

## Introduction to American Government

### Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday: 10:00 - 11:00am

### Course Information

POL 102: Section 1  
Humanities 1003  
Monday, Wednesday: 8:00 - 9:20am  
Spring 2017

### Course Description and Goals:

This class will cover the fundamental aspects of American government. It will provide a broad outline of various sub-fields, and lay the groundwork for more advanced study in future classes. Upon completion of this course, students will have the ability to identify and explain the key concepts underlying the American form of government, and relate these ideas to present and future governmental actions. In addition, students should be able to integrate the founding principles of the Constitution with subsequent developments to discuss how the nature of government has changed through the country's history. Finally, students will be able to evaluate government actions from a prospective of knowledge concerning its procedures.

### Required Text:

Geer, Schiller, Segal, Herrera, and Glencross. 2015. *Gateways to Democracy: The Essentials*. Third edition. ISBN: 1285852915 (The "MindTap" software included with some versions of the book is unneeded for this class).

### Student Responsibilities:

*Attendance* - Students are expected to attend all classes. Some test questions may concern lecture or in-class discussion, and may not be covered in the assigned readings. Attendance is important to earning a passing grade.

Recorded versions of the lectures from the online version of this course can be found at the following URL:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL74z3I3u6hVeEUr\\_H-EKokIaGrxdWSax](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL74z3I3u6hVeEUr_H-EKokIaGrxdWSax)

*Participation* - In-class participation does not factor into the final grade. However, due to the subject matter of the class, situations will frequently occur during class in which participation is welcomed. Please respect fellow students in any comments made during class periods.

*Reading* - Students are expected to read the assigned chapters from *Gateways* prior to each class period. Assigned readings will provide essential context for classroom lectures. In addition, I will post supplemental readings to Blackboard prior to each class (particularly current news stories). Questions regarding the book chapters and supplemental readings will appear on the tests. **Check Blackboard for supplemental readings prior to each class.**

*Exams* - There will be three midterm exams, as well as a (non-cumulative) final exam. Each will count equally toward one's final grade. Students are expected to arrive on time for scheduled exams. I will stop handing out exams after the first student has completed his or her test and has left the room. Bring a #2 pencil to each exam.

Make-up exams will only be allowed due to a legitimate, documented reason for absence. Excused absences from tests must be discussed with the instructor on a case-by-case basis. **You must notify me of your circumstances prior to the original test date in order to receive a make-up exam.** Exceptions will only be made if prior notification is impossible.

*Reading Quizzes* - There will be a total of six quizzes scheduled throughout the semester. Quizzes will be administered during the first fifteen minutes of class, and will cover the key topics of the assigned book chapter. Students who arrive late to class after quizzes have been turned in will not be permitted to take the quiz, and will receive a grade of zero. Make-up quizzes will be permitted based on the criteria described in the previous section (i.e. you must give me prior notification of a legitimate reason for absence).

### **Grading:**

Course grades will be assigned on the following scale:

92% or better:	A
90	A-
88	B+
83	B
80	B-
78	C+
73	C
70	C-
68	D+
60	D
<60	F

The final grade will be based on the aggregation of four test scores (20% each) and six quiz scores (20% total). Grades will not be rounded (i.e. 60.01%=D, 59.99%=F). **Final grades are not negotiable based on personal circumstances, and depend solely on the number of questions answered correctly across the four tests and six quizzes.**

In the event that the average grade for one of the tests falls below a “C” level, I will add a uniform curve to each student’s score sufficient to bring the class average up to 73.

Extra credit will not be awarded.

### **Course Schedule:**

Schedule, readings, and other syllabus content subject to change with advance notice.

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Book Chapter</u>
<u>Week 1</u>			
Monday	23-Jan	Course Introduction/Syllabus Overview	
Wednesday	25-Jan	Introduction to American Democracy	1

Week 2

Monday	30-Jan	The Constitution	2
Wednesday	1-Feb	Federalism	3

Week 3

Monday	6-Feb	Federalism (con't) [Quiz]	
Wednesday	8-Feb	Civil Liberties	4

Week 4

Monday	13-Feb	Review for First Test	
Wednesday	15-Feb	First Test	

Week 5

Monday	20-Feb	Civil Rights	5
Wednesday	22-Feb	Congress [Quiz]	10

Week 6

Monday	27-Feb	The Presidency I	11
Wednesday	1-Mar	The Presidency II [Quiz]	11

Week 7

Monday	6-Mar	Review for Second Test	
Wednesday	8-Mar	Second Test	

Week 8

Monday	13-Mar	Spring Break	
Wednesday	15-Mar	Spring Break	

Week 9

Monday	20-Mar	The Judiciary	13
Wednesday	22-Mar	The Bureaucracy	12

Week 10

Monday	27-Mar	Interest Groups [Quiz]	7
Wednesday	29-Mar	Political Parties	8

Week 11

Monday	3-Apr	Economic and Domestic Policy	14
Wednesday	5-Apr	No Class	

### Week 12

Monday	10-Apr	Review for Third Test	
Wednesday	12-Apr	Third Test	

### Week 13

Monday	17-Apr	Foreign Policy	14
Wednesday	19-Apr	Public Opinion [Quiz]	6

### Week 14

Monday	24-Apr	The Media	6
Wednesday	26-Apr	Elections, Campaigns, and Voting [Quiz]	9

### Week 15

Monday	1-May	Review for Final Exam	
Wednesday	3-May	Final Exam	

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

### **Academic Integrity**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>.

### **Critical Incident Management**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

### **Electronic Communication Statement**

Email and especially email sent via Blackboard (<http://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>) is one of the ways the faculty officially communicates with you for this course. It is your responsibility to make sure that you read your email in your official University email account. For most students that is Google Apps for Education (<http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud>), but you may verify your official Electronic Post Office (EPO) address at <http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/checkingor->

[changing-your-mail-forwarding-address-in-the-epo](#). If you choose to forward your official University email to another off-campus account, faculty are not responsible for any undeliverable messages to your alternative personal accounts. You can set up Google Mail forwarding using these DoIT-provided instructions found at <http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/settingup-mail-forwarding-in-google-mail>. If you need technical assistance, please contact Client Support at (631) 632-9800 or [supportteam@stonybrook.edu](mailto:supportteam@stonybrook.edu).