

POSC 10: AMERICAN POLITICS
Spring 2012
University Village Theater 9
MWF 1:40-2:30 p.m.

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Hours: Tuesday 9:30-10:30 a.m.,
Wednesday 3-4 p.m.,
or by appointment

TAs: Nicholas Boushee, Anwar Hijaz, Justin Nelson

This course is an introduction to the principles and practices of government in the United States. The course will primarily focus on what government does in the U.S., the institutions of governance and rules of the game, who the major political actors are, and the role individuals play in the policy making process. Government is largely concerned with making decisions and wielding authority. The ends of government activity are to select public policies, resolve disputes, and enforce these decisions. Presumably in a democracy these governing choices are in some sense responsive to the desires and needs of the people who are governed. We will explore the limits and the opportunities afforded individuals in the U.S.

Required Texts

Dalton, Russell J. 2009. *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*, Revised Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN 978-1-60426-556-9.
Lowi, Theodore J., Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2012. *American Government: Power & Purpose*, Brief 12th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-91208-1

Course Expectations and Grades

Discussion Sections and Attendance

Each student must be enrolled in a discussion section in addition to this lecture class. The TAs conduct sections and determine a large percentage of your grade.

Writing Assignments

There will be two writing assignments due on April 27 and May 30 respectively. The topics for these writing assignments will be introduced and discussed in your section meetings. Each will require you to write 3-6 pages. These writing assignments will be due in class, at the end of class, handed to your TA and uploaded to SafeAssign. Papers submitted late will be graded, but with a letter-grade reduction for each week the paper is late. To be clear, if you turn in the paper due April 27 on April 30, because your computer didn't work or you had a busy week, etc., the best you can earn is a B. Turn it in May 7, the best you can do is get a C, and so on. Any **deserving** paper turned in **at all** will at least receive a D, so if your paper would have received a passing grade if you hadn't turned in five weeks late, you will not fail the assignment, but the best you'll be able to do is a D.

Exams

There is an in-class midterm on May 4 and a final exam on June 12. The final will be cumulative. We will discuss more specifics – format, the need for blue books, etc. – closer to the date of the tests and in section meetings. Alternative test dates will be provided sparingly. Documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) will be required. All requests for alternative testing must be approved by the professor by 5 p.m. on the school day prior to the exam (i.e., by 5 p.m. May 3 and June 11).

Extra Credit. There will be at least one opportunity for extra credit. Stay tuned for details.

Academic dishonesty

Don't cheat. Cheating, plagiarism, and other instances of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the UCR Faculty Senate's Discipline Procedure in Matters of Academic Dishonesty. Students who cheat or plagiarize will receive an F on the spoiled assignment. If are confused about what constitutes plagiarism, consult this website <http://library.ucr.edu/?view=help/plagiarism.html> and/or discuss this with your TA or Dr. Johnson.

Grades

Discussion Section	20%
Writing Assignment 1, Due April 27	15%
Midterm Examination, May 5	20%
Writing Assignment 2, Due May 30	20%
Final Examination, June 12	25%

Class Schedule

April 2 Course introduction

Foundations

April 4 LGSA Ch. 1 Introduction
Articles of Confederation (LGSA, A7)

April 6 LGSA Ch. 2 The Founding & The Constitution
The Constitution (LGSA, A13)

April 9 LGSA Ch. 3 Federalism & the Separation of Powers
Federalist 51 (LGSA, A39)

April 11, 13 LGSA Ch. 4 Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
Amendments to the Constitution (LGSA, A24)

Institutions

April 16, 18 LGSA Ch. 5 Congress

April 20, 23 LGSA Ch. 6 Presidency

April 25 LGSA Ch. 7 Executive Branch

April 27 Paper due

April 30, May 2 LGSA Ch. 8 Federal Courts

May 4 MIDTERM EXAM, IN CLASS

Democratic Politics: People, Values, and Groups

May 7 LGSA Ch. 9 Public Opinion & Media

May 9, 11 LGSA Ch. 10 Elections

May 14 Dalton, Ch. 1-2 Citizenship

May 16 Dalton, Ch. 3-4 Groups and Norms

May 18 Dalton, Ch. 5 Toleration

May 21 Dalton, Ch. 6-7 Government Role & Strength

May 23 Dalton, Ch. 8-9 Tocqueville

May 25 Dalton, Epilogue Engaged Citizens & the 2008 Presidential Election

May 28 HOLIDAY

May 30 LGSA Ch. 11 Political Parties; Paper due

June 1 LGSA Ch. 12 Groups & Interests
Federalist 10 (LGSA, A34)

Public Policy

June 4, 6 LGSA Ch. 13 Introduction to Public Policy

June 8 LGSA Ch. 14 Foreign Policy

Tuesday, June 12 FINAL EXAM; 7-10 p.m.