

GOVERNMENT S-30: Introduction to American Government

Summer 2017

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Course time: Mon/Wed, 8:30am-11:30am **Location:** CGIS South S010

Course description.

This course is an introduction to American democracy and its political institutions. It examines the constitutional foundation of the system and its development over time. It studies how the institutions of the federal government — the Congress, the presidency, and the courts — operate and how they interact with one another. It analyzes the increasingly important role of campaigns and electoral pressures in contemporary American governance and examines how political parties, interest groups, activists, and the media influence elections and policy-making. By applying key ideas from political science, students learn to think analytically about American politics and become more discriminating consumers of political news and information.

Course meetings.

The course meets twice per week. Attendance at all class meetings is a natural expectation of the course and students are responsible for all assigned readings. All readings should be completed **prior** to that course meetings. Course meetings will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and small group activities, and students are expected to be active participants in each. All readings not contained in the textbook can be obtained via Canvas unless noted otherwise.

Course requirements.

Your evaluation for the course will be based on the following components:

Short response essays **25%**

In weeks 2, 3, and 4, students should submit a short response to articles from major news sources on some aspect of contemporary American politics. In 500 to 1,000 words, students

should use the material from the course to engage the claims made in the articles. Based on our class discussions and readings, do you believe the author is right or wrong? What has the author missed, overlooked, or misunderstood? What have the authors of our readings missed, overlooked, or misunderstood? The goal for these assignments is to use and apply the material from the course to understand real-world politics. These assignments should be posted to the Discussions section of Canvas by 5PM on Friday, June 30; Friday, July 7; and Friday, July 14.

Research paper **25%**

It is likely our course will raise more questions for you than it will answer – and this is a good thing! Using the tools of social science inquiry, students should identify a testable research question and outline a potential research project. In 5 to 8 pages (double-spaced), students should present a well-defined research question; describe why the question is important; propose and defend a potential answer to the question based on your understanding of American government; and outline your ideas about how you could test your hypothesis. Students are encouraged to consult closely with the TF and the instructor in working on this project. Papers should be submitted by email to the instructor and the TF by 5PM on Friday, July 28.

Final exam **30%**

Wednesday, August 2, 8:30AM.

Participation **20%**

Late assignments.

Late assignments are extremely discouraged and will be heavily penalized without a note from a doctor or resident dean. Written assignments will be penalized two-thirds of a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B-) for every day late. Students will be unable to make up the final exam without documentation from a doctor or university official.

Academic integrity.

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Summer School policies on academic integrity (<http://www.summer.harvard.edu/policies/student-responsibilities>) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting the wrong draft, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Resources to Support Academic Integrity (<http://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources-support-academic-integrity>) where you will find links to the Harvard Guide to Using Sources and two free online 15-minute tutorials to test your knowledge of academic citation policy. The tutorials are anonymous open-learning tools.

Accessibility.

The Summer School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Accessibility Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit <http://www.summer.harvard.edu/resources-policies/accessibility-services> for more information. Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessibility Office in the Division of Continuing Education and speak with the professor by the end of the first week of the term.

Course schedule and assigned readings.

The following texts should be purchased:

Canon, David T., John J. Coleman and Kenneth R. Mayer. *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. W.W. Norton. (7th Edition).

Lowi, Theodore J., Ginsberg, Benjamin, Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Ansolabehere, Stephen. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. W.W. Norton. (14th Brief Edition).

► **Note: Students are strongly encouraged to purchase the electronic version of text either from Amazon or the W.W. Norton website.**

All other readings can be found on Canvas unless noted otherwise. The instructor reserves the right to modify the reading list and schedule if necessary given the pace of the course and significant current events.

Monday, June 19 Introduction to Political Science; the American Founding

- *American Government*, Chapter 1; Chapter 2, pp. 32-40.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 9-16; 619-622.

Wednesday, June 21 The U.S. Constitution

- *American Government*, Chapter 2, pp. 41-70.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 3-8; 17-26; 67-83.
- *Federalist Papers* #10, 47, 48, and 51.
- Julia Azari and Seth Masket. February 9, 2017. "[The 4 Types of Constitutional Crises.](#)" FiveThirtyEight.com.
- William Howell and Terry Moe. February 2, 2017. "[America's Antiquated Constitution.](#)" *Prospect*.

Monday, June 26 Federalism and the Separation of Powers

- *American Government*, Chapter 3.

- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 98-111; 594-599; 612-619
- *Federalist Papers* #39 and 45.
- John Hudak, June 20, 2015. "[The Conflict between Federal and State Marijuana Laws Claims a Victim.](#)" *Newsweek*.

Wednesday, June 28 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- *American Government*, Chapters 4 and 5.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 134-156; 599-608.
- Elizabeth Shakman Hurd. February 8, 2017. "[Trump's immigration order means bureaucrats have to decide who's a 'real' Christian.](#)" *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.

Monday, July 3 Congress

- *American Government*, Chapter 6.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 175-211.
- Sarah Binder. February 8, 2017. "[3 lessons from Republicans' attempt to silence Elizabeth Warren.](#)" *Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.

Wednesday, July 5 The President and the Presidency

- *American Government*, Chapter 7.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 212-230.
- *Federalist Papers* #67, 69, 70, and 73.
- William G. Howell. 2005. "Unilateral Powers: A Brief Overview." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.

Monday, July 10 Bureaucracy

- *American Government*, Chapter 8.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 239-256.
- Nancy Cook and Andrew Restuccia. January 23, 2017. "[Revenge of the Bureaucrats.](#)" *Politico*.
- Rachel Augustine Potter. February 6, 2017. "[Why Trump Can't Undo the Regulatory State So Easily.](#)" *Brookings: Series on Regulatory Process and Perspective*.

Wednesday, July 12 The Judiciary

- *American Government*, Chapter 9.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 273-314; 589-594.

Monday, July 17

Public Opinion

- *American Government*, Chapter 10.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 317-329.
- Pew Research Center, [Political Polarization in the American Public](#).
- Kyle Dropp, Joshua D. Kertzer, and Thomas Zeitzoff. April 7, 2014. "[The less Americans know about Ukraine's location, the more they want U.S. to intervene.](#)" *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.
- Kathy Frankovic. December 14, 2016. "[Americans and Trump part ways over Russia.](#)" *YouGov*.

Wednesday, July 19

Elections

- *American Government*, Chapter 11.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 377-392.
- John Sides. August 23, 2016. "[Never forget: The 2016 presidential election is supposed to be one that Republicans can win.](#)" *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.
- Lynn Vavreck. June 20, 2016. "[Yes, Political Ads Are Still Important, Even for Donald Trump.](#)" *The New York Times The UpShot*.

Monday, July 24

Parties and Interest Groups

- *American Government*, Chapters 12 and 13.
- *The Enduring Debate*, pp. 393-403; 416-461.
- Matthew Green and Douglas Harris. November 18, 2016. "[Nancy Pelosi will probably beat Tim Ryan. But that doesn't mean her job is secure.](#)" *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.
- Emily Kalah Gade. January 30, 2017. "[Why the Women's March may be the start of a serious social movement.](#)" *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.

Wednesday, July 26

Policymaking

- Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*, chapters 1-2.
- David Mayhew, *Divided We Govern*, chapters 1, 2 and 4.
- Howell, William and Jon Pevehouse, "When Congress Stops Wars," *Foreign Affairs*, Sept/Oct 2007.
- Wildavsky, Aaron, "The Two Presidencies" (1969).

Wednesday, August 2

FINAL EXAM