POL 1101H - Honors Intro to American Politics —
Section: FMWA
Fall 2026
In person Monday & Wednesday 4:10 to 5:25 pm
Office Hours: Wednesday 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, by appointment only

Course platform(s): Brightspace; Use your CUNY login or contact IT Helpdesk

Dr. Hill Krishnan
Contact: **hillkrishnan@gmail.com**

This course introduces students to the ideas, institutions, and processes fundamental to the workings of American politics. The course analyzes key political concepts, such as democracy, liberty, equality, and citizenship. It also analyzes governing institutions, notably Congress, the presidency, and the courts, as well as organizations and institutions that connect people to government, such as elections, political parties, the media, and interest groups. This course satisfies the co-requisite for all 3000-level courses in Political Science. It is required for all POL majors.

Course Objectives: By end of the course, students will have learned:

•The foundations of American Democracy;
•The basic elements of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights;
•How the checks and balance s work in an American Democracy;
•How Feder alism works, and how media shapes public opinion;
•What major powers belong to the three branches of the US Government.

TEXTBOOK:
By the People: Debating American Government Brief Edition. Morone, James A. (2nd edition or later is fine).

I. Evaluation of Students:

Grading Scale:

Grade Meaning

A, Excellent, 4.0 (GPA conversion)
A-, Very good, 3.7
B+, Good/meets program standards, 3.3
B, Meets program standards in most respects, 3.0
B-, Requires improvement, 2.7

C+, Requires moderate improvement, 2.3
C, Requires significant improvement, 2.0
C-, Requires extensive improvement, 1.7
F, Fail – Did not meet minimal course requirements, 0

Evaluation Criteria:

❖ ***Exam :*** Mastery of the facts and scholarship involved; accurate answers; drawing insightful conclusions based on analysis.

❖ ***Online Participation:*** Active, respectful and collegial engagement in person and online class discussion/responses; evidence of reading and preparation.

II. Assignments:

Midterm Exam: In class exam covering material from the half of the semester. **Exam questions will require synthesis of ALL lecture notes and readings**. 30%

Final Exam: In class exam covering material from the entire semester. **Exam questions will require synthesis of ALL lecture notes and readings**. 30%

Participation: A lively in person & online class discussion depends upon consistent attendance and active, enthusiastic In person & ONLINE participation. Participation grades are comprised of thoughtful answers to the questions asked that reflects students have done their mandatory readings. Your online responses should be BASED ON THE ONLINE VIDEOS (documentaries and movies). 40%

III. Instructor's Office Hours and Contact Information:

I am pleased to meet with you in person, by phone or zoom to address any questions or concerns you may have regarding the contents of this course, and/or your progress throughout the semester. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail (hillkrishnan@gmail.com) with questions, or if you wish to schedule an appointment time.

Course Requirements & Policies

Weekly Preparation and Course Mechanics

Read the mandatory readings for the class before coming to the class.

Assignments and Other Requirements

Please look at the assignments above.

Attendance

Mandatory attendance. Missing class will affect negatively participation grade.

Late Submissions

Late submissions are not allowed at any condition except with doctors note for that entire week.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with Baruch College's academic integrity policies, including its policies concerning plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration.

Course-specific sanctions: [students will receive an F grade for academic dishonesty)

AI Policy:

Zero AI usage is tolerable. Students will get an F grade for using any form of AI.

Students with Disabilities

Baruch College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments for students with disabilities. Students who may need accommodations should contact Student Disability Services as early as possible.

Attendance and Lateness policy:
All students must attend class regularly. Your in person & online contribution to classroom learning is essential to the success of the course.

Incomplete Grade Policy: Incompletes are only granted in extreme cases such as illness or other family emergency and only where almost all work for the semester has been successfully completed and the basis for the "Incomplete" can be verified. A student's procrastination in completing his/her paper is not a basis for an Incomplete.

Exams: Rescheduling of exams is permitted on a very rare, case-by- case basis. Medical note from a physician or department authorization is essential.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

"Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and the students' personal and intellectual growth. Baruch students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity, and to uphold its ideals. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for disobeying them. Any student who attempts to compromise or devalue the academic process will be sanctioned."

College-Wide Student Resources

Only resources directly relevant to the course need to be highlighted in the body of the syllabus; the remainder may be collected in this brief resource section. Faculty can use links to the current Baruch webpages rather than reproducing lengthy college-wide descriptions when the information is not specific to the course.

A full list can be found here. Key resources include:

- **Baruch One Stop Shop (BOSS):** https://students.baruch.cuny.edu/
- **Student Academic Consulting Center (SACC):** https://sacc.baruch.cuny.edu/
- **Writing Center:** https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/writingcenter/
- **Tools for Clear Speech:** https://tfcs.baruch.cuny.edu/
- **Counseling Center:** https://studentaffairs.baruch.cuny.edu/counseling/
- **Office of the Dean of Students:** deanofstudents@baruch.cuny.edu
- **Library:** https://library.baruch.cuny.edu/students/

WEEKLY TOPICS/ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 (August 31st to September 2nd)

TOPIC: Introduction of the course and discussion of its requirements

Week 2 (September 9th to September 14th)

TOPIC: Ideas That Shape American Politics

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 1

Week 3 (September 16th to September 23rd)

TOPIC: The Founding and the Constitution

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 2

Week 4 (September 28th to September 30th)

Documentary to watch: "John Adams" (HBO series) Season 1 Episode 2: Independence

Recommended Readings:
Wood, Gordon. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution.*
Maier, Pauline. *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788.*
Hamilton, Alexander; Jay, John; and Madison, James. *Federalist Papers.*

Week 5 (October 5th to October 7th)

TOPIC: Federalism

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 3

Recommended Readings:
Hamilton, Alexander; Jay, John; and Madison, James. *Federalist Papers.*

Week 6 (October 13th to October 14th)

TOPIC: Public opinion & Media

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 6

Week 7 (October 19th to October 21st)

TOPIC: In class Midterm exam on October 9th and review on 21st.

Week 8 (October 26th to October 28th)

TOPIC: Campaigns and Elections
Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 8

Week 9 (November 2nd to November 4th)

TOPIC: Congress

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 10

Recommended Readings:
Mayhew, David. *Congress: The Electoral Connection,* Second Edition.
Ritchie, Donald A. *The U.S. Congress: A Very Short Introduction.*

Week 10 (November 9th to November 11th)

TOPIC: The Presidency

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 11
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Recommended Readings:
Jones, Charles O. *American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction.*
Gould, Lewis L. *The Modern American Presidency.* Second Edition, Revised and Updated.
Hofstadter, Richard. *The American Political Tradition: And the Men Who Made It.*.

Week 11 (November 16th to November 18th)

TOPIC: Federal Courts

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 13

Recommended Readings:

Toobin, Jeffrey. *The Nine: Inside the Secret of the Supreme Court.*

Greenhouse, Linda. *The U.S. Supreme Court: A Very Short Introduction.*

Week 12 (November 23rd to November 30th)

TOPIC: American Foreign Policy—Human Rights

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 14

Week 13 (December 2nd to December 7th)

TOPIC: Civil Liberties

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 4

Recommended Readings:
Warburton, Nigel. *Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction.*

Week 15 (December 9th to December 14th)

TOPIC: Civil Rights

Mandatory Readings: *By the People: Debating American Government.* Chapter 5

Recommended Readings:
Warburton, Nigel. *Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction.*

DECEMBER 15th - exam period begins: Final Exam date TBD. In-class exam.