

Introduction to American Government
Political Science (PSCI) 210
University of Montana
Tu/Th 2:00 – 3:20
Eck Hall (aka, Liberal Arts Building), Room 11
Fall 2019

	<i>Professor:</i> Robert Saldin	<i>Teaching Assistant:</i> Quincy Riordan	<i>Teaching Assistant:</i> Dillon Sarb
<i>Office:</i>	Liberal Arts 354	Corbin 347	Corbin 347
<i>Office Hrs:</i>	Tu/Th 1:00-2:00, 3:30-4:00 & by appointment	Mon. 12-1, Wed. 2:30-3:30 & by appointment	Mon./Wed. 11:00-12:00 & by appointment
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to American government and politics and is designed to provide a foundation for understanding and participating in the American political system. We will examine the theoretical ideas that informed the creation of America’s political system, how that system developed and changed over time, and some of the major contemporary challenges to its maintenance. We will also draw on current news and events for additional context in our study of American democracy.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to: 1) understand the origins and nature of the constitutional system; 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.

Required Text and Other Readings

The following book is available at the University of Montana Campus Bookstore:

James Morone and Rogan Kersh, *By the People: Debating American Government* (Brief Version), 4th edition.

- It’s fine with me if you’d like to use the full version of this text or earlier editions of either the brief or full version. Please note, however, that there are some changes in each edition and that the chapter numbers for the brief and full editions don’t always correspond (though the topics generally do). An online version of the text is also available for purchase or rent.

Other readings will consist of primary source documents and timely articles. The primary source documents are noted on the syllabus (in Weeks 2 and 3) and can be found in the appendixes of our

book, *By the People*. Other primary source documents and timely articles don't appear on the syllabus but may be added throughout the semester as the instructors deem appropriate. In these cases, the readings will be posted on the course's Moodle website and students will be notified. The instructors reserve the right to add, eliminate, or alter course readings.

Requirements and Grading

Weekly Assignments:	15%
Exam 1 (Sept. 19):	15%
Exam 2 (Oct. 10):	15%
Exam 3 (Oct. 31):	15%
Exam 4 (Nov. 21)	15%
Final Exam (Dec. 10):	25%

Weekly Assignments: In all full weeks of class without an exam, students will complete a short writing assignment. Unless otherwise noted, Weekly Assignments will be made available on Tuesdays and will be due via Moodle prior to class on Thursdays. More information about Weekly Assignments will be provided in class.

Exams: Exams 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be administered in class on *Thursday, September 19; Thursday, October 10; Thursday, October 31; and Thursday, November 21*. The Final Exam will be held from 3:20 – 5:20 on *Tuesday, December 10*. Exams may include a combination of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions. Makeup exams will only be permitted if Professor Saldin has been notified *prior* to the missed exam and only if he agrees that the absence is necessitated by a serious, documented emergency. Add these dates to your calendar now to avoid scheduling anything that conflicts with the exams.

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	below 60	F
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		

Optional Extra Credit Paper

If they choose, students may write a formal paper for up to 15 extra credit points to be added to their lowest exam score. For example, if a student's worst exam score is a 70, and s/he submits a paper earning 10 out of the possible 15 points, the exam score is adjusted to an 80. Extra Credit Paper questions will be posted on the class' Moodle site. Your task will be to answer one of the questions in 3 double-spaced pages with 1-inch margins and 12-point font. Papers are due via Moodle at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, Nov. 26. *Extensions are not available for this opportunity, and late papers will not be accepted.*

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the instructors up to and including failing the course and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#). We take academic honesty very seriously and will do our utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating. Please contact Professor Saldin if you have questions or concerns about academic honesty.

Social Sciences (S) and Democracy and Citizenship (Y) General Education Requirements

In order for this class to satisfy your General Education Requirements in Social Sciences (S) and Democracy and Citizenship (Y), you must take the course for a traditional letter grade and earn a C– or better.

Accessibility

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications, however, if you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance and you wish to request accommodations for this course, please register with DSS by contacting them in Lommasson Center 154 or at (406) 243-2243. Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements must contact DSS in order to arrange for and provide the instructor with a letter of approval for accommodations at least one week prior to the necessary accommodation.

Class Schedule

Week 1, Aug. 27 & 29: Introduction and the Ideas that Shape American Politics

Week 2, Sept. 3 & 5: The Constitution, Part I

Week 3, Sept. 10 & 12: The Constitution, Part II

Week 4, Sept. 17 & 19: Federalism and Nationalism

Week 5, Sept. 24 & 26: Civil Liberties and The Struggle for Civil Rights

Week 6, Oct. 1 & 3: Public Opinion and Political Participation

Week 7, Oct. 8 & 10: Media, Technology, and Government

Week 8, Oct. 15 & 17: Campaigns and Elections

Week 9, Oct. 22 & 24: Interest Groups and Political Parties

Week 10, Oct. 29 & 31: Congress

Week 11, Nov. 5 & 7: The Presidency and Bureaucracy

Week 12, Nov. 12 & 14: The Judicial Branch

Week 13, Nov. 19 & 21: Domestic and Foreign Policy

Week 14, Nov. 26

Week 15, Dec. 3 & 5: Conclusion

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 10, 3:20 – 5:20