



POL1023: Introduction to American Government

**Professor:** Susan Haynes, PhD

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**Office Hours:** M, W 3:00-4:00; T, R 12:30-4:30

**Class Times:** M, W, F 1:00-2:50



### **Introduction:**

*House of Cards...Scandal...Veep...* Politics has a prominent place in pop culture. Yet while ratings of such television shows are high, the number of voters in America continues to decline.<sup>1</sup> The same goes for the level of trust many Americans place in their elected leaders. A recent Harvard study, for example, indicates that roughly one third of today's young adults trust the President and only 14 percent trust Congress.<sup>2</sup> Is this a problem? Thomas Jefferson would say so. In fact, Jefferson believed that the people represent "the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty." This course will explore the role of the people (you) in a democratic system as well as the role of other actors such as the President, Congress, and Judiciary. We will examine the initial design of US government as outlined in such important documents as the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the US Bill of Rights. We will look at the evolution of the system they created and how it has adapted to changes and challenges throughout history



### **Course Texts:**

In our exploration, we'll use the following texts to guide us:

1. William Bianco & David Canon. (2015). *American Politics Today Core, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.). ISBN: 978-0-393-93700-8
2. Danielle Allen. *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality.* (2015). (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.). ISBN: 978-0-87140-690-3

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<sup>1</sup> For statistics dating back to 1944, see Michael McDonald's United States Election Project available at <http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout>.

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Politics, Harvard University. *Survey of young Americans' attitudes toward politics and public service, 25<sup>th</sup> ed.* Retrieved from [http://www.iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files\\_new/Harvard\\_ExecSummarySpring2014 .pdf](http://www.iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files_new/Harvard_ExecSummarySpring2014.pdf).



### **Promise:**

By the end of the course, you will understand the tension between individual self-interest and collective governance. You will understand how the American founders constructed a government in response to this problem and in juxtaposition to the British monarchy. You will know the documents foundational to the establishment of US government and be able to analyze them appropriately. You will know the history of the US government, while also having the means to think critically about our present political situation and future trajectory. We'll ask the big questions – such as the importance of trust between a people and their government – and we'll explore the available answers. In the end, though, the goal is not to have all the answers, but to have the desire and means to continue to ask deep questions. Most importantly, my hope is that students leave knowing how to construct and articulate answers to complex problems and that they know how to shift from thinking about politics to actually participating in politics—actively becoming part of their own solution.



### **Ways to get there:**

To fulfill the promises outlined above, you will need to take responsibility for your own learning. More specifically, I expect you to:

Prepare for and engage in class discussion. Prepare for each class by doing the designated readings. Read not just to check the box, but to comprehend the material. Write down questions or concepts you need clarified. Ask these questions in class and be prepared to discuss and answer the questions raised by others. There will be various in-class activities that will require your participation. You will receive points for these activities. If you are absent, you forfeit these points.

Analyze the issues. (30% of grade) All students will be required to complete three analysis papers throughout the semester. These will each need to be a minimum of 1000 words, single-space, 12 pt font with a separate works cited page. All papers should be emailed AND brought to class the day they are due. Six available paper topics and deadlines are included in Appendix A.

Test your Knowledge. (60% of grade) Students will be expected to take three tests throughout the course of the Semester. Each exam will be cumulative and will consist of a variety of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions.

Present your Findings. (5% of grade) At the end of the semester (weeks 16 and 17), students will be required to participate in a group project. Groups of three will select a pending case before the Supreme Court and present oral arguments for and against the appellate court's ruling. Cases will be selected at the beginning of week 14. Presentations will last no more than fifteen minutes. (Additional details will be provided on BB.)

Participate in the Political Process. (5% of grade) During the course of the semester, you are required to participate in at least one political activity and report your experience. Examples include writing a letter to the editor of a major newspaper and/or to your congressional representative, attending a political event/meeting, and/or getting involved in a political party or political organization. To receive full credit, you must submit an essay summarizing what you did and why. Be specific; include a complete description of all participating parties and any relevant background information on the policy/party/organization. The same guidelines that pertain to the analyses also pertain to the participation paper. We will have several guest speakers from local organizations throughout the class, allowing you to make connections and get involved if their area interests you.



### **Measuring your Learning:**

To evaluate your learning progress (and to provide you with feedback on your learning), I will use the following grading criteria:

A = 90-100 points

B = 80-89 points

C = 70-79 points

D = 60-69 points

F = below 59 points

\*All written assignments will be evaluated using the rubric included in the back of the syllabus.



### **The Road Ahead:**

#### **Week One (8/24): The beginning of US government**

**M.** Review syllabus. Discuss expectations.

*Declaration of Independence*, Allen, pp. 85-142

**W.** *Declaration of Independence*, Allen, pp. 85-142

Allen, pp. 160-200

**F.** Allen, pp. 160-200

## **Week Two (8/31): The beginning of US government, cont'd.**

**M.** Allen, pp. 201-254

**W.** *US Constitution*; B&C, Ch. 2, pp. 31-55

**F.** B&C, Ch. 3, pp. 67- 83.

## **Week Three (9/7): Civil Liberties**

**M.** Labor Day. No Class.

**W.** B&C, Ch. 3, pp. 83-100.

*US Bill of Rights*, B&C, Ch. 4, pp. 105-130.

**F.** *US Bill of Rights*, B&C, Ch. 4, pp. 105-130.

## **Week Four (9/14): Civil Rights**

**M.** B& C, Ch. 4, pp. 130-145.

**W.** B&C, Ch. 5, pp. 151-186.

**F.** B&C, Ch. 5, pp. 187-193; FBI Director James Comey's speech *Hard Truths: Law Enforcement and Race*. Delivered February 12, 2015. (Uploaded to BB); John Wihbey and Leighton Walter Kille. (April 2015). "Excessive or reasonable force by police? Research on law enforcement and racial conflict." *Journalist's Resource*. (Uploaded to BB).

## **Week Five (9/21): Public Opinion**

**M.** Review for Exam 1

**W.** Exam One

**F.** B&C, Ch. 6, pp. 199-232; Robert Erickson. (Fall 2012). "Public Opinion at the Macro-level.", *Daedalus*, Vol. 141, pp. 35-49. (Uploaded to BB).

## **Week Six (9/28): Public Opinion/The Media**

**M.** B&C, Ch. 6, pp. 199-232; Robert Erickson. (Fall 2012). "Public Opinion at the Macro-level.", *Daedalus*, Vol. 141, pp. 35-49. (Uploaded to BB).

**W.** B&C, Ch. 7, pp. 237-247.

**F.** B&C, Ch. 7, pp. 251-264; David Niven. (April 2012). "An Interesting Bias: Lessons from an Academic's Year as a Reporter." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, pp. 259-264.

doi:10.1017/S1049096511002071 (Uploaded to BB).

## **Week Seven (10/5): Political Parties/Elections**

**M.** *Political Polarization in the American Public*. (2015). Pew Research Center. (Uploaded to BB.)

**W.** B& C, Ch. 8, pp. 269-300. *\*\*Guest Speaker: TNGOP Chairman Ryan Haynes\*\**

**F.** B&C, Ch.9, pp. 305-332; (June 2001). "Rethinking the Electoral College Debate: The Framers,

Federalism, and One Person, One Vote." *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 114, No. 8, pp. 2526-2549.

### **Week Eight (10/12): Voting**

**M.** Margorie Randon Hershey. (January 2009). "What We Know about Voter ID Laws, Registration, and Turnout." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 1. doi: 10.1017/S1049096509090234. (Uploaded to BB).

*\*\*Guest Speaker: Douglas Johnston – Founding Partner of Barrett & Johnston, LLC. Discussing Nashville Student Organizing Committee v. Tre Hargett\*\**

**W.** B&C, Ch. 9, pp. 332-340; Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957, pages 21-35. (Uploaded to BB.)

**F.** Fall Break – No Class.

### **Week Nine (10/19): Interest Groups**

**M.** Fall Break - No Class

**W.** B&C, Ch. 10, pp. 351-376

**F.** B&C, Ch. 10, pp. 376-382

### **Week Ten (10/26)**

**M.** Review

**W.** Exam #2

**F.** *\*\*Guest Speaker: Congressman Jim Cooper\*\**

### **Week Eleven (11/2): Congress**

**M.** B&C, Ch. 11, pp. 407-429

**W.** B&C, Ch. 11, pp. 387-407

**F.** Faculty Development Day – No Class.

### **Week Twelve (11/9): Executive**

**M.** B&C, Ch. 12, pp. 435-458

**W.** B&C, Ch. 12, pp. 458-468; Kenneth R. Mayer (May, 1999). "Executive Orders and Presidential Power." *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 2, pp. 445-466. (Uploaded to BB).

**F.** No Class. Professor at Conference.

### **Week Thirteen (11/16): The Bureaucracy**

**M.** B& C Ch. 13, pp. 473-492.

**W.** B&C Ch. 13, pp. 493-504; Margaux Birdsall. (2011). "Biopharming, Bananas, and Bureaucracy: The Banana Vaccine as a Case Study for Products that Straddle the Definitional Food/Drug Divide." *Food & Drug Law Journal*, Vol. 66, pp. 265-284. (Uploaded to BB).

*\*\*Guest Speaker: Dr. Clinton Smith, SARS researcher\*\**

**F.** Group Workshop (Read case material)

### **Week Fourteen (11/23)**

Thanksgiving Break – No Class.

### **Week Fifteen (11/30): The Courts**

**M.** B&C, Ch. 14, pp. 508-548.

**W.** Group Presentations (1-3)

**F.** Group Presentations (4-6)

### **Week Sixteen (12/7): The Courts**

**M.** Group Presentations (7-9)

**W.** Group Presentations (10-12)

**F.** Exam Review

### **Final Exam: TBD**

\*\*The schedule and assignments above are subject to change at the professor's discretion. Any change will be communicated in class and/or via Blackboard.\*\*



**Correspondence:** Email is a quick and convenient way to communicate. To increase efficiency, I ask that you include both your name and course name (PO 1023) in the subject line of every email you send. Also, if your question pertains to class structure or deadlines, check your syllabus prior to emailing. (There's a lot of information in here!) Lastly, I do not provide slides or notes for students who missed class, so please do not ask. It is up to you to retrieve notes and ensure you are up to speed in the event of your absence.



**Attendance:** Regular class attendance is required. If you are likely to miss classes for an extended period of time such as a week or more, contact Professor Steve Prewitt, Associate Provost for Student Academic Support (steve.prewitt@lipscomb.edu; 615-966-5804). You are expected to provide timely notification to Associate Provost Prewitt regarding any extended absence, and may be required to provide supporting documentation for the absence. If you miss the equivalent of three weeks of class (9 class periods), you will fail the course.

A decision to stop attending class does not constitute dropping the course. A drop/add form available in the Registrar's Office must be signed the professor and processed in the Registrar's Office before the drop is official. If your name appears on the class roster at grading time and you have not officially dropped the course, a grade will be assigned based upon the policies outlined in this syllabus.



**Late Work:** Late work will be accepted under a 10-point per day penalty, and this allowance will expire one week from the assigned due date. Make-up work will be allowed only under extraordinary circumstances and at the instructor's discretion. Any late

work must be emailed to sthaynes@lipscomb.edu.

 **Accessibility Services:** Lipscomb University is committed to assisting students with disabilities by making reasonable accommodations to assure that all students have equal access. If you know or suspect that you have a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students with disabilities who require accommodations should contact Disability Services within the *first two weeks of the semester* in order to receive the most appropriate accommodations in a timely manner.

 **Open Inquiry & Civility:** As an accredited institution of higher education, Lipscomb University is committed to providing students with a superior learning experience. Pursuant to this objective, it is critical the classroom be a place where open intellectual inquiry is encouraged and the diversity of opinions is respected and appreciated. This course covers a wide array of content; including issues which may evoke strong opinions and emotions. As such, it is important, that students strike a balance between free expression and civil engagement. Discriminatory or hateful language will not be tolerated. Please be respectful of the views and beliefs of others.

 **Technology:** I allow the use of laptops or tablets for taking notes in class. Everyone learns differently, and if you learn better by typing notes during a lecture, I encourage you to do so...but there's a catch: If you chose this option, you are required to email me your notes at the end of class. Your notes will need to be thorough. The use of a laptop or tablet for other purposes (i.e. checking email, shopping, watching YouTube, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

In order to ensure an optimal learning environment, I ask that you please refrain from using your cell phone during class. (This means talking, texting, checking Facebook, etc.) If it is an emergency, please politely dismiss yourself from the room prior to engaging in conversation. The use of your phone during class time, if not an emergency, will result in a reduction in participation points.

 **Academic Integrity:** Lipscomb students are expected to conduct themselves with high integrity, both inside and outside of the classroom. Academic fraud undermines this integrity and has serious consequences. The university provides definitions and examples of several different types of academic fraud, including unauthorized collaboration, cheating, fabrication, multiple submission, false citation, and plagiarism. Of these, plagiarism is the most common. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, copying and pasting the direct words of someone else and not including these words in quotations marks. I am lenient on

most things, but not this. Using someone else's words is theft. It devalues their work and it robs you the chance of processing and learning the material yourself. Read someone else's words and think about them. Step away from the computer or put down the book if you need to. Write/type your own notes and then attempt to put in your own words what the author was saying. Then, cite the author as the original source in an in-text citation and include a full reference in your bibliography. For a more in-depth look at the problem of plagiarism, please read:

Trip Gabriel. Generation Plagiarism? *New York Times Upfront* (October 25, 2010).

[http://library.standrewsde.org/lists/ldPWebPage/PlagiarismResources\\_files/generation-plagiarism.pdf](http://library.standrewsde.org/lists/ldPWebPage/PlagiarismResources_files/generation-plagiarism.pdf)



**Sources:** You will have several writing assignments throughout the course. These assignments will be academic in nature and thus require outside research. This means that your papers should NOT be solely based upon your opinion. Instead, you should use your text and other academic sources to help inform your analysis. As you write, you will need to include properly formatted in-text citations and end references (MLA style is preferred.) While attention should be paid to formatting, it is even more important to pay attention to the sources you use. Not all sources are created equal! Wikipedia, for example, is not a valid source, nor is about.com.



**Writing Help:** This course requires a fair amount of writing. If this is not your strong suit, I strongly encourage you to visit Lipscomb's Writing Studio located in Beaman Library 141 (the Academic Success Center). The Writing Studio provides valuable one-on-one writing assistance to students. Conferences are available by walk-in or appointment (966-6301 or visit the ASC if the studio isn't open). If you are in a jam (i.e. you waited until the last minute), you can use the online proofing service [paperrater.com](http://paperrater.com). This is an automated service, so it is not a substitute for personal writing help, but it might help you notice and fix larger issues before submission.



**Extra Credit:** (5 points) Studying in the capital of the state of Tennessee, Lipscomb students have a unique opportunity to experience government first-hand. To receive 5 extra credit points, compile five photographs of yourself at different locations relevant to government in the Nashville area. (If you don't want to appear in the picture, just have a piece of paper with your name and the class number.) Attach your photos to an email and describe each of the five locations and relate them to a concept we discussed in class. The assignment, which is pass/fail, is due by 12/11. If you need ideas of where to go, don't hesitate to ask. Most importantly, have fun with it!

## **Appendix A: Paper Topics & Deadlines**

*Each paper should address all questions included under the designated topic. Students should cite their textbook as well as other appropriate outside sources.*

### **9/11: Federalism**

Federalism provides citizens with a broad range of policies to choose from. Supposedly, people can “vote with their feet” by moving to a low-tax, low-service state or a high-tax, high-service state. Is this always the case? What barriers – tangible and intangible – might people face in attempting to vote with their feet?

### **9/25: Civil Rights**

How diverse is the U.S. population? Is that diversity rooted in legitimate, meaningful differences, or are those differences largely man-made? (In other words, discuss the different categories and labels applied to different “groups” of people.) Does it really matter if those differences are genuine or invented? How vigilant should the U.S. government remain in its defense of civil liberties for all people? How successful has the government been in that defense so far?

### **10/9: The Media**

How does the process of the media collecting information shape how the public learns about politics? What are the implications that this has for the public’s ability to participate in an informed manner?

### **10/14: Campaigns**

How do you feel about the way that campaigns use negative ads? How do you think fairness and effectiveness need to be balanced by campaigns? Should negative campaign ads be more heavily regulated?

### **10/19: The Presidency**

What is the relationship between the level of partisanship in Congress and the number of presidential vetoes? Offer a theoretical explanation of this relationship—what do you think explains it? Which presidents in the modern era used the most vetoes? Whose vetoes were least likely to be overridden by Congress?

### **11/30: The Bureaucracy**

What do you think is the popular perception of bureaucrats and bureaucracy? Are these fair

assessments? Why might people have these perceptions?

**Appendix B: Grading Rubric**

	Poor 0 -10 Points	Proficient 11 - 20 Points	Distinguished 21 - 25 Points
Grammar (25 pts) _____	Obvious grammatical errors & spelling mistakes throughout, making the essay very difficult to read	Numerous grammatical errors and spelling mistakes of the variety typically caught by Word Processors, including run-on sentences, sentence fragments, etc.	Relatively few grammatical errors or spelling mistakes – most often those that are <i>not</i> picked up by a Word Processor such as missing commas, failure to capitalize proper nouns, and/or homonyms.
Structure (25 pts) _____	Does not meet specified word count requirement; and/or is not properly structured (i.e. does not have an introduction or conclusion and/or is one singular block of text.)	Minor structural issues throughout such as lengthy paragraphs; lengthy quotes not put in block form, a missing thesis statement, etc.	Succinct introduction with a clear thesis statement, several supporting paragraphs of appropriate length, and a solid conclusion.
Research (25 pts) _____	No sources or questionable sources used – the writing either demonstrates the sole opinion of the author or relies upon information from non-academic sources (i.e. Wikipedia, About.com, etc.)	Uses several valid sources, though does not always include full source information (ie author’s name(s), publication date, title of article, title of journal/newspaper/website & web address.	Uses several academic sources, including at least one academic journal article; All sources are properly cited in the text as well as in the reference list.
Argument (25 pts) _____	Off topic - Did not sufficiently answer the question presented	Answered the question, but did so by relying heavily upon the words of others. (ie repeatedly using direct quotes)	<i>Rich</i> in content, full of thought, insight, and analysis, incorporating and citing outside research. The author’s voice is the primary voice of the paper, and he/she primarily paraphrases –rather than quotes – the research of others.
TOTAL: _____	Comments:		

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**Appendix C: Information Sheet – PO 1023 – Fall 2015**

**Legal Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferred Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Major:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year:**          Freshman                  Sophomore                  Junior                  Senior

**Why did you register for this class?**

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**What do you expect of me as your professor?**

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**What type of career would you like to have?**

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**Please tell me anything you would like me to know about yourself (ie hobbies, extracurricular activities, learning style, study habits, etc.)**

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