

# POL 1100: American Government

University of Missouri

MWF 9:00-9:50AM, Middlebush 212

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Office hours: MTW: 10:00-12:00PM or by appointment (By Zoom: Meeting ID: 932 9737 8151; Password: 1100)

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to American government and satisfies the University of Missouri's General Education requirement. In it, we will cover a range of issues central to the structure and substance of politics in the United States: the founding and the Constitution, federalism, civil rights, the basic institutions of government, public opinion and participation, interest groups, and public policy. The course is also intended to provide an introduction to various aspects of political science, offering a broad survey of themes, questions, and topics that can be studied further in the context of a major or minor in the Department of Political Science.

The central objective of this course is that, by the end, students will be equipped with sufficient knowledge about American politics and government to be active and effective participants. To this end, the structure and content of the course is oriented towards the following goals:

- Students will be able to describe our systems of government and identify where change is needed and how change is possible.
- Students will have an understanding of the struggle for civil rights in the United States and the role race has played, and continues to play, in American politics.
- Students will be able to diagnose what branch of the national government—Congress, the president, and/or the courts—should handle particular political challenges.
- Students will be able to explain why we have the laws, electoral results, and policy outcomes that we do in the United States.

In this syllabus, you will find information about the following: how the course will be structured, how I will communicate with you, which course texts are required and how you can access them, the grading breakdown and grading scheme, the course calendar, and basic course policies and further resources. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change. If and when they occur, all changes will be announced in class and an updated version of the syllabus will be posted on Canvas.

**Course Texts:** There are two required books for this course. Both are e-books and are available through the course website on Canvas.

- *We the People, 13th Essentials Edition* (E-book Edition)
- *University of Missouri: Readings in American Government* (E-book Edition)

**How to Access Texts:** This course is part of the AutoAccess program designed to reduce the cost of course materials for students. You will be able to access the digital content for this course through Canvas on the first day of class automatically.

Your student account will be charged for the cost of the digital course materials, which \$93 for the textbook and the reader. We have helped save students over \$9.7 million over the last four years by providing digital content through this program.

Through this program, the lowest cost content has been sourced. If you choose to opt out of the digital content, you have until September 7 to opt out to receive a refund. Check your student email for the specific date. You will receive a welcome email from The Mizzou Store, so please watch your inbox. Also, the AutoAccess welcome email will provide charge amounts, the opt-out process, and any additional information needed for this AutoAccess course.

If you have any questions please contact The Mizzou Store via phone at 573-882-7611 or email at [autoaccess@missouri.edu](mailto:autoaccess@missouri.edu).

**Grading:** The course is divided into four sections, each of which includes four graded components: (1) one non-cumulative multiple choice exam, (2) an assignment, (3) a discussion board topic, and (4) attendance. Point, percentage, and scheduling details are as follows:

- Exams (60% or 300 points)
  - Exam One (75 points): Friday, September 17
  - Exam Two (75 points): Friday, October 15
  - Exam Three (75 points): Friday, November 12
  - Exam Four (75 points): Wednesday, December 8
  - Optional Final Exam (date TBD): You will have the option to take a final multiple choice exam with questions drawn from all four sections of the course. If you elect to take this exam, your highest four exam grades from the course will be counted towards the final grade.
  - There will be a time limit of 50 minutes, unless you have an accommodation from the Disability Center (see Americans with Disabilities Act section below).
- Section Assignments (20% or 100 points)
  - Section One Assignment (25 points)
  - Section Two Assignment (25 points)
  - Section Three Assignment (25 points)
  - Section Four Assignment (25 points)
  - Assignments are due on Canvas by the final day of each section, the same day as the exam is held. You are encouraged to complete them before the deadline so you can focus on the exam. The details for each assignment will be posted to Canvas under the corresponding module at least 2 weeks prior to the due date.

- Discussion Assignments (10% of 50 points)
  - Section One Discussion Board (12.5 points): Week 4
  - Section Two Discussion Board (12.5 points): Week 8
  - Section Three Discussion Board (12.5 points): Week 12
  - Section Four Discussion Board (12.5 points): Week 15
  - Discussion boards will be active for one week (Monday through Friday) during each section, as reflected above and also below on the course calendar. Prompts will be distributed and discussed in advance of each discussion board.
- Attendance (10% or 50 points)
  - Attendance at lectures is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for a passing grade. Ideal answers to questions on the examinations will express clear knowledge of both the assigned reading materials and the content of the lectures. In addition, the lectures will be used to deliver important class information. I will take attendance at each class, and will incorporate this into the class participation component of your final grade. I also expect active participation in the lectures and the discussion opportunities.

Final class grades will be assigned with the following grading scale:

**A+ = 97.0 - 100**

**A = 93.0 - 96.99**

**A- = 90.0 - 92.99**

**B+ = 87.0 - 89.99**

**B = 83.0 - 86.99**

**B- = 80.0 - 82.99**

**C+ = 77.0 - 79.99**

**C = 73.0 - 76.99**

**C- = 70.0 - 72.99**

**D+ = 67.0 - 69.99**

**D = 63.0 - 66.99**

**D- = 60.0 - 62.99**

**F = 0 - 59.99**

### **Other Considerations:**

- Mental Health: The University of Missouri is committed to supporting student well-being through an integrated network of care, with a wide range of services to help students succeed. The MU Counseling Center offers professional mental health care and can help you find the best approach to treatment based on your needs. Call to make an appointment at 573-882-6601. Any student in crisis may call or go to the MU Counseling Center between 8:005:00 M-F. After hours phone support is available at 573-882-6601. Visit our website to take an online mental health screening, find out about workshops and resources that can help you thrive, or learn how to support a friend. Download Sanvello, a phone app that teaches skills

and strategies to help you maintain good mental health. Log in with your Mizzou e-mail to unlock all the tools available through Sanvello at no cost to you.

- Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor. For more information, please see the Office of Academic Integrity's "For Students" page.
- Americans with Disabilities Act: If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course or if you have emergency medical information you feel you need to share with an instructor, please let us know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the MU Disability Center (S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696) and then notify us of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, see the University's "Accessibility and ADA" webpage.
- Intellectual Pluralism: The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities; the MU Equity Office, or [equity@missouri.edu](mailto:equity@missouri.edu). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.
- Executive Order #38, Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion, and Privacy: University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

**Make-up Policy:** You are expected to submit work and take exams on time. If work is submitted late, there will be a 10% deduction in grade for each day late, unless caused by some serious impediment. If there are such impediments, then the expectation is that you email or provide some written documentation to alert me to your situation, where an extension may be offered at my discretion.

Make-up exams will only be given for university-excused absences. To be excused the student

must notify their instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible (in particular in times of university-excused absences). In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. unanticipated illness, accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence by 5:00 PM. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.

Failing to take a make-up exam at a previously agreed-to time will result in a zero. The make-up exam must be taken within one week of the original test date listed in the syllabus, except under extreme circumstances approved by the instructor. Also, keep in mind that an exam proctored outside of the normal exam time may be of a different format than the original exam.

### **Class Schedule:**

#### **Part 1: The Founding**

##### **Week 1: Introduction (What is American Democracy?)**

- Read: *We the People*, Chapter 1

##### **Week 2: The Founding and the Constitution**

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 2 (pg. 28-39)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Of the State of Nature,” John Locke (chapter 1)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Slavery and the American Constitution,” Justin Dyer (chapter 2)
  - Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (July 5, 1852)
- Assignment: Section One Assignment posted on Canvas

##### **Week 3: The Founding and the Constitution (continued)**

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 2 (pg. 44-56)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Federalist and Anti-Federalist Debates,” Jay Dow (chapter 2)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Anti-Federalist Essay III: To the Citizens of New York” (chapter 2)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Anti-Federalist Essay V: To the Citizens of New York” (chapter 2)
- Note: **Monday, Sept. 6 is Labor Day – the University is closed**

## Week 4: Missouri Constitution and Federalism

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 3
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Comparing and Contrasting the U.S. and Missouri Constitutions,” L. Marvin Overby (chapter 2)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Introduction to Guide to the Missouri Constitution”, Justin Dyer (chapter 2)
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Sanctuary Cities: Protecting Citizens or Violating the Law?” American Bar Association (chapter 3)
- Assignment: Section One Discussion Board Open Monday, September 13 through Friday, September 17
- **Exam One: Friday, September 17**

## Part 2: The Institutions of Government

### Week 5: Congress

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 9
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “The Electoral Connection,” David Mayhew

### Week 6: Presidency

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 10
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “The Power to Persuade,” Richard Neudstadt
- Assignment: Section Two Assignment posted on Canvas

### Week 7: Bureaucracy

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 11
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Bureaucracy and the Public Interest,” James Q. Wilson
  - Francis Fukuyama, “Covid and Bureaucratic Autonomy,” American Purpose (June 21, 2021)

### Week 8: Judiciary, Civil Rights, Civil Liberties

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapters 4 and 12
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “What am I, a Potted Plant?” Richard Posner

- *Readings in American Politics*: “Lloyd Gaines and the Fight to End Segregation,” James Endersby and Bill Horner
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Letter from Birmingham Jail” (June 12, 1963)
- Assignment: Section Two Discussion Board Open Monday, October 11 through Friday, October 15
- **Exam Two: Friday, October 15**

### Part 3: Links between the People and the Government

#### Week 9: Public Opinion and Political Participation

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapters 5 and 7
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Bowling Alone” Robert Putnam

#### Week 10: Public Opinion and Political Participation

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 7
- Assignment: Section Three Assignment posted on Canvas

#### Week 11: Campaigns and Elections

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 7
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “The Single-Member District System,” Jay Dow
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “Citizens United vs. FEC”

#### Week 12: Media and Politics

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 6
- Assignment: Section Three Discussion Board Open Monday, November 8 through Friday, November 12
- **Exam Three: Friday, November 12**

### Part 4: Interest Groups and Public Policy

#### Week 13: Interest Groups

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 8

- *Readings in American Politics*: “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System,” E.E. Schattschneider
- Assignment: Section Four Assignment posted on Canvas

#### **Week 14: Thanksgiving Break**

- **No Class**

#### **Week 15: Domestic Policy**

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 13
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “The Affordable Care Act: Making and Implementing Health Policy in America,” Jake Haselwerdt
  - Andrew Prokop. ”Biden’s reconciliation bill would be a big f—— deal.” Vox.com (August 9, 2021)
- Assignment: Section Four Discussion Board Open Monday, November 29 through Friday, December 3

#### **Week 16: Foreign Policy**

- Read:
  - *We the People*, Chapter 14
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “U.S. Presidents Dont Need Congresss Approval to Go to War,” John Yoo
  - *Readings in American Politics*: “The U. S. Congress Must Authorize Major Wars,” Alberto Coll
- **Exam Four: Wednesday, December 8**

**Optional Final Exam: Tuesday, December 14 from 12:30-2:30PM**