

Winter, 2008  
P.S. 1010-035,  
5:30. - 9:00 p.m. Thurs

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Telephone: 577-8826  
Office Hrs: Thur 4:15 - 5:15 pm.,  
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## THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study and analysis of American governmental institutions and political processes. Topics to be studied include: the constitutional foundations and evolution of the American governmental system; the ways individuals and groups participate in the political process and the factors that make for effective political participation; the structure and functions of major policy making institutions; and various policy issues, including civil liberties and civil rights.

### Course Objectives

This course has the following major objectives:

To provide the student with a basic knowledge and understanding of American political institutions, processes and policies.

To show how the American political system evolved and how it is changing in the contemporary world.

To compare the American political and governmental systems with institutions and processes elsewhere

To provide tools of critical thinking and analysis to enable the student to make evaluations of and judgments on institutions, processes and policies.

To provide knowledge and understanding for responsible citizenship and political participation.

### Textbooks

#### **Required texts:**

Conflict and Consensus in American Politics, 2007 edition, by Stephen J. Wayne et al., 2007, Wadsworth, available for purchase at both bookstores.

The text will be supplemented by handouts and material from the instructor's book, The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New Press).

### Graded Assignments and Course Grade

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Graded assignments will be weighted as follows in determining the course grade:

will be 4 quizzes (short exams), approximately every other week, January 24, February 7, March 6 and 27.. The lowest score will be dropped. There will be a mid-term exam on February 21. An in-class final exam will be given on April 17. The 3 quizzes will be equal in weight to the mid-term exam. The final grade will be based on the sum total of the quizzes, the mid-term, and the final exams. The final letter grade will be based on a curve, devised by the instructor.

**Students are expected to attend every class, to be there on time, and not leave early. Three absences will result in a failing grade. There will be no make-up exams. All students who do not drop the course will be given a grade based on their total points, and attendance. There will be no incompletes. The final drop date for the course will be March 1, 2008.**

### Class Policies

- Cheating, plagiarism and all other forms of academic dishonesty or misconduct are
1. prohibited and will be handled in accordance with provisions of the Student Due Process Policy, copies of which may be obtained by the student from The Office of the Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life, Room 470, Student Center Building. Students are responsible for all material covered in lectures, assigned readings and class
  2. discussions. Regular class attendance is expected, as is participation in class discussions.

### University General Education Requirement

The course may be used to satisfy the University General Education Group Requirement in "American Society and Institutions." Students cannot use more than one course from the same department or program in satisfying the General Education Group Requirement.

### Blackboard Site for This Course

Materials pertinent to this class will be available throughout the semester in the Blackboard system of Wayne State University. Most of this material will be located in the Course Documents section of Blackboard, under the heading: "Topics Outline, Lecture Notes and Glossary for Topic." Any changes in course procedures or material will also be put up on Blackboard, as well as announced in class. If you are having trouble using Blackboard, please email [bbadmin@wayne.edu](mailto:bbadmin@wayne.edu), not the instructor

Email Policies: Questions about course content are appropriate to email the instructor. Questions about course and major requirements should be addressed to your guidance counselor. Questions about course policies should first include a careful reading of the syllabus. Emails to the instructor should consist of a formal note with correct grammar and punctuation, beginning with "Dear Professor Goldfield" and ending with the student's name. No unsigned emails will be answered.

### Topics Outline

Major topics to be covered in class lectures and discussions are listed below, together with textbook materials relevant to each topic. Assigned materials should be read prior to the class session(s) in which they are scheduled to be discussed. Dates listed give an approximate schedule for the semester; adjustments will be announced in class, as needed.

Date	<u>Topics and Subtopics</u>
Sept 8	<u>Introduction to the Course</u>
Jan 10	<u>Foundations of American Government</u>
Jan 17	
	Chapters 1 and 2, pp.3-63; Appendices A and B; material from Goldfield, pp.50-74
Jan 24	Federalism, ch. 3, pp.66-103; appendices C, D, E, and F;  <i>exam 1</i>
262-295	Jan 31 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, 109-149; Goldfield
Feb 7	Chapter 5, 156-197; <i>exam 2</i>
	Feb 14 Chapters 6 and 7, pp.202-273
Feb 21	Mid-term
Feb 28	Campaigns, Elections, and Media chs. 8 and 9 , 276-363
March 6	Congress and the Presidency, ch. 10 and 11, pp. 368-453, <i>exam 3</i>
March 20	Federal Bureacracy, Chapter 12, pp.458-494,
March 27	Judiciary, ch 13, 496-529, <i>exam 4</i>
	<u>Public Policy</u>
April 3	Ch. 14 (Domestic Policy), pp. 532-576; Goldfield, 296-347
April 10	Ch 15, Foreign Policy, pp. 578-613
April 17	<i>In-class Final Exam</i>