

# **POL 101: Introduction to American Government**

**Spring Semester 2005**

**Combs 114**

**Tuesday & Thursday, 2 – 3:15**

Professor: Dr. Dana Patton

Office: McCreary 213

Phone: 622-4388

e-mail: dana.patton@eku.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 10-12, and by appointment

## **Description of Course**

- This is an introductory course that focuses on the national government. Emphasis is placed on learning how institutions, people, and politics shape public policy.

## **Required Texts**

- Edwards, George C. III, Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry. 2005. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*. Brief Seventh Edition, Election Update. Pearson Longman Press.
- Frank, Thomas. 2004. "What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America". Metropolitan Books.

## **Learning Objectives**

The primary text (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry) is constructed around three questions: (1) How should we govern? (2) What should government do? and (3) What difference does politics make to the policies governments produce? The learning objectives for this course are constructed around these three themes which are carried throughout the text. By the end of the semester, students should:

- Understand the evolving and ambiguous nature of democracy.
- Understand competing viewpoints concerning the role of government in society.
- Understand how our federal government is organized and operates.
- Understand how politics affects policy and how policy affects politics.

Introduction to American Government is a General Education class and the College of Arts & Sciences has outlined learning objectives for all classes that fall under this rubric. General Education learning objectives that are appropriate for this class include the following:

- Students will learn to write, speak, and listen effectively.
- Students will learn to critically analyze both information and reasoned arguments.
- Students will learn to participate in fruitful intellectual dialogue and work effectively with others on issues of personal and public importance.
- Students will learn to integrate their knowledge in ways that will deepen their understanding of, and will inform their own choices about, issues of personal and public importance.

### **Assessment Methods**

- The primary means of assessing student progress on meeting the learning objectives will be through exams that focus on all aspects of the learning objectives. In addition, students will demonstrate their ability to make reasoned arguments and think critically by completing writing assignments and participating in class discussions.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Attendance and Participation**

Class attendance and participation is expected. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading before class. Absences will be excused in the event of sickness or death of a family member. Students should notify me of their expected absence the day of class or before if possible. Make-up exams and late assignments will ONLY be accepted if the student has an excused absence. Make-up quizzes will not be given. Attendance will be taken periodically throughout the semester and factored in as a quiz score.

### **Quizzes**

Short quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester in an effort to encourage you to keep up with the reading. If you have done the reading for the week, you should have no problem securing good scores on the quizzes. There will be NO make-up quizzes. The two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. The quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade.

### **Blackboard**

Students should check Blackboard on a regular basis for announcements and assignments. Please update your email and consult with Academic Computing if you do not know how to use Blackboard. *I reserve the right to conduct class sessions on Blackboard as warranted.*

## Exams

There will be a total of three exams covering the assigned material. The very detailed outline of my lectures that I provide every class meeting is your study guide for the exams. No additional study guide will be provided. Students are expected to fill in the lecture outline with notes during class and utilize the outline and notes as a study guide. The exams are worth 65% of your final grade.

## Paper Assignment

Students will complete a paper based on the book, "What's the Matter with Kansas". Details will be posted on Blackboard and reviewed in class in the following weeks. The paper is worth 25% of your final grade.

## Academic Honesty

Cheating, plagiarism, and destruction of course materials violate the rules of the University and the ethical standards of public administration and political science professions. Violations of the university's rules regarding academic honesty can lead to a failing grade in the course and expulsion from the University. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to appropriate University officials as required by University rules and procedures. If I suspect a student has cheated in any way on homework or exams, or plagiarized materials in the research project, I will pursue it. See me if you're not sure what constitutes cheating or plagiarism.

## Disability Accomodation Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please make an appointment with the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you need academic accommodations and are not registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please contact the office on the third floor of the Student Services Building, by email at [disabilities@eku.edu](mailto:disabilities@eku.edu) or by telephone at (859) 622-2933 V/TDD. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms.

## Grading Summary

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Exam 3:	25%
Quizzes:	10%
Paper:	25%

## Final Grade Calculation

90% and above	= A
80-89%	= B
70-79%	= C
60-69%	= D
59% and below	= F

## Weekly Reading Assignments

All reading assignments are to be completed BEFORE the class meeting. I reserve the right to alter the reading schedule based on class progress and other factors.

**Week 1: January 11 & 13**

Introduction; Read the Preface, Tools for Understanding Government in America, About the Authors, and Chapter 1: Introducing Government in America for the 13<sup>th</sup>

**Week 2: January 18 & 20**

Chapter 2: The Constitution; also read: The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution (both are located in an Appendix in the back of the book)

**Week 3: January 25 & 27**

Chapter 3: Federalism for the 25<sup>th</sup>  
Chapter 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (read for the 27<sup>th</sup>)  
(Page numbers TBA)

**Week 4: February 1 & 3**

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

**Week 5: February 8 & 10**

Chapter 5: Public Opinion and Political Action

**Week 6: February 15 & 17**

**EXAM ONE on the 15<sup>th</sup>!**  
Chapter 6: The Mass Media and the Political Agenda (read for the 17<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 7: February 22 & 24**

Chapter 7: Political Parties

**Week 8: March 1 & 3**

Chapter 8: Campaigns and Voting Behavior

**Week 9: March 8 and 10**

**NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK!**

**Week 10: March 25 & 17**

Chapter 9: Interest Groups

**Week 11: March 22 & 24**

**EXAM TWO ON the 22<sup>nd</sup>!**  
Chapter 10: Congress (read for the 24<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 12: March 29 & 31**

Chapter 10: Congress, continued

**Week 13: April 5 & 7**

Chapter 11: The Presidency

**Week 14: April 12 & 14**

Chapter 12: The Federal Bureaucracy

**Week 15: April 19 & 21**

Chapter 13: The Federal Courts

**Week 16: April 26 & 28**

Chapter 15: Social Welfare Policymaking

**EXAM THREE: Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 – 3pm.**