

Introduction to American Government and Politics  
Political Science 104 (Section 003) – Spring 2014

Professor Kathleen Dolan

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Bolton Hall 631

Introduction to American Government and Politics is a survey course designed to acquaint you with the fundamental ideas, institutions, and actors that make up our governmental system. During the semester, we will examine the legal and structural basis of our government, evaluate the institutions that carry out its day to day functions, and analyze the role the individual citizen can play in influencing and affecting government. Also, since government and politics are things that go on around us all the time, we will follow the actions of the President, the Congress, the Courts, and the public. For this reason, current political events will be of special interest and importance to our studies.

This course fulfills the Social Science General Education Requirement (GER) through its focus on:

- a) the study of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and/or socio-cultural factors associated with individual behavior, collective action, or societal development.
- b) the study of human collectivities, organizations, institutions, and cultures, their infrastructures, and interrelationships.

This course meets these requirements through our examination of the varied personal, social, and cultural forces that shape individual and collective political behavior. We will also examine the institutions and organizations on which our political and governmental system is built and discuss the development of those systems. This 3-credit course meets for 3 hours of lecture per week during the semester. Students are expected to set aside a minimum of 6 hours each week studying the material and working on assignments to achieve the learning goals of this course.

**Required Readings:**

*We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. Shorter Ninth Edition by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, and Margaret Weir. W.W. Norton and Company, 2013.

ISBN: 9780393921090

Daily Newspaper/National News Program

Students are required to complete all readings PRIOR to each class meeting and be prepared to discuss them. At the end of each class, I will indicate which readings should be completed for the next meeting. Since the issues and occurrences of current political events will have relevance for this course, students are expected to keep themselves informed about what is happening in government and politics on a daily basis.

**Lecture:** The lecture for this course meets from **11:00 to 12:15 Mon/Wed in Bolton B40**. Students should attend all class meetings. You are responsible for, and will be tested on, all materials and information regarding this course. This includes information from lectures, readings, and class discussions. Feel free to ask questions or make comments during class about class material or current political events. Exams will be given in lecture meeting.

**Course Website:** This class will have a site on the Desire 2 Learn (D2L) system. The address for D2L is <https://uwm.courses.wisconsin.edu/> or you can click on the D2L quick link from the UWM homepage. The site will be where I post the syllabus and grades. I may also put up announcements or media articles related to the class, so check the site regularly.

**Textbook Website:** The *We The People* textbook we are using in this class has a website. The address is <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/we-the-people9/shorter/welcome.aspx>. The website offers many things that may be useful or interesting to you. There are practice quizzes and review questions for each chapter, a study guide, and links to other political web pages. While we will not use the site as a formal part of the course, you may find some of the features interesting or helpful.

**Grades:** Your grade for this course will be based on four exams, each consisting of 50 multiple-choice questions. Each of the exams will be worth 25 percent of your grade. None of the exams will be cumulative.

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	59% or below

If you miss a regularly scheduled exam, you will only be allowed to take a make-up if your absence was unavoidable and due to some medical problem, excused University absence, or other emergency situations. **If you have a problem or miss an exam, get in touch with me immediately, beforehand if possible. If you miss an exam without giving me prior notice, you MUST contact me within 24 hours of that exam or you will not be allowed to take a make-up under any circumstances.**

**Any student who cheats on an exam or commits any other act of academic dishonesty will receive an F for the course and will be referred to the appropriate University authorities. I cannot stress this strongly enough. You may view the University's policy on academic misconduct at [http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad\\_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)**

**Exam Dates:** The following are the dates for the four exams in this class. If you have a **legitimate** conflict with any of these dates, let me know as soon as possible.

1<sup>st</sup> exam – Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> exam – Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> exam – Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> exam (non-cumulative, during final exam period) – Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am-12:00pm

**Extra Credit:** There will be two opportunities for you to earn extra credit, which can amount to a **total of a six percentage point increase** in your final course grade.

- (1) **A three percentage point increase** can be earned by completing three brief online surveys (5-10 minutes each). You must complete *all three* online surveys to receive the three percentage point increase.

Survey 1: The link will be emailed to you on January 21<sup>st</sup>

Survey 2: The link will be emailed to you on March 10<sup>th</sup>

Survey 3: The link will be emailed to you on May 8<sup>th</sup>

- (2) **A three percentage point increase** can be earned by taking a 50-item multiple choice exam on Political Science 104 in a classroom on the UWM campus. Your score on this exam will NOT affect your final grade. *In addition to the three percentage point increase, you will also receive \$25 for taking this non-counting exam. (This \$25 is on top of the \$150 you will automatically get for taking this course.)*

Exam Sign Up: On March 31<sup>st</sup>, we will email you a link to the website where you can sign up for the non-counting exam. There will be many time slots available to take the exam between April 21<sup>st</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Example:** If you have an exam average of 75%, that would be a grade “C” according to the chart above. If you completed all three online surveys, you would earn a three percentage point increase leading to a 78% average, which is a grade of “C+.” If you also took the non-counting exam, you would earn another three percentage points, which would give you a final average of 81%, which is a “B-.” You would also receive \$25 for taking the non-counting exam (on top of the \$150 you will already receive for taking this course). Thus, after taking advantage of both extra credit opportunities, your grade would go from a “C” to a “B-.”

I will be automatically informed of your extra credit participation. Your extra credit will be added toward your final course grade after the last exam. The extra credit will not show up on D2L, but I will take it into account before submitting your final grade.

### **Special Accommodations**

If you have a documented disability and need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. I will need your VISA form, which you can obtain at the Student Accessibility Center (Mitchell 112,

<http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/>, phone 414-229-6287).

### **Information on grade appeals and other policies**

Information on university policies on participation by students with disabilities, accommodation for religious observances, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, and other standing policies (e.g., sexual harassment) can be found on this web page:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

### **Important Dates**

January 21 <sup>st</sup> (Tuesday)	First day of classes
February 17 <sup>th</sup> (Monday)	Last day to drop without receiving a “W” on transcript
March 14 <sup>th</sup> (Friday)	Last day to drop or withdraw (“W” will appear on transcript)
March 16 <sup>th</sup> (Sunday) through March 23 <sup>rd</sup> (Sunday)	Spring Break

### **Free Tutoring**

You can receive additional help from the UWM Panther Academic Support Services (PASS). They provide free in-person or online tutoring, supplemental instruction, review sessions, study groups, and academic resources. For more information, please visit <http://www4.uwm.edu/pass/>, call (414) 229-3726, or email [pass@uwm.edu](mailto:pass@uwm.edu). Shannon Van Roo is the Political Science tutor ([smvanroo@uwm.edu](mailto:smvanroo@uwm.edu)).

You can sign up for tutoring in one of two ways:

- (1) In person at the Student Success Center (Bolton 120)
- (2) Online at the PASS website: <http://www4.uwm.edu/pass/>
  - On the left side of the screen, halfway down, click the button that says “Click here to make an appointment”
  - On the next page, click “Cattrack Click Here” with the picture of the paw
  - Log in with your normal Pantherlink information
  - Select “Poli Sci 104” in the drop down menu and click “Go” to view available services

### **Topics and Readings**

American Political Culture

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 1, Declaration of Independence, Ginsberg Appendix

The Founding and the Constitution

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 2, Constitution, Ginsberg Appendix

Federalism

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 3

**Exam 1: Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>**

The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 4

Public Opinion

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 6

Political Participation and Voting

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 8

**Exam 2: Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**

Political Parties

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 9

Campaigns and Elections

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 10

Interest Groups

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 11

**Exam 3: Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**

The Legislative Branch - Congress

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 12

The Executive Branch - The Presidency

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 13

The Judiciary - The Federal Courts

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 15

**Exam 4 (*non-cumulative*): Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am – 12:00pm**