

**American Government**  
Political Science 540  
University of Montana  
Wednesdays 12:00 – 2:20, LA 344  
Spring 2019

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Office: Liberal Arts 354  
Office Hrs: Wed. 2:20-3:30  
& by appointment

**Required Texts and Other Readings**

We will read the following books:

- Amy J. Binder and Kate Wood, *Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives* (Princeton University Press, 2013).
- Andrea Louise Campbell, *Trapped in America's Safety Net: One Family's Struggle* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).
- David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (Yale University Press, 1975).
- David C.W. Parker, *Battle for the Big Sky* (CQ Press, 2014).
- Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Greg Weiner, *American Burke: The Uncommon Liberalism of Daniel Patrick Moynihan* (University Press of Kansas, 2015).

Readings in scholarly journals can be accessed through the Mansfield Library's website. Other readings are available via the web links provided on this syllabus. And still other readings—designated with an asterisk (\*)—will be posted on the course's Moodle website. The instructor reserves the right to add, eliminate, or alter course readings.

**Requirements and Grading**

Participation:	33.3%
Research Paper:	33.3%
Final Exam:	33.3%

*Participation:* Most of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings in a seminar setting. As such, class participation will be very important. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Daily attendance will be taken. *Students missing 3 or more of our scheduled class meetings will not pass the course.*

- Every other week, students will write a two-page response paper on *a central aspect* of that week's material, circulate it to the class via email by 5:00 AM on Wednesday (so others have time to read it prior to class), and present their response papers in class.
- Students will formally present their research papers in class at the end of the semester.

Research Paper: Students will write a paper of about 20 – 25 pages on a topic of their choosing that is related to the course and that is approved by the instructor. Papers will be due on April 26. Each student will meet with the instructor at least once during the semester to discuss his/her paper and its design.

Final Exam: All students will complete a take-home final exam at the end of the semester.

Field Exam: Graduate students in the Political Science M.A. program will also complete the American Government field exam.

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	F below 60
A- 90-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9	
	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9	

\*\*\*\* The Final Exam and the Research Paper must be completed in order to pass the course.\*\*\*\*

### **Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at [http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php). Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

### **Accessibility**

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements must contact the instructor as soon as possible and must contact DSS in order to arrange for a letter of approval for accommodations to be provided to the instructor. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154; phone: (406) 243-2243.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **PART I: THE STUDY OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Week 1, Jan. 16: Introduction to the Course**

**Week 2, Jan. 23: What is Political Science, and What Should it Aspire to?**

**Week 3, Jan. 30: Traditional Political Science**

### **PART II: CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH**

**Week 4, Feb. 6: Behaviorism**

**Week 5, Feb. 13: Rational Choice**

**Week 6, Feb. 20: Historical Institutionalism and American Political Development**

**Week 7, Feb. 27: Individual Research Paper Conferences**

**Week 8, Mar. 6: Ideas**

### **PART IV: DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO STUDYING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**Week 9, Mar. 13: An Ethnographic Study of American Social Policy**

**Week 10, Mar. 20: Studying Politics on Campus**

**Week 11: Spring Break**

**Week 12, Apr. 3: Soaking and Poking on the Campaign Trail**

### **PART V: SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTROVERSIES**

**Week 13, Apr. 10: Irregularities in LaCour**

**Week 14, Apr. 17: A Criminal Research Agenda?**

**Week 15, April 24: Research Paper Presentations**