**American Government: A Historical Introduction**

**POLSC 11000 - W01**

**Winter 2024**

**Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday, 9:00 AM– 12:08 PM**

**Online (Synchronous) Via Blackboard Collaborate**

Instructor: Maxwell Fuerderer

Email: mfuerderer@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:15-3:15 PM, via Blackboard Collaborate (and by appointment)

## Course Description

This course explores the creation and development of the American political system through a historical perspective. The course begins with a discussion of important concepts in the American political system and an introduction to the Constitution. Next, we will explore the opinions and beliefs of the American people, the factors that shape these beliefs, and how citizens express their beliefs through interest groups and political participation. Finally, we will examine the structures of the three branches of American Government: Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.

## Resources and Requirements

### 1) Required Textbook

*American Government*, 2e by Glen Krutz, University of Oklahoma, PDF version ISBN-10: 1-947172-66-2. OpenStax. Download for free at https://openstax.org/details/books/American-government. This is an open-source textbook, which means there is no cost to you for reading it online or downloading it.

For all other readings, I have included links in the syllabus, which students can access directly. If there are any issues with the links, I will send them to the class via email, though all readings can be found through an internet search engine.

### 2) Staying Informed of Current Events

You are highly encouraged to read the *New York Times* (or a national news publication of your choice) every day, and come to class in command of current events, especially those relating to American politics. As a Hunter student, you have access to the paper online for free through this link: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/communications/pressroom/news/the-new-york-times-online-is-now-available-to-all-hunter-faculty-staff-and-students-1.

### 3) *Blackboard*

Course updates, including information on assignments and grades will be posted on Blackboard. Please check your Blackboard page frequently.

### 4) *Email*

All students are required to check their Hunter College email frequently, in case any immediate updates, such as class cancellations, are posted. In addition, the best way to reach me with any questions or concerns about the course is through my email, which I have listed above.

Make sure you read this before sending emails to your professors, and please be formal in your email communications:

https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay.

I encourage students, if there is something going on that will prevent them from completing coursework to bring any problems to my attention immediately. I will **always** prefer that you let me know sooner, rather than later, that there is an issue. The sooner I am aware, the better it can be resolved.

**5)** ***Attendance***

Because this course will be conducted online, and time differences will likely affect when students can participate, the class will be conducted synchronously, at the same time every week via Blackboard Collaborate. However, I will record all class sessions, so that students are given the opportunity to keep up. Students are expected to attend Blackboard Collaborate sessions nevertheless, if able, as all course material will be covered in class, providing students with the best opportunity to understand the material and posit questions. All students should behave in a manner that is neither distracting nor disruptive to the class. If a student is disruptive, they will be asked to leave the class session.

**Grading Policy**

1) *Weekly Quizzes from Course Readings* *50%*

2) *Final Exam (January 23rd)* *50%*

*Participation* – Though not required, participation in class meetings is *highly encouraged*, and may contribute to embellishment of your final grade.

**Weekly Quizzes**

The first half of your grade will be determined by performance on Multiple-Choice Quizzes, available via Blackboard. The Weekly Quizzes have two goals: 1) to provide students with an opportunity to show that they are reading and understanding the course material; 2) enable students to better prepare for the Final Exam through practice.

For each week of classes, there will be 4-5 quizzes due, depending on the amount of course material we cover for that week. The quizzes must be completed by 11:59 pm, every Friday, on the week they are due. Students are allowed two (2) attempts per Quiz. Furthermore, the highest score will be the one counted for credit. However, because of the fairness of this arrangement, strict punctuality is expected for the Quizzes. Thus, missed Quizzes will NOT be accepted, and will result in automatic zeroes, so be sure to complete them on-time.

**Final Exam**

The second half of your grade is a Final Exam, which will be comprised of multiple-choice questions. The Final Exam will be cumulative, to test whether students have grasped the subject matter of the course. A review session will be held on the last class day before the Final Exam, which will be conducted in-person at Hunter College. **There is no make-up date for the Final Exam, and missing it will constitute an automatic zero.**

**Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity (required on all syllabi by Senate resolution)**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

**ADA Policy**

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with

documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

If anyone in this class has a disability that may require some modification of the seating, testing, or other class requirements, please let me know immediately, and we can work out whatever arrangements are needed. **It is the responsibility of students to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for testing accommodations, and within the first week of class, or these accommodations cannot be provided, as this course is conducted within the span of a few weeks.**

**Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-onSexualMisconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf

**Reading List** (Note: This list is tentative, and I may add/subtract readings, depending on what we cover for the week)

Tuesday, January 2nd – Introduction, Outline of Course Requirements; The Roots of the American Political System: The "First" Constitution

1) *American Government*, Chapter 1.1 - 1.2

2) *Articles of Confederation*

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp

3) *Declaration of Independence*

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp

Wednesday, January 3rd - The Constitution: Its Support and its Opposition

1) *American Government*, Chapter 2

2) *The Constitution of the United States and the First 12 Amendments*: 1787-1804.

http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch1s9.html

3) *Madison, James, Federalist no. 51.*

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed51.asp.

4) *The Ratification Debate: The Federalist and Anti-Federalist Arguments*

https://judiciallearningcenter.org/the-ratification-debate/

Thursday, January 4th - The Constitution: Its Support and Opposition, cont'd.

1) *American Government*, Chapter 2

2) *The Constitution of the United States and the First 12 Amendments*: 1787-1804.

http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch1s9.html

3) *Madison, James, Federalist no. 51*.

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed51.asp.

4) *The Ratification Debate: The Federalist and Anti-Federalist Arguments*

https://judiciallearningcenter.org/the-ratification-debate/

Monday, January 8th - Federalism

1) *American Government*, Chapter 3

2) Randy Barnett, *Why Federalism Matters.* Accessed 2020.

https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/interpretation/article-i/section/8712#why-federalism-matters

3) . *Statement and Proclamation of Governor George C. Wallace*, University of Alabama, June 11, 1963.

http://www.archives.state.al.us/govs_list/schooldoor.html.

4) Conor Friedersdorf, *The Superiority of a States' Rights Approach to Marijuana – The Public Wants it, and the Tenth Amendment demands it.*

https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/01/the-superior-morality-of-a-states-rights-approach-to-marijuana/549707/

Tuesday, January 9th - Civil Liberties

1) *American Government*, Chapter 4.

2) Franklin D. Roosevelt, *1941 State of The Union Address: The Four Freedoms* (6 January 1941)

http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/fdr-the-four-freedoms-speech-text/

3) Excerpt from Justice Harry A. Blackmun, U.S. Supreme Court, *Decision: Roe et.al. v. Wade, District Attorney of Dallas County 410 U.S. 113.* Online:

https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/410/113/case.html (Read Part I and skim Part II, then read IX thru XII)

Wednesday, January 10th - Civil Rights

1) *American Government*, Chapter 5

2) *Slave Petition to the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts*. May 25, 1774.

http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch14s9.html

3) Justice John Marshall Harlan's dissent, *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*

http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/nclc375/harlan.html

4) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

5) Lyndon B. Johnson, *Howard University Commencement Address*

https://www.americanyawp.com/reader/27-the-sixties/lyndon-johnson-howard-university-commencement-address-1965/

6) Malcolm X. 1964. *The Ballot or the Bullet*, Blackpast.org http://www.blackpast.org/1964-malcolm-x-ballot-or-bullet

[To listen to audio of speech go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zLQLUpNGsc&t=2268s&ab_channel=npatou

Thursday, January 11th - Public Opinion and Political Participation

1) *American Government*, *Chapters 1.3, 6 and 7*

2) Pew Research Center, *Trends in Party Affiliation Among Demographic Groups,* 2018.

https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/20/1-trends-in-party-affiliation-among-demographic-groups/.

3) Junn, Jane (2016). *Hiding in Plain Sight: White Women Vote Republican. Politics of Color*

*http://politicsofcolor.com/white-women-vote-republican/*

4. Lichtenberg, Nick, and Hoffower, Hillary (2020). *A Book Published Nearly 25 Years Ago Predicted America Would Hit A Great Crisis Climaxing in 2020 – And That Up Next Is A Millennial vs. Boomer Standoff That Will Usher in A New World Order* https://www.businessinsider.com/protests-coronavirus-crisis-fourth-turning-theory-millennials-boomers-2020-6.

5) Kay Schlotzman, *The Big Tilt*, https://prospect.org/power/big-tilt/

6) Robert Putnam, *Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America,* PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 664- 683. https://www.uvm.edu/~dguber/POLS293/articles/putnam1.pdf

**Monday, January 15th - College Closed, No Class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)**

Tuesday, January 16th - Media, Political Parties, Interest Groups and Lobbying

1) American Government, Chapters 8, 9, and 10

2) Cullen Murphy, The Press at War: From Vietnam to Iraq (2018)

3) Jim Rutenburg, A Nation at War: The News Media. (2003)

https://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/15/us/a-nation-at-war-the-news-media-cnn-s-silence-about-torture-is-criticized.html

4) Madison, Federalist #10
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp

5) Pew Research Center: *Political Polarization in the American Republic*. 2014. https://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/

6) Thomas Zittel: *The Dark and Bright Sides of Party Polarization.* 2018. https://items.ssrc.org/democracy-papers/the-dark-and-bright-sides-of-party-polarization/

7) Geoffrey Skelley and Nathaniel Rakich: *Why the President's Party Almost Always Has a Bad Midterm*. FiveThirtyEight. 2022. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-the-presidents-party-almost-always-has-a-bad-midterm/

Wednesday, January 17th - Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts

Congress

1) *American Government, Chapter 11*

2) James E. Campbell, *American Democracy Should Represent Only Its Citizens*. 2019.

https://www.marketwatch.com/story/american-democracy-should-represent-only-american-citizens-period-2019-07-23

3) Pew Research Center, *Partisan Conflict and Congressional Outreach*. 2017.

https://www.people-press.org/2017/02/23/partisan-conflict-and-congressional-outreach/

The Presidency

1) *American Government, Chapter 12*

2) Lincoln, *Letter to Albert Hodges*

http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/hodges.htm

3) Hamilton, *Federalist #69 and #70*

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed69.asp

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed70.asp

4) *Transcript of David Frost's Interview with Richard Nixon*

https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/transcript-of-david-frosts-interview-with-richard-nixon/

The Courts

1) *American Government, Chapter 13*

2) Hamilton, *Federalist 78 & 79*

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed78.asp

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed79.asp

Note: Audio recordings of Supreme Court oral arguments can be found at: https://www.oyez.org/

Thursday, January 18th - Review Session

**Tuesday, January 23rd – Final Examination In-Person (9:30 am – 11:30 am in HW 1729).**