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## Principles of American Government

Political Science 100

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Principles of American Government examines the United States' fundamental political values and institutions. The course invites students to explore the nation's founding ideas and their applicability to understanding present politics. Readings, lectures, and discussions address theoretical questions about how political order should be structured, strategic questions about how actors pursue divergent objectives, and institutional questions about the health of the American regime. The course is a required component of a major in Political Science, but politics is not for specialists alone; the demands and promises of the ideal citizen are central themes that may illuminate studies in other fields and in one's life as a citizen.

### Course Requirements:

There will be two 6-8 page papers, and two in-class examinations. Your grade will be based on the following formula:

- 20% Paper 1, 6-8 pages (Due September 28)
- 20% Midterm examination (October 24)
- 25% Paper 2, 6-8 pages (Due November 28)
- 25% Final examination (to be held at the regularly scheduled exam time)
- 10% Participation

*Paper topics* will be distributed in class, and will be due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Unexcused late papers will be counted off a letter grade per day (including weekends), and will not be accepted after 4 days. Students must keep a copy of all work submitted until final grades have been posted. Your grade will be evaluated according to the following:

1. Effective analysis of a range of conflicting and diverse material
  - Have you addressed all material relevant both to the question and to your argument?
  - Have you evidenced thorough reading of the assignment?
  - Could you have enriched your analysis by considering a wide range of assigned sources?
  - Have you used the assigned material in such a way as to make the strongest argument possible?

2. Accurate explanation of course concepts
  - Have you explained major concepts accurately and thoroughly?
  - Are the facts presented accurately?
  - Are arguments made in class and in the readings recounted accurately?
  - Where you disagree with prominent interpretations, have you explained your position persuasively?
  - Are your arguments appropriately documented; that is, have you attributed credit to all sources from which you have taken ideas?
  
3. Original thought that addresses substantive questions raised in class, but that also pushes beyond the boundaries, showing that you have thought about the subject on your own
  - Did you present a thesis, rather than simply restating what others have said, both in class and in the readings?
  - Did you synthesize material, showing connections and contradictions between the different sources?
  - Does your work display thoughtful and intelligent reflection, or is it evidently the product of a quick and hasty approach?

*Paper 2* will focus on what may shape up to be the most dramatic political event of the semester, and will therefore require you involve yourself with news coverage and on-campus activities related to the confirmation process surrounding Judge John Roberts' nomination to the Supreme Court. Topics will be distributed in class, but will require you to cite from reputable news sources and evidence awareness of the issues surrounding the confirmation fight. Additional (optional) readings will be available in the library and in the bookstore.

*Examinations* will be given during class time. Both will be comprehensive and "closed-book." Should you anticipate that you will not be able to be present on the day of an exam, you should inform me as soon as possible. The only way you can be guaranteed a make-up exam is if you schedule one ahead of time.

*Participation* will be evaluated on your attendance and your contribution to discussion. You are strongly advised to attend every class meeting, and you should provide me with an college-approved excuse when you are forced to miss. Students who are unable to attend class because of religious beliefs will be excused upon notifying me. Students who anticipate absences because of their participation in a sport or extracurricular activity should inform me of this at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as absences are anticipated. I will generally be understanding about a reasonable number of excused absences, but **each unexcused absence, and an accumulation of excessive excused absences, will result in a deduction from your participation grade.**

Students are expected to participate when discussion is called for, but this not an episode of "Hardball." On television talk shows, the smooth-tongued and the quick-witted are rewarded. The academic experience, on the other hand, is a search for truth, and students are expected to display conscientious consideration of their fellow students and of the

material. Finally, please be aware that “negative contributions” to the classroom, such as disrespect for the classroom environment and poor preparation, will be counted against you.

*Academic honesty* is expected of all students. All work produced in this course must be the student’s own original work that has been prepared for this course alone. Any violation of this expectation will be taken seriously. Plagiarism is deceptively tempting these days, with many sources available online. Do not be deceived. If you have any questions about plagiarism, you should confer with me or another faculty member. You might also go to [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org), and click on “Research Resources.”

You should consult the course catalog for the official procedures surrounding plagiarism charges, which I will follow. In summary, should I find evidence of plagiarism, I will record a zero for the assignment, meet with you to discuss the charges, and report them to the department chair and to your class dean. You will be able to request a formal review of the charge. If the charge is upheld, the zero will remain. While this does not mean that you will automatically fail the class, given the significance of each assignment in the tallying of your final grade, a zero will make it exceedingly unlikely that you will receive a grade that is satisfactory to you.

Texts:

The following texts are available at the Holy Cross bookstore (and on Amazon.com), and are required reading for the course:

*Showdown at Gucci Gulch*, Jeffrey Birnbaum and Alan Murray

*The Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay

*Red Over Blue: The 2004 Election and American Politics*, James Ceaser and  
Andrew Busch

*Government’s End*, Jonathan Rauch

*The Supreme Court*, William Rehnquist

*republic.com*, Cass Sunstein

*American Government, Brief Edition*, James Q. Wilson

*Additional required readings* have been placed on the course Blackboard site.  
These readings are listed on the syllabus below.

*In addition*, students are required to keep up with the daily news by reading one of the major newspapers provided for Holy Cross students (preferably *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*). I have also set up a weblog for the class that will feature current articles relevant to the class, as well as questions that will guide you to think about class discussions. The blog can be found at <http://fenwick303.blogspot.com/>. You are not required to keep up with the blog, nor should you consider it to be your only source of

news, but it is designed to help you identify specific articles that bear on subjects discussed in class.

Scheduled Events:

Note that there are two special events on campus that are required for the course, on September 15 (at 4pm) and October 19 (at 7:30pm). Both events will touch on subjects covered in the course. Please plan ahead now to attend.

**Schedule of Assignments**

August 31	Introduction to the course
September 2	<i>No Class -- *made up at September 15 roundtable*</i>
September 5	John Locke, <i>Second Treatise, On Government</i> , selection (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 1
September 7	The Declaration of Independence Wilson, ch. 1
September 9	The US Constitution (entire) Federalist 1, 37, 38 Wilson, ch. 2
September 12	Robert A. Dahl, “On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy in the United States” (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 2
September 14	James W. Ceaser, “In Defense of Republican Constitutionalism: A Reply to Dahl” (Blackboard) (Review Dahl, “On Removing Certain Impediments”) Wilson, ch. 2
<i>September 15</i>	<i>Roundtable Discussion on the Roberts Nomination</i> <i>4:00, Rehm Library</i>
September 16	Federalist 10
September 19	Federalist 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 (Review Federalist 10)
September 21	Federal Farmer, “Letter 7” (Blackboard) Herbert Storing, “What the Antifederalists Were For,” selections (Blackboard) (Review Federalist 47, 48, 49)

September 23	Agrippa, "Letter 4" (Blackboard) Federalist 16, 17, 39 (Review Federalist 47-51)
September 26	<i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> (Blackboard) <i>U.S. v. Lopez</i> (Blackboard) Plotz, "The New New New New Federalism" (Blackboard) Ford, "The New Blue Federalists" (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 3
September 28	<b>Paper I Due: The Founding and American Constitutionalism</b> Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" (Blackboard) Niall Ferguson, "America: An Empire in Denial" (Blackboard)
September 30	<i>Government's End</i> , chas. 1, 2 Wilson, ch. 5
October 3	<i>Government's End</i> , chas. 3, 4, 5 Wilson, ch. 5
October 5	<i>Government's End</i> , chas. 6, 7 Wilson, ch. 5
October 7	<i>Government's End</i> , chas. 8, 9, 10 Wilson, ch. 5
October 10	<b><i>COLUMBUS DAY – No Class</i></b>
October 12	Federalist 52, 57, 62, 65 US Constitution, Article I Jeffrey Toobin, "Blowing Up the Senate," (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 7
October 14	<i>Showdown at Gucci Gulch</i> , introduction, chas. 1, 2, 3 Wilson, ch. 12
October 17	<i>Showdown at Gucci Gulch</i> , chas. 4, 5, 6 Wilson, ch. 12
October 19	<i>Showdown at Gucci Gulch</i> , chas. 7, 8, 9 Wilson, ch. 7  ***David Brooks delivers the Conde Nast Lecture on Media, Ethics, and Values at 7:30pm – attendance is required***

October 21	<i>Showdown at Gucci Gulch</i> , chas. 10, 11, epilogue Wilson, ch. 7
October 24	<b><i>Midterm Exam</i></b>
October 26	Federalist 78 US Constitution, Article III <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> (Blackboard) <i>The Supreme Court</i> , ch. 1-2 Wilson, ch. 10
October 28	<i>The Supreme Court</i> , chas. 3-6 Wilson, ch. 10
October 31	<i>The Supreme Court</i> , chas 7-10 Wilson, ch. 10
November 2	<i>The Supreme Court</i> , chas. 11-15 Wilson, ch. 10
November 4	Federalist 68, 70 US Constitution, Article II Wilson, ch. 8
November 7	David Frum, <i>The Right Man</i> , selections, (Blackboard) <i>Red Over Blue</i> , ch.2 Wilson, ch. 8
November 9	<i>Red Over Blue</i> , ch. 1 Thomas Frank, <i>What's the Matter With Kansas?</i> , selections, (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 8
November 11	<i>Red Over Blue</i> , chas. 3-4 Wilson, ch. 6
November 14	<i>Red Over Blue</i> , chas. 5-6 Wilson, ch. 6
November 16	Edward Banfield, "In Defense of the American Party System" (Blackboard) E.E. Schattschneider, "In Defense of Political Parties" (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 5

November 18	Theodore Lowi, "Toward a Responsible Three-Party System: Prospects and Obstacles," (Blackboard) Jeffrey Toobin, "The Great Election Grab," (Blackboard) Ralph Nader, "Open Reply to the Democratic Party" (Blackboard) Wilson, ch. 5
November 21	Federalist 84 The Bill of Rights Wilson, chas. 4 & 11
November 23	<b><i>THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class</i></b>
November 25	<b><i>THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class</i></b>
November 28	<b>Paper II Due: The Roberts Confirmation</b> <i>republic.com</i> Louis D. Brandeis, <i>Whitney v. California</i> , (Blackboard) Oliver Wendell Holmes, <i>Abrams v. United States</i> (Blackboard) Edward T. Sanford, <i>Gitlow v. New York</i> , (Blackboard) Wilson, chas. 4 & 11
November 30	<i>republic.com</i> Wilson, chas. 4 & 11
December 2	<i>republic.com</i> Wilson, chas. 4 & 11
December 5	<b><i>TBA</i></b>