

JACK MILLER CENTER

American *Government*

American Government, Berry College
GOV 211-A, D, & E: American National Government (3.0)

Fall 2006

MWF

EVA

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Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the ideas and institutions that constitute American political life.

Textbooks:

Ceaser, O'Toole, Bessette and Thurow, *American Government: Origins, Institutions and Public Policy*.

Nichols and Nichols, *Readings in American Government*.

Kingdon, *America the Unusual*.

Additional readings can be found on the internet, with the web addresses provided in the footnotes.

Purpose:

This course is intended to familiarize students with the basic principles, institutions, and processes of American government. Over the course of the semester, students will learn how to think critically about different facets of American politics and American political life, and will be able to contribute to arguments concerning the perennial issues and problems that the American regime confronts.

Evaluation Components and Grading Scale:

Midterm Exam – 25%

Two Papers (5 pages each) – 15% each

Final Exam – 30%

Class Participation, Reading Quizzes, and Attendance – 15%

Grading will be based on a ten-point scale (100-94 A, 93-90 A-, 89-87 B+, 86-84 B, 80-83 B-, etc.). Please note that the failure to turn in an assignment will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Every unexcused absence will result in a lowering of your class participation grade. Students missing three consecutive classes will be referred to the Office of the Registrar.

Academic Integrity:

The course is covered by the Berry College policy on academic integrity (see the Berry College Catalogue, p. 27, and the Student Handbook, pp. 15-16). **If it is determined that you have engaged in academic dishonesty, you will receive an “F” for the course.** If, after reading the Berry College policy, you have questions regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty it is your responsibility to confer with me to seek clarification.

Accommodation Statement:

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodation in this course are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center in Krannert Room 329 (ext. 4080) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Schedule of Class Sessions

Week 1 (August 21) – Introduction: What founders do and the characteristics of liberal democracy.

Readings:

Selection from Plutarch’s “Life of Lycurgus”[\[1\]](#)

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., “Harrison Bergeron” (N)

Week 2 (August 28) – The Concept of Founding: The Declaration of Independence, what constitutes a people, and the fundamental regime principles – liberty, equality, self-government and citizenship.

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 2 (pp. 32-46)

Federalist 2[\[2\]](#)

The Declaration of Independence (Ceaser, pp. 535-537)

Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address”[\[3\]](#)

FDR, “State of the Union Message of 1944”[\[4\]](#)

Week 3 (September 4) – The Founding: the small republic argument vs. the large republic argument; or, Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 2 (pp. 46-61)

Centinel, “The Small Republic Argument” (N)

Federalist 10, 51 (N)

Thomas Jefferson, "Against Manufacturing" (N)

Alexander Hamilton, "Report on Manufacturing" (N)

Week 4 (September 11) – A Written Constitution: Limited Government and a Bill of Rights

Readings:

"Selections from the Federal Convention" (N)

U.S. Constitution (Ceaser, pp. 539-559)

Federalist 49 (N)

Jefferson and Madison, "Exchange on the Binding of Generations" (N)

Week 5 (September 18) – Representative Democracy and Federalism

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 4

Federalist 39, 45, 46, 63, 71 (See Footnote 2)

United States v. Lopez (1995)[5]

Week 6 (September 25) – The Role of Religion in Political Life

Readings:

Virginia Declaration of Rights[6]

Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1789[7]

James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance"[8]

Thomas Jefferson to Danbury Baptist Association[9]

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, part 2, chapters 2-3, 8-15[10]

Week 7 (October 2) – Political Parties, Campaigns and Elections

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 7

2000 Election Data[11]

James Bryce, "Why Great Men Are Not Chosen Presidents" (N)

Martin Diamond, "The Electoral College and the American Idea of Democracy" (N)

James Ceaser, "Political Parties and Presidential Ambition" (N)

Week 8 (October 9) – Elections and Voting Behavior: How Do People Think about Politics? Why Do People Vote? Why Do People Vote the Way They Do?

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 5, 8

David Brooks, "One Nation, Slightly Divisible"[12]

Blake Hurst, "The Plains vs. the Atlantic"[13]

Midterm Exam

Week 9 (October 16) – The Presidency

Readings:

Hamilton, “On the Presidency” (N)

Ceaser, chapters 11, 14

Ceaser, et. al., “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency” (N)

Week 10 (October 23) – Congress

Readings:

Ceaser, chapters 10, 12

Hamilton and Madison, “On Congress” (N)

Woodrow Wilson, “The Need for Cabinet Government in the United States” (N)

Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. v. Sawyer (1952) (N)

William F. Connelly, “In Defense of Congress” (N)

William F. Connelly, “Congressional Government and Separation of Powers” (N)

Week 11 (October 30) – The Judiciary

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 13

Federalist 78 (See Footnote 2)

Marbury v. Madison (1803) (N)

Brutus, “The Problem of Judicial Review” (N)

Jefferson, “Against Judicial Review” (N)

McCulluch v. Maryland (1819) (N)

Week 12 (November 6) – Judiciary and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 16

William Brennan, “Constitutional Interpretation” (N)

Robert Bork, “Testimony Before the Senate Judiciary Committee” (N)

Roe v. Wade (1973) (N)

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey (1992) (N)

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) (N)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) (N)

Week 13 (November 13) – American Exceptionalism: Are We Different?

Readings:

Kingdon, *America the Unusual*

Week 14 (November 20) – Foreign Policy

Readings:

Ceaser, chapter 17

Pontuso, “American Foreign Policy and the Victory of Liberal Democracy” (N)

Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations”^[14]

Week 15 (November 27) – Old Fears and New Horizons: Tocqueville and Fukuyama

Readings:

Alexis de Tocqueville, Selections from *Democracy in America* (N)

Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone” (N)

Please note: We will not hold classes Sept. 4, 2006, in observance of Labor Day. Classes after 2 p.m. on October 6, 2006, are suspended for observance of Mountain Day. October 16-17, 2006, is Fall Weekend and no classes are held. No classes are held Nov. 22-24, 2006, in observance of Thanksgiving.

^[1] <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/lycurgus.html>

^[2] <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa02.htm>

^[3] <http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/gettysburg.html>

^[4] <http://209.208.234.42/archives/speeches/jan1144.cfm>

^[5] <http://www.supremelaw.org/decs/lopez/lopez.htm>

^[6] <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/virginia.htm>

^[7] <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/firsts/thanksgiving/thankstext.html>

^[8] <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/P/jm4/writings/memor.htm>

^[9] <http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/misc/danbury.htm>

^[10] <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/TocDem2.html>

^[11] <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/>

^[12] <http://pages.towson.edu/sovadia/SOCI243%5COne%20Nation,%20Slightly%20Divisible.htm>

^[13] http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleid.17299/article_detail.asp

^[14] http://www.bintjbeil.com/articles/en/d_huntington.html