

Required Texts:

You are responsible for reading and preparing:

Diane D. Blair and Jay Barth, Arkansas Politics and Government: Do the People Rule, 2nd Edition, University of Nebraska paperback, 2005.

Sid McMath, *Promises Kept*, University of Arkansas paperback.

Arkansas State Constitution---Handout: No purchase.

Southwestern Bell Legislative Directory---Handout. No purchase.

Arkansas Democrat~~*Gazette*~~ *and Arkansas Times*: The Gazette has a section each day devoted to Arkansas government and politics. The Arkansas Times is available each Thursday at campus sites and in many restaurants and gas stations. They concentrate largely on Arkansas political stories and issues.

Handouts provided in class and through discussion e-mail list---Pols33501@ualr.edu

I. The Course Revealed

This course introduces you to the institutions and operations of Arkansas State Government. The mission of this course is to examine and analyze the institutions and processes of Arkansas Government so that you will become a more effective evaluator and participant in our state political system. The instructor believes that a better understanding of our state political system enhances the opportunities that real and worthwhile reform will take place in our state political institutions and the way we do political business in Arkansas. Can Arkansas Government be better? I believe so. Do the people rule in Arkansas? We shall see.

In particular, the political science department specifies four learning objectives for courses in American Political Institutions and Processes:

1. Students will assess the formal and informal powers belonging to an institution or political process and assess the effective and legitimate use of this power.
2. Students will identify political inputs applicable to the institution and evaluate their impact on the institution.
3. Students will identify significant organizational elements and discuss significant organizational relationships and their impact on institutional performance.
4. Students will perform an analysis of a topic or a text appropriate to the institution or political process. They will (1) apply appropriate concepts or theories (2) state an argument or hypothesis (3) use relevant evidence (4) and draw valid conclusions based on their analysis and evidence.

In addition the Department for learning and assessment purposes believes the following are learning actions for this class:

Knowledge Goals – students majoring in political science will be exposed to a wide range of substantive information about the world of politics, covering subjects such as:

- The history, characteristics, and impact of political institutions and systems, including international, national, state, and local governments
- The behavior of individual actors at both the mass and elite levels
- The processes involved in creating government policy and the impact of those policies
- The debates over the normative foundations of the state, the scope of its activities, and the nature of justice

Skill Goals – students majoring in and those taking political science will develop practical and marketable skills which will help them to apply that knowledge to any number of career paths. These skills include:

- Critical thinking – the ability to read and evaluate primary texts, ideas, theories, and political analysis
- Analysis/Research – the ability to pose and answer questions effectively
- Argumentation/Persuasion – the ability to use logic and evidence to build a persuasive argument
- Written and Verbal Communication – the ability to communicate ideas clearly on paper or through oral presentations
- Working in Groups – the ability to effectively coordinate with others on a project
- Practical Applications – the ability to take information gained through coursework and use it effectively in real world or simulated exercises

II. Questions for Analysis:

So many questions so little time. Can the state and local governments provide adequate public services without implementing regressive taxes? How are term-limits affecting state government? Are interest groups too powerful in Arkansas? How can political participation in Arkansas be increased? What kind of presidential politics has Arkansas seen and how will the Obama Administration influence politics and state government in Arkansas. Should lobbying be more strictly regulated? Can Arkansas achieve a viable two party system at the state level especially after the disastrous 2006 and 2008 state elections that decimated the state Republican Party? How can the economic level of the citizens of Arkansas be raised? What kinds of leadership are the current new constitutional officers providing? How will the legislature balance shale exploration and the environment? Will the lottery be a force for educational improvement or will it prove to a discordant element in a traditionally conservative state?

III. How we do the class.

Well we have a relatively small class that will facilitate discussion and I have an informal style of teaching. In consequence we may be able to do this class in a more seminar/discussion style format. We will seek to weave the ideas, concepts, and symbols of Arkansas Government into its current context. One important thing that should be stressed and that is we should concentrate on the big ideas in this class. Arkansas Government is complex and our task should be able to generalize and conceptualize whenever we can.

While lecture and discussion are key ways to transfer information in this class, research, video, guest lectures, and the Internet will be useful tools that we will use whenever a good opportunity presents itself. The emphasis is on learning and I look forward to helping you in that noble endeavor.

IV. Your responsibilities.

Regular attendance and class preparation is assumed since this is a university class. Class attendance and preparation is viewed as good Karma for you grade in close situations. In this regard, your presence in class means you have done the reading and are ready to react and discuss. You should bring the text with you to class. If you have to leave early for some reason, I would appreciate the courtesy of being told at the beginning of the class and you should sit toward the back of the classroom to minimize any interruption. Of course civility and courtesy are always an integral part of any classroom or work situation. Class attendance is important so please make it a priority to get to class and be on time for the noon start. Cell phones are to be shut off including mine.

a. When things are due.

Your assignments, any class effort and of course your major course paper, are due in class as a hard copy on the specified date. I take a very dim view of late papers and any late assignments are penalized. Get your work done on time. There are virtually no good excuses with the exception---God forbid---of hospitalization or very serious illness to you.

V. Class Performance objectives:

- a. **Exams:** There are two major exams: the midterm and the final examination. Each exam will be essay and short answer in character. Bring a blue exam book the day of the exam and use a black or blue pen to write your answers. The objectives of these exams are to test your knowledge content of course material, reinforce and improve your essay writing, organizational and critical analysis skills. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The final exam will be a bit more comprehensive in the cast of its essay questions.
- b. **Quizzes:** We will quiz two or three weeks on the designated Friday: These will be short answer and objective type quizzes. These quizzes go to knowledge and class preparation objectives primarily. They are 100 points of your grade with the highest five averaged together to determine your grade for his objective, but you have to have taken at least five. Any less then that are graded as “0.”
- c. **Team project on lotteries---tentative project:** This exercise would organize the class into three four person teams. One team would be advocates for the current lottery determining by their research that the lottery would be highly beneficial to Arkansas. Their strategy would be to keep, defend and expand the lottery. Another team would be critics of the lottery advocating repeal of the lottery amendment. Their primary strategy and goal would be to get rid of it. The third team would analyze current legitimate gambling in Arkansas. Their goal would be to provide an analysis of the current gambling situation: Oak lawn, dog racing, simulcasts and other gaming devices---how they are working and should they be maintained or changed. Each team would prepare a memo for their position to the

- d. legislature (and me---high gambling priest) and be prepared to advocate their position in class perhaps in front of those from gambling institutions in our state.
- e. Each team would have 50 minutes for their presentation and to respond to questions from the class and any outside evaluators... This assignment is aimed at enhancing your teamwork skills, your ability to provide good persuasive arguments and effective critical thinking. Each team member would have 75 points of your grade at stake.
- f. **The research paper.** Each student is required to write a research paper on a prominent but varying in power Arkansas interest group. Examples would be the Arkansas Educational Association, the Arkansas Pharmacy Association, Arkansas Bankers, Entergy, The Arkansas Forestry Association, Arkansas Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries, ACORN, Arkansas Chapter of the ACLU, Family Council et al., with a further list for you to look it. The paper would be ten to twelve double spaced pages excluding endnote or reference page, 12 point font. Class members would address some of the following points in the paper: membership, organization, group origin, legislative strategy, recent agendas, types of tactics used including how their money is raised to whom it goes, political successes and defeats, lobbyists used, other groups that the group works with, and a final assessment of how powerful the group is which is the central question of the research paper. Any relevant interviews are encouraged as a research source. The objective of this assignment is to assess and improve writing and research skills and the ability of the student to write a well developed, data supported research paper. Class members should be prepared to use newspaper records, interviews possibly, especially with the organization's lobbyists, use of the internet to track down money, to use the Secretary of State Reports and Ethics Commission reports to look at the money trails. Ethics commission opinions might be another useful source in this regard.

1. A short one or two page proposal noting your group, the resources that you will use, and what you expect to find is to be turned in on the date designated in the course outline.

e. Class effort: As noted earlier this is good karma for your performance grade in this class. Good attendance, participation, and overall effort is important, Measured objectives and skills are those of class commitment, interaction with the instructor and class peers, verbal skills, and preparedness.

VI. Incompletes.

An incomplete is never assigned when the course is not completed because of student failure. An incomplete is assigned when a student fails to complete the class because of significant, documented personal or family problems.

VII. Make Up Examinations

No make ups are usually given during the regular semester. Any make ups will take place on consultation day which is December 8th, at nine a.m. in a classroom to be designated, usually Ross Hall 123 or Ross Hall 215. I will let you

know. In case you miss the midterm where instructor and student convenience meets a possible make-up possibility may exist.

VIII. Grading Scale

450-500 A

400-449 B

350-399 C

300- 349 D

299 or below—not passing

Please note: Midterm grade should be available to you on October 12th

IX... Students with a Disability Policy

Students with disabilities: It is the policy and practice of *the University of Arkansas at Little Rock* to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement--such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos--please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the Disability Resource Center, telephone 501-569-3143 (v/tty). For more information, visit the DRC website at www.ualr.edu/disability. Please see me after class privately if you require an accommodation.

X. Important Semester Dates

Aug 20 th	Classes begin.
Aug 26 th	Last day to register, add, or drop a class by 4 p.m; all tuition and fees due by 4.p.m.
Sept 7 th	Labor day holiday, no class
Nov 12 th	Last day to drop a class and receive a final grade of "w" by 5 p.m.
Nov 26-29 th	Thanksgiving holiday continues, no class on Friday the 27 th
Dec 7 th	Monday, last day of classes. Last day to withdraw from classes by 5 p.m.
Dec 8 th	Tuesday, Consultation and Make up Day
Dec 14 th	Finals begin. Our final at 10:30 a.m. in our classroom
Dec 17 th	Course Grades due at noon
Dec 17 th	Commencement TBA

Selected portions of the constitution will be assigned as we go along. This is not a document that you just pick up and read although it is worth the entire read. However, for every institutional topic covered in the class, you are to read the constitutional provisions that deal with the institution that we our studying. Our outline is close to but not written in stone. I reserve the right to make adjustments with reasonable notice. The big ideas are important so selectivity is a reminder for our class.

XI. Schedule: I take my 10th amendment rights seriously and reserve the right to alter the schedule in the best interests of the class.

The topics correspond to the chapters in Blair and presentations will be move in that direction whether by Professor or guest lecturer or exercise. I would begin reading the McMath book right away at about a 35 page a week clip. Part three should be read or re-read in conjunction with the Blair chapter on transformation and the chapter on Arkansas's executive office. Also I have noted the sections you should read in the Constitution where appropriate. Specified related amendments should also be read and noted for you in class or on a revised syllabus. Some are already noted.

Week 1	The past in the Present: Article 1 and 2---draw for lottery teams.
Week 2	Explanations of the systems: first quiz; interest group proposal due
: Week 3	Traditional Politics & Transformation (interest group proposal Due)
Week 4	Contemporary Political Patterns: ---second quiz
Week 5	Lottery Exercise Article 3
Week 6	Parties and Voters: third quiz
Week 7.	Influence of Interest Groups Article 16
Week 8.	Constitutional Provision and Politic: Midterm exam.
Week 9	Politics and Power of Executive Branch: 4 th quiz Article 6
Week 10	Politics and Power of the Legislative Branch Article 5 and Amendment 73 First draft of paper due in class due in class
Week 11	Power and Politics of the Judicial Branch: 5 th quiz Article 7 and Amendment 80
Week 12	Arkansas in the Federal system
Week 13	Politics at the grassroots: final paper due in class Friday Amendment 55: 6 th quiz
Week 14	Politics of State Services
Week 15	Reforming the system

