

# Political Science 201: American National Government

## Fall 2019

**Class Time:** Mondays & Wednesdays 3:55pm-5:10pm

**Class Location:** Gambrell Hall 151

**Instructor:** Dr. Elizabeth Connors

**Office:** Gambrell Hall 323

**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 pm or by appointment

**Email:** connors4@mailbox.sc.edu [Note: may take up to 24 hours to respond]

### Course Description

What the informed citizen and specialist should know about the organization of American government, including the Constitution and what it means today, the Congress, political parties, pressure groups, growth of the Presidency, the Supreme Court, judicial review, federalism, separation of powers, and the Bill of Rights.

### Learning Objectives

This course is an introduction to American politics focusing on the constitution, the institutions of the United States' government and the processes and bodies that determine public policies. The objectives of the course include providing students with:

- Understanding of the philosophical origins and political implications of the American constitution
- Ability to understand how the United States political system works
- Understanding of major theories and approaches to American politics
- Understanding of the American electoral system and electoral politics
- Ability to think critically about political issues

For most of you, this is your first political science course and you may not be exactly sure what political science is. Briefly, political science is a social science that attempts to develop rigorous theories and explanations of political phenomena. When possible, political scientists use data such as survey results or economic data to test and support their theories. Most political scientists attempt to make their theories as objective as possible rather than promote some particular philosophy or ideology. It may help to understand what political science is by understanding what it is *not*. Political science is *not* history, although history is often useful for our understanding of previous and contemporary political questions. Political science is not social studies or civics, in that its goal is not to make you better citizens—although being better informed is an objective. Political science is *not* current events, news, or journalism, although these things are helpful in our understanding of political phenomena and trends. Political science is not partisan politics or trying to promote a particular ideology, although we will study political parties and ideologies.

### Required Text

Barbour, Christine, and Gerald C. Wright. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizens in American Politics, The Essentials, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition*.

## Course Requirements

You are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared by reading the assigned material *before* class. You should also take notes during the lecture—you can do this with either a laptop or a notebook—I have no preference, but there is research that suggests taking notes by hand is more effective than by typing. *And*, not having a laptop saves you from yourself (e.g., going on Facebook or watching cat videos during class).

The exams are comprised of the reading material, slides, and lectures, so make sure to pay attention to *all* of these! The best way to do well in this course is to read the assigned material carefully and before class, attend every class session, take notes each lecture, and, obviously, study before the exams. You are encouraged to bring your textbooks to class, as my lectures neatly coincide with the book—both reading the textbook and listening to my lectures will help you do well on the exams. Also, feel free to ask questions during class or slow me down if you do not understand something—I want you to learn!

## Grading:

4 Exams—all cumulative, all 50 multiple choice questions, *each worth 200 points (800 points in total)*. To help you, I will email out a review sheet to help you study for the exam—once you receive it, please go through it and—on the day of the “review session”—bring to class any questions you have.

Exam 1—September 23<sup>rd</sup>, in class

Exam 2—October 28<sup>th</sup>, in class

Exam 3—December 2<sup>nd</sup>, in class

Exam 4—TBD in designated exam room

Attendance, *worth 200 points*

At end of randomly chosen classes, write your name on sheet of paper and pass in

Extra credit opportunity

Opportunities for extra credit points will be announced in class at later date

## Final Grading Scheme:

935 - 1000 points	A
895 - 934	A-
865 - 894	B+
835 - 864	B
795 - 834	B-
765 - 794	C+
735 - 764	C
695 - 734	C-
665 - 694	D+
595 - 664	D
0 - 594	F

## **Makeup Exam Policy**

It is essential that you understand the following policy for the course since *no exceptions will be made*. No exams may be taken early for any reason. A student who misses an exam must provide a *very* good reason supported by evidence such as a hospital admittance form. If you are ill prior

to an exam, let me know as soon as possible beforehand if you may miss the exam. Makeup exams will consist entirely of long essays. Failure to write one of the exams without providing a sufficient excuse will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

### **What is Expected from Students**

I expect every student to come to class fully prepared. That means you have read the required reading prior to class. This will make much of the lecture review for you and you will find class to be a good time to raise questions you may have about the reading. Class discussion is usually more interesting than lectures and is greatly enhanced by well-informed questions and comments. I hope that you feel free to voice your comments and to question my lectures. However, you are expected to be respectful of me and the other students in the class, especially when it comes to discussing issues with which people may have strong feelings.

Staying informed with current events is a good way for you to apply what you are learning in class to the real world. The textbook also supplies suggested readings at the end of each chapter to provide you with more in-depth information about subjects that may interest you in general. While many of you will never take another political science class, this is an opportunity to get to know a lot more about the country where you may spend the rest of your lives.

In terms of grades, there is no substitution for hard work. Review sessions will be given the class before each exam and students may ask any relevant question that is not phrased as: “Will \_\_\_\_\_ be on the test?” Test questions will be fair, though difficult, and will come from textbook or lecture material. If you have questions or require additional help, please let me know.

### **SCHEDULE**

*Note: Assigned readings are due the day of class*

Class 1: Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup>

- Have assigned textbook
- Check email because I will be sending any announcements there (no excuse later on if you don't get it)
- Lecture - Introduction to class

*No class—start reading for next Wednesday!*

*No class for Labor Day (September 2<sup>nd</sup>)—Enjoy the long weekend!*

Class 2: Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 1: 1-32
- Lecture – Chapter 1 (Politics: Who Gets What, and How?)

Class 3: Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 2: 33-59
- Lecture – Chapter 2 (American Citizens and Political Culture)

Class 4: Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 3: 60-88
- Lecture – Chapter 3 (Politics of the American Founding)

Class 5: Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

- Read – Chapter 4: 89-126
- Lecture – Chapter 4 (Federalism and the U.S. Constitution)

Class 6: Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 5: 127-168
- Lecture – Chapter 5 (Fundamental American Liberties) & Review for Exam 1

Class 7: Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **EXAM 1 (CHAPTERS 1-5)**

Class 8: Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 6: 169-190
- Lecture – Chapter 6 (The Struggle for Equal Rights) & Review from Exam 1

Class 9: Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> (Rosh Hashanah)

- Read - Chapter 6: 191-212
- Lecture – Chapter 6 (The Struggle for Equal Rights)

Class 10: Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Read - Chapter 7: 213-234
- Lecture – Chapter 7 (Congress)

Class 11: Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 7: 235-260
- Lecture – Chapter 7 (Congress)

Class 12: Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> (Yom Kippur)

- Read - Chapter 8: 261-280
- Lecture – Chapter 8 (The Presidency)

Class 13: Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 8: 281-300
- Lecture – Chapter 8 (The Presidency)

Class 14: Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 9: 301-333
- Lecture – Chapter 9 (The Bureaucracy)

Class 15: Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>

- Read - Chapter 10: 334-352
- Lecture – Chapter 10 (The American Legal System and the Courts)

Class 16: Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Read - Chapter 10: 353-370
- Lecture – Chapter 10 (The American Legal System and the Courts) & Review for Exam 2

Class 17: Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>

- **EXAM 2 (CHAPTERS 6-10)**

Class 18: Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 11: 371-389
- Lecture – Chapter 11 (Public Opinion) & Review from Exam 2

Class 19: Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 11: 390-404
- Lecture – Chapter 11 (Public Opinion)

Class 20: Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 12: 405-438
- Lecture – Chapter 12 (Political Parties)

Class 21: Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 13: 439-472
- Lecture – Chapter 13 (Interest Groups)

Class 22: Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 14: 473-493
- Lecture – Chapter 14 (Voting, Campaigns, and Elections)

Class 23: Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 14: 494-512
- Lecture – Chapter 14 (Voting, Campaigns, and Elections)

Class 24: Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>

- Read - Chapter 15: 513-528
- Lecture – Chapter 15 (Media, Power, and Political Communication)

Class 25: Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>

- Read – Chapter 15: 529-543
- Lecture – Chapter 15 (Media, Power, and Political Communication) & Review for Exam 3

*No class for Thanksgiving Break (November 27<sup>th</sup>)—Enjoy the holiday!*

Class 26: Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

- **EXAM 3 (CHAPTERS 11-15)**

Class 27: Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> (last day of class)

- Lecture – Review from Exam 3 & Review for Final Exam

**FINAL EXAM—date & time TBD**