

**American Government  
Political Science 201, Section 003  
Fall 2009**

**Three Credit Hours**

2:00 to 3:15, T and Th, 305 Kinard

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 12:00 to 1:00; Thursday, 5:00 to 6:00; and by appointment.

**Students with Disabilities**

**Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and need accommodations, please contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-3290, as soon as possible. Once you have your Professor Notification Form, please tell me so that I am aware of your accommodations as soon as possible (since quizzes will begin almost immediately).**

**I. Goals of the Course**

The major goal of this course is to foster a basic knowledge of how the American political system works. This knowledge entails understanding American governance as a structurally situated set of practices operating at the level of institutions, the economy, society, and the individual. Though we will not ignore political events as they occur during the semester, we will spend a great deal of time looking below the surface of everyday politics in order to see how structure, across these different levels of analyses, both constrains and empowers different kinds of political actors. This kind of analytical capacity cultivates an important prerequisite for meeting one of Winthrop's primary goals, preparing our students to participate in their own democratic self-governance.

**II. Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the institutional structure of American politics, particularly as that structure is organized by the separation of powers, bi-cameralism, and federalism.
2. Students who successfully complete this course will understand and be able to describe the way the institutional structure of American politics is entwined with and conditioned by an economic structure. Following from this understanding, students will be able to demonstrate how the question of how government *should* relate to this economic structure has been an ongoing basis of partisan contestation.
3. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to explain the history of civil liberties and civil rights, both in terms of their historically changing Constitutional status and in relation to the broader social and economic contexts in which these changes have occurred.
4. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate an understanding of key texts and events central to the ongoing practice of American politics, such as but not limited to John Locke's defense of a natural right to property from Chapter 5 of *A Second Treatise of Government*; Federalist Papers 10, 51 and 70; the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments; Supreme Court cases such as *Barron v. Baltimore*, *Palko v. Connecticut*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Roe v. Wade*; and Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail."
5. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate how politics encompasses the fight for and exercise of power through various processes of violent force, coercion, bargaining, and consensus.
6. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to critically interrogate the practices of our democratic system, enabling them to arrive at their own normative evaluations about the degree to which our political system is currently living up to its democratic promise.

### III. The Relationship of PLSC 201-003 and Touchstone Goals

PLSC 201 is designed to help students begin to develop and master competencies in the seven Touchstone goals. Some of these goals lead to clear and measurable learning outcomes: the goal of communicating clearly and effectively in standard English, for example, is easily demonstrable. Students are required to write effective essays about a variety of questions throughout the semester, which will be evaluated using the Touchstone's Writing Competency Rubric.

For other Touchstone goals (such as goals 2, 5, and 6), however, the relationship between the sustained foci of the class and those goals may not be as clearly direct even though those goals remain germane to the texture of a student's introductory understanding of American politics. In some cases, students may not have entirely mastered the skills and orientations represented by these goals by the end of the semester; in other cases, they will only consider a part of a goal's content. This course, however, should be understood as part of a process that helps students build these capacities. For example, students will not learn everything they need to know about the quantitative study of political phenomena (suggested by Goal Two below), but they will learn about how mathematical reasoning allows us to make distinctions between reliable and unreliable political polls. Nor will students learn about the entire history of aesthetics in this course, but they will be introduced to considerations of the aesthetic dimensions of politics, such as the role that spectacle and emotive appeals play in the realities of American electoral politics. Without claiming that these goals can, should, or will be enclosed within the circle of an assessment loop, it makes good pedagogical sense to include all of those that are relevant to PLSC 201 - 003 on the syllabus so that the class can talk about connections between the specific goals of the course and the broader set of skills, aptitudes, and orientations enunciated by the Touchstone goals. Such questions about the relationship between specific Touchstone goals and the specific content of PLSC 201 remain a legitimate basis for quiz and test questions throughout the semester.

*Goal One: To communicate clearly and effectively in standard English.*

*Goal Two: To acquire and appreciate quantitative skills.*

*Goal Three: To use critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a variety of research methods.*

*Goal Four: To recognize and appreciate human diversity (both past and present) as well as the diversity of ideas, institutions, philosophies, moral codes, and ethical principles.*

*Goal Five: To understand scientific knowledge in terms of its methods or acquisition, its specific quantitative nature, and its dynamic and contingent character.*

*Goal Six: To understand aesthetic values, the creative process, and the interconnectedness of the literary, visual, and performing arts throughout the history of civilization.*

*Goal Seven: To examine values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits which define the nature and quality of life.*

### ***Political Science 201 meets the General Education Social Science and Constitution Requirements***

#### IV. Required Texts

Lowi, Ginsberg, and Shepsle. *American Government: Power and Purpose, with election update*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

*Norton American Politics Online Reader*, [http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/lowi/lowi10\\_brief/](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/lowi/lowi10_brief/)

Grover and Peschek. *Voices of Dissent: Critical Readings in American Politics*, Eighth Edition. New York: Longman, 2010.

In addition to these required texts, I strongly recommend that you keep in touch with current political events through a reliable news source. Not only will the practice of following politics allow you to perform better in this class, it is an admirable life-long habit that you should begin to cultivate as you prepare yourself to become a responsible and competent democratic citizen. Reliable sources for political news include, but are not limited to, daily newspapers with a national reputation such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* (note that these papers can be accessed via the internet); television news programs, such as the "News Hour with Jim Lehrer"; radio programs like National Public Radio's daily broadcasts of "Morning Edition" or "All Things Considered"; as well as an ever-

expanding list of internet sources. I will reward those who keep up with current events with occasional extra credit, in-class opportunities.

## V. Assignments

- 1) **Attendance is not optional** and will be taken daily. I will excuse absences because of religious holidays, but it is your responsibility to inform me that this is the reason for your absence. I will also excuse absences caused by sickness or family emergency if you provide me with proper written documentation.
- 2) You are expected to have completed all **reading** assignments before you come to class.
- 3) To make sure that you keep up with and understand the readings, you will be given **pop quizzes** throughout the semester.
- 4) You will be graded on both the frequency and quality of your **participation in class discussions and, when appropriate, class exercises**.
- 5) You will take **two in-class exams** during the semester.
- 6) You will take a **final, in-class, exam** at the end of the semester.

## VI. Political Science Department Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

The Winthrop University Political Science department abhors all forms of academic misconduct, and faculty members aggressively investigate all incidents of suspected cheating. This includes, but is not limited to, using turnitin.com.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is by far the most common form of academic misconduct in the Political Science department. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Using the words or ideas of others as one's own;
- Reproducing, in whole or in part, principal ideas from a fellow student's work;
- Granting a fellow student permission to copy one's paper, or to reproduce some or all of its principal ideas;
- Quoting or paraphrasing material from sources without any citation;
- Quoting or paraphrasing material without sufficient and/or proper citation;
- Omitting some or all sources used in a paper; and
- Submitting a paper written for one course -- whether in Political Science or another discipline -- to meet a course requirement in a second course, *without the express permission of all instructors involved*. This is the case even though many paper topics may be relevant to several different courses.

All incidents of suspected academic misconduct are investigated with equal vigor.

When a faculty member suspects that a student engaged in academic misconduct, the faculty member will follow the appropriate procedures outlined in the *Student Handbook*. The faculty member will apply whatever sanctions s/he deems appropriate. Possible sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Failing the assignment;
- Requiring a student to repeat an assignment for reduced credit;
- Requiring a student to repeat an assignment for no credit; or
- Failing the course.

Academic misconduct applies equally to required assignments and extra credit assignments.

*All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Department Chair, the Dean of Students, the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the student's academic advisor. The University may impose its own sanctions in addition to sanctions imposed by the faculty member or the department. The University may impose sanctions even after a student has graduated, and may include revoking a student's diploma.*

In addition, students who engage in more than one incident of academic misconduct may be declared ineligible for departmental awards, ineligible for employment in the department or its affiliated programs, and ineligible to volunteer as a peer advisor.

Adopted August 14, 2007.

**In this course**, any act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in an “F” for the course and will lead to appropriate administrative action. Ignorance as to what constitutes plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty is not a valid excuse for such transgressions. For further clarification about matters of academic dishonesty, students should consult Section V of the **Student Conduct Code** in the **Student Handbook**. For specific questions about plagiarism, the Writing Center, located on the second floor of Bancroft, is an excellent resource. The Center’s web page ([www.Winthrop.edu/wcenter](http://www.Winthrop.edu/wcenter)) has specific links that can help you with questions about how to cite source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Your instructor is more than glad to talk to you about these matters.

## VII. Grading Scale

**Grades of A through F will be determined based on the following numerical scale:**

100 – 94	A
93 – 90	A-
89 – 87	B+
86 -84	B
83 – 80	B-
79 – 77	C+
76 – 74	C
73 – 70	C-
69-65	D
64 – 60	D-
59 and below	F

## VIII. Final Grade Distribution

Attendance 10%  
Participation 10%  
Pop Quizzes 20%  
Test I 20%  
Test II 20%  
Final 20%

## IX. Grading Criteria For Written Work

I will grade your written work consistent with the General Education Writing Competency Rubric developed by the English Department, which can be found on the General Education web page (<http://www.winthrop.edu/universitycollege/GenEd/default.htm>). Across the University, and specifically in this class, writing competency is expected and taken very seriously. Being able to write clearly is the cornerstone of our ability to think and communicate clearly, which we believe remain important characteristics of competent citizenship.

## X. Schedule

**Note on schedule:** the instructor reserves the right to make changes to this schedule as he sees fit, depending on the unfolding needs of the class. Any such changes will be announced in class, and it is the sole responsibility of the student to be aware of such changes.

Date	Assignment
August 25	Introduction
August 27	Harold D. Lasswell, from <i>Who Gets What, When, How</i> (online reader)  “Structure” (Grover and Peschek)  <b>NOTE: AUGUST 28<sup>th</sup> IS THE LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT INSTRUCTOR’S</b>

	PERMISSION
September 1	Zinn, "Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress," "Drawing the Color Line," Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1 – 38), from <i>A People's History of the United States</i> .  Hobbes, Locke, and the Logic of Collective Action (Lecture)
September 3	<b>NO CLASS MEETING</b> (I will be attending the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association)  Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 1  Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i> , Chapter 5, "On Property," <a href="http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr05.htm">http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr05.htm</a>  <i>The Bill of Rights</i>  Jefferson, <i>The Declaration of Independence</i>
September 8	Hobbes, Locke, and the Logic of Collective Action (Lecture, continued)  Olson, from <i>The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups</i> (online reader)
September 10	Lindblom, "The Market as Prison" (in the Dacus Library database, on JSTOR)  Clawson, Neustadt, and Mark Weller, "Why Does the Air Stink? Corporate Power and Public Policy (G. and P.)  Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" (online reader)
September 15	The Constitution  Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 2
September 17	Lowi and Ginsberg; <i>Federalist</i> No. 10 and No. 51 (L. and G.).

September 22	Cohen and Rogers, "American Exceptionalism"; Dolbere and Metcalf, "The Dark Side of the Constitution"
September 24	Lowi and Ginsbeg, Chapter 3; <i>The Constitution, the Amendments</i> , (L. and G.)
September 29	<b>Review</b>
October 1	<b>Exam I</b>
October 6	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 4.
October 8	Williams, "This Dangerous Patriot's Game," (G. and P.).  Richard A. Posner, from <i>Not a Suicide Pact: The Constitution in a Time of National Emergency</i> (online reader)
October 13	Film: "Is this America?"
October 15	King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail"; Zinn, "Some Truths Are Not Self-Evident," (G. and P.).
October 20	<b>FALL BREAK</b>
October 22	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 5.  Berg, "Congress and Big Business"; Common Cause, "How a Bill Really Becomes a Law"
October 27	Grover and Sipion, "Congressional Inertia: Iron Triangles Old and New" (G. and P.).
October 29	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 6  Federalist Paper 70 (online reader); Van Bergen, "The 'Unitary Executive' and the Threat to Democratic Government" (G. and P.).
November 3	Genovese, "The Limits of Presidential Power"; Miroff, "The Presidential Spectacle" (G. and P.)
November 5	<b>EXAM TWO</b>
November 10	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 8  Rosen, "Supreme Court, Inc."; Tushnet; "Democracy Versus Judicial Review" (G. and P.).

November 12	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 9
November 17	Solomon, "The Industrial-Military-Media Complex"; McChesney and Nichols, "It's the Media, Stupid"; Bennett, "News Content and Illusion: Four Information Biases That Matter" (G. and P.)
November 19	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 10  Frank, "What's the Matter with America?"; Fairvote, "The Shrinking Electoral Battlefield"; Heuvel, "Just Democracy" (G. and P.)
November 24	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 11  Aldrich, from <i>Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Party Politics in America</i> ; Wattenberg, from <i>The Decline of American Political Parties 1952-1996</i> (online reader)
November 26	<b>NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break</b>
December 1	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 12  Terry M. Moe, from <i>The Organization of Interests: Incentives and the Internal Dynamics of Political Interest Groups</i> Kevin M. Esterling, from <i>The Political Economy of Expertise</i> Kenneth W. Kollman, from <i>Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies</i> Adam Sheingate, from <i>The Rise of the Agricultural Welfare State: Institutions and Interest Group Power in the United States, France, and Japan</i> (online reader)
December 3	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 13  Allan H. Meltzer and Scott F. Richard, "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government" (online reader)
December 5	Lowi and Ginsberg, Chapter 14  Paul E. Peterson, "The President's Dominance in Foreign Policy Making" Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, from <i>America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy</i> (online reader)

**The Final Exam for this class is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The final must be taken on this date unless you have two other exams on the same day. Travel plans are NOT a legitimate excuse for rescheduling the exam.**