

Introduction to American Government and Politics
Political Science 104:201 – Summer 2022 – First Four-Week Session

Professor Kathy Dolan

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General Course Information: 1) Please remember that I only have access to your UWM email addresses. If you don't regularly use that account, make sure you check it or forward it to an account you do use regularly. 2) When you need to email something for the class, send it to me at kdolan@uwm.edu

Introduction to American Government and Politics is a survey course designed to acquaint you with the fundamental ideas, institutions, and actors that make up our governmental system. During the semester, we will examine the legal and structural basis of our government, evaluate the institutions that carry out its day-to-day functions, and analyze the role the individual citizen can play in influencing and affecting government. Also, since government and politics are things that go on around us all the time, we will follow the actions of the President, the Congress, the Courts, and the public. For this reason, current political events will be of special interest and importance to our studies, such as Supreme Court decisions and the upcoming primary elections for 2022.

Required Readings:

We the People: An Introduction to American Politics. Core Version, Twelfth Edition by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, and Margaret Weir. W.W. Norton and Company, 2019.

This book will be made available to you at no cost as a pdf through the course Canvas site. There is nothing to purchase for the course.

If you are someone who likes to have their own physical copy, you can buy a used copy on any number of websites. If you purchase one, make sure you get the right book, as "We The People" is a common book title. And make sure you get the 12th or 13th Core edition.

There is also an e-book, which you can find on the Norton website at:

<https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople13core> and click "Purchase Options"

Grades: Your grade for this course will be based on three exams and a short writing assignment. Each of the exams and the writing assignment will be worth 25 percent of your grade. Grades will be calculated on a 100-point scale that breaks down as follows. There is no extra credit and no curve or adjustment applied to grades.

A = 92-100
B+ = 88-89
B- = 80-81
C = 72-77
D+ = 68-69
D- = 60-61

A- = 90-91
B = 82-87
C+ = 78-79
C- = 70-71
D = 62-67
F = 59-below

Any student who cheats on an exam, plagiarizes, or commits any other act of academic dishonesty will receive an F for the course and will be referred to the appropriate University authorities.

Flow of the Class: This summer session runs from Tuesday, May 31 – Saturday, June 25. To take advantage of the online environment, I have broken things up into three units. For our purposes this summer, a unit will start at 12:01AM on the first day noted and end at 11:59 PM of the last day. For each unit, I will post lecture notes for the topics covered during that unit. These notes, combined with the reading from the textbook, will constitute the materials for that unit. During each unit, you will read the textbook chapters, access the lecture notes, and take an exam on those topics. You will also complete a short writing assignment during Unit 2.

Exams: There is an exam associated with each of the three units in the course. You will take an exam at some point before the end of each unit, but when you take it is up to you. This allows you to work at your own pace and take the exam whenever you are ready to do so. The only requirement is that you take a unit exam before 11:59 PM on the last day of that unit. Please take careful note of the dates on which each unit begins and ends so that you will know when you need to take an exam. The units don't all begin and end on the same days of the week, so make sure you have the dates in your calendar. Failure to take an exam before the end of a unit will lock you out of that unit's exam.

Exams will be multiple choice and taken through the Canvas site. **You can take an exam at any time during the unit. But you will only have one opportunity to take it – once you begin the exam, you must finish it. You cannot start an exam and then enter again at a later time to finish it. Also, exams will be timed, so you will have a set amount of time to take the exam once you begin. You should make sure that you have set aside the whole time allotted to take the exam (in case you need it) and you should make sure you have a secure connection before you begin. Also, since you have a limited amount of time, you cannot look up every answer as you take the exam. You should study and prepare for these exams in the same way you would any closed-book exam and be prepared to complete the exam on your own.**

Unit One Exam Period - Tuesday, May 31 at 12:01 AM through Wednesday, June 8 at 11:59 PM

Unit Two Exam Period – Thursday, June 9 at 12:01 AM through Friday, June 17 at 11:59 PM

Unit Three Exam Period – Saturday, June 18 at 12:01 AM through Saturday, June 25 at 11:59 PM

Unit 1 - Foundations of American Government – Tuesday, May 31 – Wednesday, June 8

- * American Political Culture - Ginsberg, Chp. 1 and Declaration of Independence, Appendix
- * The Founding and the Constitution - Ginsberg, Chp. 2 and Constitution, Ginsberg Appendix
- * Federalism - Ginsberg, Chp. 3
- * The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties - Ginsberg, Chp. 4 and Bill of Rights (Constitution)

Week 2 - Forming and Expressing Beliefs – Thursday, June 9 – Friday, June 17

- * Public Opinion - Ginsberg, Chp. 6
- * Political Participation - Ginsberg, Chp. 8
- * Political Parties - Ginsberg, Chp. 9
- * Campaigns and Elections - Ginsberg, Chp. 10

Week 3 - Governing Institutions – Saturday, June 18 – Saturday, June 25

- * Congress - Ginsberg, Chp. 12
- * The Presidency - Ginsberg, Chp. 13
- * The Judiciary - Ginsberg, Chp. 15

Writing Assignment – There is **one** short writing assignment that you will complete for this class. This assignment is for you to respond to a question that is related to one of the topics on the syllabus, using what you have read in the book, what you have learned in the course, etc. **There is no expectation or requirement that you do any research outside of the course materials.** The goal of this assignment is to get you to apply some of the material we have learned and think a bit more deeply about a topic.

The topic for the assignment involves political socialization and political ideology and corresponds to the chapter on Public Opinion, which is part of Unit Two. The questions you will answer for this assignment are on the Canvas site under the “Assignments” heading. For the assignment, you will write a short essay that addresses the questions raised and demonstrates your understanding of the topic and your ability to apply relevant information from the course to the question. **The assignment is brief and can be handled in one or two single-spaced pages.**

All standard conventions for writing assignments should be followed. By that I mean this assignment should be proof-read and spell-checked and it should engage all parts of the question asked. More than anything else, this assignment should reflect **your original thoughts and work**. I feel very strongly about plagiarism and refer you to the earlier statement about the consequences of plagiarism on this syllabus. Plagiarism involves the act of taking the words and writings of someone else and presenting them as your own. This means the cutting and pasting of things you find in some other source, but it also means using someone else’s work without complete and correct citations. As I say above, there is no need for you to bring in materials from outside the course, so this should not be a problem. Most of this assignment will ask you to reflect on your own experiences and, as such, will not require you to do any outside research. The assignment is due in the Canvas folder by **midnight on Friday, June 17**. Late assignments will not be accepted.