOLOGY

No “technology problem” excuses will be accepted in this class. That is, you cannot blame your failure to complete an assignment on time on “computer/internet/Moodle issues” (unless it was one that affected the whole class, in which case we will address the issue on a class-wide basis). This means that you must not wait until the last minute to complete your work such that if you do have computer issues, you have time to find a solution. Three hints: try a different web browser, try a different computer, try a different Internet connection (e.g. campus computer labs). If none of that works, call the campus tech help desk. The exception is you get one “retry” if your computer kicks you off while you are taking a quiz. I highly suggest that you save your work in multiple places. It is so imperative that you make this a habit now that you are in college. Many of you already have Microsoft OneDrive on your computers (a cloud service to save your work). If you do not have it, I would suggest downloading the program Dropbox from www.dropbox.com (another cloud service) to back up your work. Among others, it is easy and free. If you happen to lose all your work because you made the choice to not back it up, you will have to start over and begin again. Furthermore, you cannot use the excuse that an assignment didn’t show up on your Moodle calendar. It is your responsibility to utilize the course calendar in this syllabus for all due dates.

NOTE ON LATE WORK

Do not ask to submit an assignment late because the answer is already “No”. Never just plan on writing a paper or completing a quiz at the last moment. By doing so, you are taking a foolish, calculated risk of getting a zero.

NOTE ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Using laptops, cell phones (texting), iPods, or other electronic devices is not allowed in class except when you are working in groups on class activities. Checking Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or catching Pokemon are not allowed. Turn them off and put them away to avoid having your final grade docked.

NOTE ON DEBATE ETHICS

Some of the issues we discuss in this class are controversial with multiple divisive points of view. Although you may already have an established opinion on a particular topic, you are encouraged to consider other points of view and the strengths/weaknesses of your own. You may be surprised how much you learn by adopting this tactic in your analyses. Additionally, as we discuss controversial topics, you are expected to respect the points of view of your fellow students. Respect is shown in the manner you address other students and the words you use to carry your point across. In an increasingly uncivil political environment in the U.S., civility will be maintained in class so as to elevate the educational experience of all present.

NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, [please view](#). As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference

or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation.

NOTE ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

UM prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Prohibited sex discrimination includes incidents of sexual harassment (including sexual violence), dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (collectively “sexual misconduct”). As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. University policy requires that I report all incidents of sexual misconduct that come to my attention. If you encounter sexual misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at (406)243-5710. Additional information about sexual misconduct and available resources can be found at <http://www.umt.edu/eo/titleix/>.

NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY RELATED NEEDS

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. The link for this information is: [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.