

POLITICAL SCIENCE 1310-Section 02, AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT  
Fall, 2009 MWF, 10:00---10:50 a.m.

Dr. Art English

Ross Hall 123

[ajenglish@ualr.edu](mailto:ajenglish@ualr.edu)

Office: 569-3331

Office: Stabler Hall, Suite 603, 1-2, MW and by appointment

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Barbara A. Bardes, et al., **American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials, 2009-2010 edition, (paperback).**

**A good way to apply your knowledge in this class is to keep up with the news by reading a good newspaper in print or on line.**

**I.** This course introduces you to the institutions and operations of American National Government. The purpose of this course is to provide you with better critical and analytical tools so that you can participate more effectively in the American political system. The fundamental assumption of this course is that a liberally educated person should understand the institutions and processes of our political system to be truly empowered in it. A corollary proposition is that for a free system of government to continue, citizens have to be informed and participative.

**II American National Government Today:** We study American National Government at another critical juncture in our history. We are fighting two wars, attempting to recover from a long and hurtful recession, and face numerous global challenges among them energy, climate control, and human rights and threats to a more peaceful world. We have elected our first African American President and placed our first justice of Hispanic extraction on the United States Supreme Court all while we seek to create opportunities and a better way of life for our citizens. These our times that we dare not take our democracy lightly.

**III. How to approach the class:** Not much comes easy in life. Anything you learn cannot be taken away from you. Work hard in your education, read, think, and write and you will be greatly benefited. Learning is a cooperative exercise. Learn from your classmates, think critically, and endeavor to go beyond the basics, think beyond three credits and a grade and fulfilling 124 credits for graduation and instead think about getting your education. Let's aim high. I know there will be obstacles this semester but to be alive with an opportunity to make a difference----what an opportunity. Let's take advantage of it. You can expect me to be forthright and honest with you in this class so let's give our best.

### **IV. What are our objectives?**

To aid us in our learning, our department has collectively defined learning goals for American National Government: The defined general goals are:

A. To bring students knowledge of factual information about the American Political system to a level that enables them to achieve an elementary understanding of accounts of political events in the popular media.

B. To develop students' critical acumen to the point that they can begin to make rationally defensible judgments about political events.

In addition, the Department of Political Science has defined the more specific learning objectives of American National Government as follows:

1. Students will be able to identify salient features of the U.S. Constitution (including the protection it provides for civil liberties and civil rights and American Federalism. Action: Students will show content competency by measurable performance on quizzes. In terms of critical thinking, students are to write a constitutional amendment, develop a strategy for its adoption, outlining the nature of the amendment process and the political difficulties that might be encountered in getting adopted. Students in the second paper will select a candidate for congress and assess his ability to be elected based on his or her district, the money he or she is raising for the race, and other advantages or disadvantages he or she may have.
2. Students will be able to identify the functions and important features of the behavior of institutions that link individuals to the political system, including the media, interest groups, and political parties.
3. Students will be able to identify the function and important features of the behavior of the three branches of government, the legislative, executive, and judicial.
4. Students will demonstrate at least minimal attention to contemporary political affairs by being able to identify the most important players in the federal system. Students are to demonstrate this competency by showing their content knowledge on exams and quizzes. Students are to keep up with salient national government affairs by reading newspapers and listening to diverse news programs from time to time.
5. Given a passage from a newspaper or news weekly about a political event, students will be able to identify statements that accurately summarize the passage, distinguish between good and bad evidence for claims made within the passage, and identify conclusions that can be inferred logically from the information provided in the passage.

**V. Can we make a difference?** Scott Trotter, former executive director of Common Cause, Arkansas, along with reform allies, managed to pass most of the relevant ethics legislation adopted in Arkansas in the past decade. There would be no ethics commission, no lobbyist disclosure, and no conflict of interest legislation had it not been for his and their efforts. George Donaghey, Governor of Arkansas during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was responsible for the building of the state capitol, and passed the initiative and the referendum in Arkansas among his many accomplishments. He did this in part from a blue-collar background, working extraordinarily hard to obtain a higher education for himself. Hattie Caraway became the first woman ever elected to the United States Senate on her own---and her home state was

Arkansas. Blanche Lincoln is the youngest woman ever elected to the United States Senate and is considered a force to be reckoned with in that body. William Jefferson Clinton's zeal for public service won him two terms to the highest office in the land. Former Governor Mike Huckabee is considered one of the best communicators in the nation. After serving as chairperson of the national governors association in 2006 he made a strong run for the presidency in 2008 and is considered a leading candidate for the Republican Party's presidential nomination in 2012.

## **VI. How the class works**

1. Be prepared and have the reading done before you come to class.
2. Be on time. We start at ten sharp. When the rear door is shut you are late for class.
3. Have your cell phones turned off and don't get up in the middle of the class to leave unless you need to. And do not text. That is disrespectful to me and your classmates.
4. Be courteous and respectful to those in this class and this is a good rule for just about anywhere in our society. If you are tired you don't need to be dozing off in class---you need to be in your bed and not in class.
5. Listen carefully and do not carry on discussions in class that disturb the class.
6. Be here regularly. Don't miss class.
7. Always have a sharpened number 2 pencil with you, a good blue or black ink pen, and a notebook to take notes. Bring your book to class.
8. Class presentations will usually be 40 minutes leaving 10 minutes for discussion. I will use videos and other media when relevant to our class. I don't use blackboard but we do have a class discussion list at [pols131002@ualr.edu](mailto:pols131002@ualr.edu).
9. Make sure you are on the class roster. You can't get credit on the class if you are not. I will call the roll in class to make sure you are where you are suppose to be and be aware yourself.
9. Any class concern, see me directly or call me at 902-0427.

## **VII. Objectives and Performance**

1. We will have a short objective quiz each Friday, usually no more than ten questions on what we have covered the previous three class periods. That should be roughly 11 or 12 quizzes. This will count 200 points of your grade and a student will have had to sit for at least three fourths of these. I will drop the lowest three or four of those quizzes. Students who don't take the requisite number of quizzes will receive a 0 for each quiz missed and there are no make-ups. This performance objective goes to your mastery of knowledge goals, class preparation and class commitment.
2. There will be two writing exercises, details to follow. Each writing exercise will consist of a short analytical paper that will require a student to think critically and use political science concepts effectively. Each paper will be worth 50 points of your grade. This performance objective goes to critical thinking skills, research, and effective expression.

3. There are two exams: the midterm and the final. Each exam will count 100 points and the second covers our course material from the midterm on. For these exams you should bring a number two pencil and a blue full page scan sheet. These performance objectives go to your knowledge and conceptual understanding of the course material. There may be reading passages on these exams to respond to.
4. Class effort is measured in terms of your preparation, participation and attendance. Good karma in this area should help your grade but more importantly help develop your listening and articulation skills. The performance objective here is the practice and development of effective reasoning skills in presenting a persuasive argument and responding to one.

### **VIII. 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.

### **IX. Make-Up Examinations**

No make ups are 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.

### **X. 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 12<sup>th</sup>

### **XI. 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](http://www.ualr.edu/disability). Please see me after class privately if you require an accommodation.

## **XII. Important Semester Dates**

Aug 20 <sup>th</sup>	Classes begin.
Aug 26 <sup>th</sup>	Last day to register, add, or drop a class by 4 p.m.; all tuition and fees due by 4.p.m.
Sept 7 <sup>th</sup>	Labor day holiday, no class
Nov 12 <sup>th</sup>	Last day to drop a class and receive a final grade of "w" by 5 p.m.
Nov 26-29 <sup>th</sup>	Thanksgiving holiday continues, no class on Friday the 27 <sup>th</sup>
Dec 7 <sup>th</sup>	Monday, last day of classes. Last day to withdraw from classes by 5 p.m.
Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday, Consultation and Make up Day
Dec 9 <sup>th</sup>	Finals begin. Our final at 10:30 a.m. in our classroom
Dec 17 <sup>th</sup>	Course Grades due at noon
Dec 17 <sup>th</sup>	:Commencement TBA

## **XIII Assignments: Subject to Instructor Change**

**Week One—August 21-28<sup>th</sup>---Chapter 1**

**Week Two---August 31-September 4<sup>th</sup> ---Chapter 2, A-1-, F10, F51**

**Week Three---September 9<sup>th</sup>—11<sup>th</sup> ---Chapter 2—Move ahead**

**First Writing Assignment (due date fourth class after assignment is received with the assignment day counting as the first class).**

**Week Four---September 14<sup>th</sup>---18<sup>th</sup>---Chapter 3**

**Week Five---September 21<sup>st</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> ---Chapter 4**

**Week Six---- September 28<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter 5**

**Week Seven---October 5<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> --- Chapter 6, MIDTERM EXAM ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup>**

**Week Eight----October 12<sup>th</sup>—16<sup>th</sup> Chapter 7**

**Week Nine---October 19<sup>th</sup>---23<sup>rd</sup> ---Chapter 8**

**Week Ten----October 26<sup>th</sup>---30<sup>th</sup> Chapter 9**

**Week Ten---Chapter 9----Second Writing assignment**

**Week Eleven---November 2<sup>nd</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> Chapter 10**

**Week Twelve----November 9<sup>th</sup>—13<sup>th</sup> Chapter 11**

**Week Thirteen---November 16<sup>th</sup> ---20<sup>th</sup> Catch Up---Move ahead**

**Week Fourteen--- November 23<sup>rd</sup>—25<sup>th</sup> -Chapter 12**

**Week Fifteen---November 30<sup>th</sup>-December 4<sup>th</sup>---Chapter 13<sup>th</sup>**

**December 7<sup>th</sup>---Last day of class.**