

American Government

POLI 101

FALL 2018

ROBERT SCOTT SMALL 235

10:50AM - 12:05PM TR

Professor: Dr. Matthew Nowlin

Office: 114 Wentworth, #107

E-mail: nowlinmc@cofc.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00pm - 3:00pm
and by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the core concepts of American government and politics. The emphasis of this course will be placed on approaching topics associated with government and politics as *social scientists*, therefore this course will be organized around social science concepts and methods.

The first part of the course will examine the foundation of the American political system including the constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and civil rights. The second part of the course will focus on the fundamental role played by the institutions of American government including, Congress, the President, the bureaucracy, and the courts. The third section focuses on the intermediary institutions such as public opinion, elections, political parties, and interest groups. Finally, the fourth section will cover economic policy in the United States.

Political Science Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures, and decision-making processes of the American political system
- Evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas
- Relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates, and outcomes in the United States
- Develop an analytical, social science disposition toward American politics.

General Social Science Education Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions. This will be assessed in the first paper.

Student Responsibilities

- Devices: **All phones, tablets, and laptops are to be used specifically for class purposes.**
- Taking Notes: **I strongly discourage the use of laptops to take notes in class.** Notes should be taken by hand, with pen and paper. You learn better that way. I recommend using the Cornell Method to take notes during lectures. *Lecture slides will be made available after class.*
- Attendance: Attendance is required for this course and will be taken, using *Top Hat*, at each session. *You are allowed two absences without penalty, after the second absence you will lose 10 points per absence. 6 or more total absences will result in a grade of WA.*

Required Materials

The following materials are **required**.

BOOK: Krutz, Glen. 2016. **American Government.** OpenStax. The book is **free** and available here: <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government?Book%20details>

You are required to set-up an account at Top Hat. More information can be found here: <https://tophat.com/>. It costs \$26.00. *I will send an invite to your CofC email.* Top Hat will be used to take attendance and to take reading quizzes. To use Top Hat in class you will need a cellphone. The book and the lecture slides will also be available through Top Hat.

Course Requirements and Grading

This course will make extensive use of OAKS. OAKS is accessible through this link <https://lms.cofc.edu> as well as through your My Charleston page. All course materials including the syllabus, assignments, and some readings will be available through OAKS. **All assignments must be uploaded to the associated dropbox folder on OAKS.** *No assignments will be accepted by email or in-person.* Be sure to allow yourself plenty of time to upload assignments, *issues with OAKS are not an excuse for a missing or late assignment.*

Performance in this course will be evaluated based on 10 reading quizzes, 4 exams, a discussion board assignment, 2 papers, and class attendance and participation.

Assignment	Possible Points (Percent of Overall Grade)
Reading Quizzes	200 points (10 at 20 pts. each) (20%)
Discussion Board	20 points (2%)
Paper 1	100 points (10%)
Paper 2	130 points (13%)
Exam 1	100 points (10%)
Exam 2	100 points (10%)
Exam 3	100 points (10%)
Final Exam	200 points (20%)
Attendance & Participation	50 points (5%)
Total	1000 points (100%)

There are 1000 possible points for this course. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points and calculated as a percentage of 1000.

A = 94 to 100%; A- = 90 to 93%; B+ = 87 to 89%; B = 83 to 85%; B- = 80 to 82%; C+ = 77 to 79%; C = 73 to 76%; C- = 70 to 72 %; D+ = 67 to 69%; D = 63 to 67%; D- = 60 to 62%; F = 59% and below

Assignments

Specific details and expectations for each assignment will be posted on OAKS. Assignment due dates are in the following course schedule.

Reading quizzes: There will be 10 “pop” reading quizzes. Reading quizzes consist of 10 multiple choice / true-false questions based on material from the assigned readings and lectures. *Reading quizzes will be taken in class, during the lecture using Top Hat.* Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

Exams: All exams will be multiple choice / true-false and taken with a Scantron. The Scantrons will be provided, but you *must bring a number 2 pencil on exam days.* Exam questions will come from the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The first three exams will have 25 questions, and the final exam will have 50 questions and will cover material from the entire semester.

Papers: There are two assigned papers for this class. The first paper is a reflection paper about the Constitution. The second paper is an analytical paper that examines the potential for authoritarianism in the United States.

Attendance and Participation: The attendance and participation portion of your grade is based on attendance — *which will be taken each class using Top Hat* — and in-class discussion. The discussion portion is based on the *quality* (not quantity) of your contributions to class discussion.

Bonus Points: There are opportunities for extra credit by attending College sponsored events (such as guest speakers) and writing a one-page reaction paper. You can earn up to 20 points for each event paper, and you can attend up to three events to earn up to 60 points. **Events must be approved by the professor before they occur.** I will also announce events in class and through CofC email, but qualifying events are not limited to those I announce. Email me and ask if an event will count, before it happens.

Late Work Policy

Late work will be penalized 10% each day (24 hr period) it is late, up to 2 days. After 2 days the assignment will not be accepted. For example, if an assignment is due Tuesday at 10:50am, it is late as of 10:51am and you lose 10%. After Wednesday at 10:50am you lose another 10% and no work will be accepted after Thursday at 10:50am. *No work will be accepted 48 hrs after the assignment due date and time.*

Email Policy

I encourage you to email me, but I tend to get quite a few emails. Here are a few things to note to make the process easier for us both.

- Please allow 48 hours for a response from me before sending a second email.
- Emails asking questions that are easily answered by looking at the syllabus (e.g., “what did I miss?”) will not receive a response.
- Emails asking for extra credit opportunities other than for events and/or a chance to do “make-up” work will not receive a response.
- Emails asking for an extension on an assignment will not receive a response. See the Late Work Policy
- Assignments must be turned in on the dropbox on OAKS and will not be accepted by email under any circumstances, including “issues with OAKS.”
- If you are having a technical issue with OAKS, I will not be able to help you, so please contact the Student Computing Support Desk.
- If you missed or will miss class I do not need to know, unless there is an exam that day and you have an emergency.
- Find and email me a picture of Alf from the 1980’s TV series (Google it) for five extra credit points before class on Aug 28.

Course Schedule

Subject To Change. Changes will be announced in class.

Readings, Assignment Due Dates, and Exam Dates

Assigned readings come from the Krutz text and other readings mentioned below will be available on OAKS.

Krutz: Krutz, Glen 2016. *American Government.*

Part I: Foundations

Aug 21-Aug 23: Introduction and Class Overview

- *Reading:*
 - Taking Good Notes *from Dr. Steven Miller*
 - Careers in Political Science

Aug 28-Aug 30: American Government and Civic Engagement

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 1
- *Assignment:*
 - Separated: Children at the Border video and discussion board on OAKS, **DUE Aug 30th**
- **NO CLASS: Aug 30th**

Sept 4-Sept 6: The Constitution I

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 2
 - The Declaration of Independence
 - The Constitution
 - *The Federalist* No. 10
 - *The Federalist* No. 51

Sept 11-Sept 13: Hurricane Florence

Sept 18-Sept 20: The Constitution II: Federalism

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 3
- *Assignment:*
 - *How Democratic is the Constitution?* paper due Sept 21 by 11:59pm EST

Sept 25-Sept 27: The Constitution III: Civil Liberties

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 4

Oct 2-Oct 4: The Constitution IV: Civil Rights

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 5
- **EXAM 1: Oct 4th**

Part II: Formal Institutions

Oct 9-Oct 11: Congress

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 11
 - *Setting the Agenda*

Oct 16-Oct 18: The Executive Branch: The Presidency and the Bureaucracy

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 12
 - Krutz Chap 15

Oct 23-Oct 25: The Courts

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 13
- **EXAM 2: Oct 25**

Part III: Mediating Institutions

Oct 30-Nov 1: Public Opinion and Voting

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chaps 6 and 7

Nov 6-Nov 8: Political Parties

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 9

- **FALL BREAK: Nov 5-6**

Nov 13-Nov 15: Interest Groups and Lobbying

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 10

Nov 20-Nov 22: Test and Turkey

- **EXAM 3: Nov 20**
- **THANKSGIVING BREAK: Nov 21-25**

Nov 27-Nov 29: Political Economy

- *Reading:*
 - Krutz Chap 16
 - *Unequal Democracy*
- *Assignment:*
 - *Paper 2* due Nov 29

FINAL EXAM Thursday Dec 6 at 8:00am

Important Information

Center for Student Learning

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website or call (843) 953-5635.

Students with Disabilities

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me at least one week before any accommodation is needed.

Cheating or Plagiarism

A grade of zero will be given to anyone cheating on any exam, homework assignment or committing plagiarism in a paper. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own ideas, the words, writings, music, graphs/charts, etc that were created by another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. It does not matter from where the material is borrowed—a book, article, material off the web, another student's paper—all constitute plagiarism unless the source of the work is fully identified and credited. Plagiarism is cheating and a violation of academic and personal integrity and will not be tolerated. It carries extremely serious consequences. To avoid plagiarism it is necessary when using a phrase, a distinctive idea, concept or sentence from another source to reference that source in your text, a footnote, or end-note. Please contact me if you need assistance in citing a source.

Religious Holiday Policy

It is the policy of the College to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class any time during this semester.