

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Mark David Hall  
Center Street House, Room 12  
Class time: 10:35-11:50, TTH  
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PSC 190  
Fall 2010  
Ross 140

Office Hours, MF 2:00-4:00, W 2:00-3:00, TTH 1:30-4:00, or by appointment.

This course provides an introduction to the American system of government. The origin, development, and present state of its major institutions are examined in detail. Special emphasis is placed on current policy issues in which the government plays an important role. Students are encouraged to think about these subjects from a Christian perspective.

Required text:

James Q. Wilson and John DiIulio, American Government: The Essentials, 12<sup>th</sup> ed.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Students are required to read The New York Times on a daily basis. You can subscribe to the Times free of charge at <http://www.nytimes.com>. (Once you have subscribed, save the page as a bookmark or make it your homepage). Students should read all of the front-page stories dealing with national and international politics. We will discuss these stories regularly.

I expect students to attend class regularly, complete reading assignments on time, and participate in class discussions. Throughout the semester I will give 14 short quizzes at the beginning of class over assigned readings and the preceding week's The New York Times. I will drop 4 of the 14 quizzes under the assumption that students will miss or do poorly on 5 quizzes because of illness, sporting events, travel, job interviews, family emergencies, tardiness, etc. **I will not give make up quizzes for any reason.** If you think you will miss more than four quizzes this semester, let me know immediately. Combined quiz scores are worth 10% of your final grade. As well, we will have three exams, each of which is worth 20% of your final grade.

Finally, students are required to write three opinion pieces based on their reading of The New York Times (each is worth 10% of your final grade). Editorials should be 600-800 words (about two pages—use the “word count” function under the “tools” bar in Microsoft Word to ensure that you fall within these guidelines) and must argue a clear thesis. One piece should be written for The Crescent, one for The Oregonian, and one for either. I will add three points to your score if you publish your piece in The Crescent, and five points if you publish it The Oregonian, The Graphic, or a similar paper. You must come and talk with me in my office about your first topic. You may e-mail your topics for the last two editorials.

Each opinion piece should rigorously argue a thesis. You should **not** include footnotes, but you should indicate where you got quotations, statistics, etc. If you are unfamiliar with the format, you should read columnists such as Ruth Marcus or George Will on the editorial page of the Times (or elsewhere). For op-ed pieces, paragraphs should generally not be more than three

sentences long. I strongly recommend that you buy, read, and follow religiously Strunk and White, The Elements of Style.

The editorials are due at the beginning of class on October 3, October 31, and December 1. All written assignments must be turned in by hand and on paper (no e-mail submissions). Late assignments will be penalized 3 points every 24-hour period they are late (excluding weekends). Absolutely no extensions will be given for computer/printer problems.

You may discuss your topic with other students, and they may proofread your essay, but all of your research and writing must be done by you alone. Plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” on the paper or, if flagrant enough, the course. A good definition of plagiarism, with links to sites that show you how to avoid it, may be found at: (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/plag.html>). I encourage you to take your essay to George Fox’s new writing center for assistance.

A final letter grade based upon the percentage of points you earn in this course will be given based on the following scale:

93-100, A; 90-92.99, A-  
87-89.99, B+; 83-86.99, B; 80-82.99, B-  
77-79.99, C+; 73-76.99, C; 70-72.99, C-  
67-69.99, D+; 60-66.99, D  
0-59.99, F

### Reading Assignments

All page numbers refer to the text unless otherwise noted.

August

31. Introduction

September

2. **No class**, read chapter 1 and Declaration of Independence (appendix 1)

7. The Constitution, chapter 2

9. The Constitution

14. Federalism, chapter 3

16. Federalism

21. American political culture, chapter 4. Paper #1 due.

23 Review session lead by Austin Schaefer (I am out of town Sept, 23-27)

28. Test #1.

30. Civil Liberties, chapter 5

October

5. Civil Liberties

7. Civil Rights, read chapter 6

12. Civil Rights

14. **No Class. Op-ed #2 due in my mail box in Center Street House at 4:00.**

19. Public Opinion, read chapter 7

21. Public Opinion, Internet Assignment: go to <http://www.pollingreport.com/>. Study and be prepared to discuss several polls that interest you (e.g., Bush's approval rating, leading Democratic candidates, etc.). [A fun, related site, <http://www.campaignline.com/odds/> places odds on current races.]

26. Political Participation, chapter 8

28. TEST #2

November

2. Political Parties, chapter 9

4. Elections and Campaigns, chapter 10

9. Parties and Elections

11. **Guest Speaker. Op-ed #3 due in my mailbox in Center Street House at 4:00.**

16. Congress, Chapter 13 and Article I of Constitution

18. Congress.

23. Presidency, Chapter 14

25. Thanksgiving

30. Presidency

December

2. Judiciary, chapter 16

7. Judiciary

9. Catch-up and review.

16. Test #3

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, and learning enhancement strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). Students can make an appointment with the ARC Writing Center for guidance and feedback on written projects. ARC consultants can also provide basic tutoring for many general education and other courses. Go to [www.georgefox.edu/arc/](http://www.georgefox.edu/arc/) for information about consultants' areas of study, how to schedule an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at x2314 if you have questions. If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services office early in the term so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, contact Rick Muthiah, Director of Disability Services (x2314 or [rmuthiah@georgefox.edu](mailto:rmuthiah@georgefox.edu)), or go to [ds.georgefox.edu](http://ds.georgefox.edu).