

## **POLI 1090-004: American Government in a Multicultural World**

Spring 2020 | TR 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM | Haley 3203

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Office Hours:	TR 9:00 AM—10:30 AM; By appointment (email me)		

### **Overview, Objectives, and Outcomes**

This course is designed to provide you with a broad understanding of the development and mechanics of the American political system. This understanding, however, is as much theoretical as it is factual. The American political system is but one example of a government serving the public goods typically demanded by citizens. As such, we will discuss what those public goods are, potential solutions, the particular solution of the American government, and the implications of that solution for Americans.

This course aims to teach both the theoretical foundations behind the American political system as well as the historical development of that system. Specifically, we will cover the institutions of the American federal government—from their founding to present—and how they function, extra-governmental actors and their influence in the political process (lobbying firms, interest groups, and active citizens, among others), the importance of elections in affecting the political process, and recent trends in public opinion and political behavior of the average American.

Student Learning Outcomes: by the end of the course, you should sufficiently understand American political system so that you feel qualified to participate in politics as an active and informed citizen. In addition, you should be able to articulate the theoretical motivations behind the institutions and processes of that system. Through all, you should think critically and skeptically, as a scientist.

Official catalog description: American Government in a Multicultural World. (3). LEC. 3. Social Science II Core. American political institutions, processes and behavior in comparative context, with special attention to the ways in which cultural and social diversity in the the United States has impacted its politics.

### **Prerequisites**

None.

## Expectations

College is an environment in which you learn how to manage your time and set your priorities. I do not take attendance. There is, however, a strong correlation between course attendance and performance (not to mention that a substantial portion exam material is drawn from lectures). If you choose to come to class, you should do so responsibly. I fully expect that you will have done any assigned readings before coming to class. Class is much more interesting when you engage with both your instructor and the material. I also expect that you make a reasonable effort to maintain classroom decorum by refraining from reading newspapers, doing crossword puzzles, sleeping, texting, or playing on Facebook (or whatever social network/game/trend that I'm oblivious to). Please silence all cell phones. These ideas are formally outlined in the Auburn University Classroom Behavior policy: see [tinyurl.com/au-st-pol](http://tinyurl.com/au-st-pol) for more details.

## Text

There is only one required textbook for this class.

Krutz, Glen. 2017. *American Government*. OpenStax. ISBN: 978-1-947172-19-7.

The textbook is free and sponsored by the open-access OpenStax project. Your instructor believes in a high quality education that is accessible to as many students as possible. OpenStax is a first step towards that reality. The only problem is that there are many, many versions of the book. Notice: we are using an older edition of the book. Please make sure that you are using the correct version. There are three options for the book.

Option 1: An electronic version is available at [tinyurl.com/1090book](http://tinyurl.com/1090book). I have the *exact* version I use available at [tinyurl.com/1090gradecalc](http://tinyurl.com/1090gradecalc). Option 2: There are print copies available for a fee in the Auburn University Bookstore. These are identical to the free online version. Option 3: A third version, which I personally edit, will be on TopHat (explained below). I highly, highly, highly recommend using this edited version.

Any other supplementary readings will be accessible to all Auburn University students through the University Libraries or Canvas.

## Other Course Materials

Auburn University partners with TopHat. This service allows me to make classes much more interactive. You can view lecture slides on your phone or other device, take notes on top of slides, answer questions in class, and much more. More importantly, you have access to a special version of the textbook *edited by your instructor*. I do not like the regular textbook, but I use it because it is free. On TopHat, I delete all the material I think is not useful and add material I think clarifies politics. I highly, highly, highly recommend using this version.

You've already been enrolled in TopHat through All Access, a program of the AU bookstore. You receive an unique access code from them, and it is billed to you electronically. *If you want to opt*

out of this service (which I do not recommend), you need to do so by the 10th day of class.

## Assignments and Grades

The assignments are three examinations, weekly course notes, and a short written assignment. These assignments are detailed below. For your grade, the grade percentages are:

Exam 1, February 6 (Thursday):	20%
Exam 2, March 19 (Thursday):	30%
Exam 3, April 30 (Thursday):	35%
Class summary notes (each Sunday evening):	10%
Memo assignment, March 6 (Friday):	5%

When calculating your grades, I use the standard Auburn University grading scale.

89.5-100:	A
79.5-89.49:	B
69.5-79.49:	C
59.5-69.49:	D
59.49↓:	F

To maintain fairness, I do not change grades under any circumstances except when I make a mathematical error in computing your grade. There is a grade calculator at [tinyurl.com/1090gradecalc](http://tinyurl.com/1090gradecalc). Do not email me about when test grades will be posted or to calculate your grade. Do not email me about your grade in general: I cannot discuss grades over email.

## Exams

Makeup examinations will only be offered to those with a University excused absence, which can be found at [tinyurl.com/au-st-pol](http://tinyurl.com/au-st-pol). It is your responsibility to ensure that your absence is covered by the University, and it is your responsibility to comply with all policies. These policies require that you notify me of your absence prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible, but within one week from the missed class. Your makeup examination must be scheduled within two weeks of this notification (though I recommend much, much earlier). If I need additional information on your absence (doctor's notes, for instance), you must provide this additional documentation within one week of the last date of the absence. Note that this policy also allows for makeup examinations for reasons deemed appropriate by the instructor. If you do not have a University excused absence, and you are going to miss an examination, it is much easier for me to work with you if you notify me promptly, especially if you can provide some sort of documentation. You can view your exams in my office the Monday after the relevant makeup period.

Makeup examinations will be offered the Friday after the regularly scheduled exam in Haley. These examinations may differ in content from the regular exams, but not in difficulty. More information will be available as a makeup examination approaches.

## Class Summary Notes

The best way of studying for the exams is to interact with your notes early and often. But we're often tempted to study the night before and ignore everything until then. To that end, I require you to submit weekly summaries of the class notes. Each week, you have to produce a one-page summary of the notes for the *week just concluded*. **It cannot be longer than one page.** Notes must be submitted by 11:59 PM on the Sunday of the week *after* class. In other words: if you are summarizing Week 1 Notes, they are due the Sunday *after Week 1*. The summary must be submitted as a **.pdf** on **Canvas**. For example, the notes for Week 1 (January 7 - 9) are due Sunday, January 12, at 11:59 PM.

You cannot submit summaries for the weeks of Exam 1 or Exam 2 (Weeks 5 and 10).

There are 13 weeks of class, not including the two exam weeks during the semester. You must submit 10 summaries of course notes. That means you can miss three weeks (you can pick 10 of the 13 weeks to submit notes). This also means *I will not accept late submissions for any reason whatsoever*. You can replace poor grades by re-submitting later weeks if you like. In other words, if you submit all 13 weeks of summaries, I'll only count the top 10 summaries.

## Memo Assignment

After Exam 1, you will be responsible for a one-page electronic memo. There will be a full assignment (with specific instructions) uploaded to **Canvas** after Exam 1. The Memo Assignment is due Friday, March 6, at 11:59 PM on **Canvas**.

## Extra Credit

Extra credit may be offered at the discretion of the instructor throughout this class. There is absolutely no guarantee of extra credit. You should plan on there being no extra credit.

## Et Cetera

Look around! There are a bunch of people in the class with you! As such, I ask that follow three guidelines when attempting to contact me. First: include the course number and section number [1090-004] in the subject of your email. Your email will almost certainly get lost in the abyss if it missing this information. Second: wait at least 48 hours, not including weekends, to send a second email. I promise I will get to it, but it may not be immediate. Third: email me only from your Auburn University official email address. In the event that I need to contact you, it will almost certainly be at your **@auburn.edu** email address. You should check this email often!

## **Student Academic Honesty**

Auburn University is a institution committed to integrity and honor. It is your job as a University citizen to uphold those values. I will not tolerate any cheating or plagiarism, broadly defined as using unauthorized aids during examinations or attempting to represent someone else's work as your own. You are not as sly as you think you are. With hundreds of heads facing forward, it is extremely easy to tell who is working alone and who is not. Be aware that academic dishonesty can lead directly to failing the course and being referred to the Academic Honesty Committee. Penalties include expulsion from Auburn, as per Chapter 1202 of Title XII. For additional information visit [tinyurl.com/au-st-pol](http://tinyurl.com/au-st-pol).

## **Emergency Contingency**

If normal class is disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

## **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please electronically submit your approved accommodations through AU Access and make an individual appointment with the me during the first week of classes (or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately). If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Any requests or arrangements made with the instructor in person must be followed up with an official email request for documentation. If you believe you may need an accommodation, it is your responsibility to secure it before the first exam.

## **Copyrighted Materials**

The lectures, presentations (including slides), readings, and exams for this course are copyrighted, so you do not have the right to copy and distribute them. This includes recording class lectures.

## **Course Outline**

### PART I: WHAT THE GOVERNMENT MEANS TO YOU

Week 1 (January 9): What is "Politics" or "Science"? How is Political Science "Scientific"?

*American Government*, Chapter 1

Week 2 (January 14 - 16): The Constitution

*American Government*, Chapter 2  
The Constitution. <http://constitutionus.com/>

Week 3 (January 21 - 23): The Constitution, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights

*American Government*, Chapters 4 and 5  
The Constitutional Amendments. <http://constitutionus.com/#rbillofrights>

Week 4 (January 28 - 30): Federalism

*American Government*, Chapter 3  
January 29 (Monday): 15th Class Day (last day to drop with no grade assignment).

Week 5 (February 4 - 6): Political Parties

*American Government*, Chapter 9  
**February 6 (Thursday): Exam 1.**

## PART II: THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

Week 6 (February 11 - 13): Presidency and Bureaucracy

*American Government*, Chapters 12 and 15

Week 7 (February 18 - 20): Judiciary and Interest Groups

*American Government*, Chapters 10 and 13

Week 8 (February 25 - 27): Congress and Lawmaking

*American Government*, Chapter 11  
February 26 (Wednesday): Mid-semester grades posted.

Week 9 (March 3 - 5): Policies: Economic, Domestic, and Foreign

*American Government*, Chapters 16 and 17  
March 5 (Thursday): 41st Class Day (deadline to request moving final exam).  
**March 6 (Friday): Memo assignment due at 11:59 PM.**

Week 9.5 (March 10 - 12): No Class (Spring Break)

Week 10 (March 17 - 19): Policies and Catchup Day

**March 19 (Thursday): Exam 2.**

PART III: HOW YOU TYPICALLY THINK AND PARTICIPATE

Week 11 (March 24 - 26): Campaigns, Elections, and Voting

*American Government*, Chapter 7

Week 12 (March 31 - April 2): Primaries, Conventions, and Local Elections

*American Government*, Chapter 14

April 3 (Friday): Last day to withdraw with no grade penalty (W).

Week 13 (April 7 - 9): Partisanship and Mass Media

*American Government*, Chapter 8

Week 14 (April 14 - 16): Public Opinion and Political Psychology

*American Government*, Chapter 6

Lau and Redlawsk, *Voting Correctly*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2952076>

*Pro tip*: you must be logged in to [lib.auburn.edu](http://lib.auburn.edu) to access this reading.

**April 16 (Thursday): No class. Instructor at MPSA.**

Week 15 (April 21 - 23): Polarization and Representation

*Additional reading to be assigned.*

**April 30 (Thursday): Exam 3 at 4 PM.**