

**Introduction to American Government
PSCI 210-01
University of Montana**

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor Information	Course Information
Instructor: Ray Curtis	Term: Fall 2018
Office: Corbin Hall 332, hours immediately after each class	Class Meeting Days: M,W, F
Phone: 406-360-0762	Class Meeting Hours: 9:00-9:50
Email: ray.curtis@mso.umt.edu	Class Location: LA 11
TAs: Sierra Anderson (office hours: M, W 11-12, Corbin 345) Kaylee Nassiri (office hours: T, Th, 11-12, Corbin 345)	sierra.andreson@umconnect.umt.edu kaylee.nassiri@umontana.edu

I. Course Description

Students will explore the nature, purpose, and forms of the American government; relationship between function and structure; dynamics of political change; governmental problems of modern society; emphasis upon constitutional principles, political processes of the national government, public opinion, interest groups, political parties, elections, Congress, the Presidency and the Courts.

II. Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- 1) understand the origins and nature of the constitutional system, federalism, and civil liberties;
- 2) appreciate the relationship between and the development of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches;
- 3) understand basic social science theories concerning political behavior, bureaucracies, interest groups, and political parties;
- 4) understand how social scientists explain and understand social and political processes;
- 5) write a thesis-based persuasive essay;
- 6) know the difference between a well-crafted argument substantiated with the effective use of evidence, and a poorly constructed argument based largely upon personal values and opinions.

III. Course Prerequisites

None

IV. Course Credits

3

V. Required Texts and Materials

The basis of our studies will be the US Constitution, you will need to obtain a copy.

Occasionally I will assign an article to read that you will be able to access via Moodle.

VI. Grades

If people were perfect assigning grades would not be necessary but, as Madison wrote, we are not. Therefore, you will be assigned a grade based upon your performance on the tasks listed below. It is not a perfect system although it is rather traditional. It is possible for you to earn 1000 points.

Assessment	Points possible
Random in class participation assignment, 15 times x 10 pts, one must be in attendance to earn these points.	150
1 st Midterm Exam, October 5	200
2 nd Midterm Exam, November 9	200
Paper, "A More Perfect Union", due November 19	150
Final Exam, December 12, 8-10 AM	300
	1000

Grading Scale (%)	
100-94	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
0 - 59	F

VII. Course Policies

Late Work Policy: Late work is unacceptable unless there are extenuating circumstances. Please speak with me if that is the case. If granted an exemption expect a 10% deduction from your overall grade for that assignment.

Extra Credit Policy: There will be a few extra credit assignments offered in this course. These assignments provide you an opportunity to improve upon your grade total. Consider this a way to make up for a missed participation assignment or low test grade.

Grades of "Incomplete": The current college policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester I am the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

VIII. Course Policies and Student Expectations

Disability Access: UM is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities.

If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Attendance Policy: As stated previously, students can earn up to 150 points for random in class participation assignments.

Professionalism Policy: I do not expect any behavior that disrupts the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings.

Academic Conduct Policy: Please refer to the Student Conduct Code which “embodies and promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities associated with constructive citizenship in our academic community at the University of Montana.”

<http://www.umt.edu/vpesa/documents/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20PDF-%20FINAL%208-27-13.pdf>)

Any student involved in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action imposed by the instructor up to and including administrative withdrawal or a failing grade for the course. Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting others’ work as your own, using Internet sources without citation, having another student take your exam, tampering with the work of another student, facilitating other students’ acts of academic dishonesty, etc. Depending on the severity of the offense, disciplinary action may range from an “F” grade on an assignment or test to an “F” in the course. Severe cases and/or repeat offenses of academic dishonesty may also result in more severe disciplinary actions up to and including administrative withdrawal.

I. Proposed Course Sequence and Related Chapter Readings (Subject to Modification)

Foundations of American Government

Socialization

Political Parties

1st Exam

Elections

Media

Interest Groups

2nd Exam

Legislative Branch: Article I

Executive Branch: Article II

Reform Paper

Bureaucracy and Policy

Judicial Branch, Civil Liberties and Rights: Article III, Amendments

Final