**Political Science 104: Introduction to American Government**

**Spring Semester, 2015 - Rutgers University**

**Professor Ross K. Baker -** rosbaker@rci.rutgers.edu

**Lecture Location: Loree Building 022, Douglass Campus**

**Lecture Time:** Tuesdays & Fridays\* 12:35PM-1:55PM

*\*****NOTE:*** *On the scheduled weeks you have recitation with your TA, there is no lecture with Dr. Baker that Friday*

**Teaching Assistants:**

**Ms. Arielle Bennett -** ariellebennett@gmail.com

**Mr. Héctor Bahamonde -** hector.bahamonde@rutgers.edu

**Ms. Christabel Cruz -** chricruz@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

***Course Statement:***

This survey course covers the major components of U.S. national government. Beginning with the philosophical origins of American constitutionalism, we will proceed to discuss the political and economic context in which the Constitution was written and then examine in detail the Constitution and Bill of Rights. We will then proceed to discussion of the underpinnings of the Constitutional system such as American values, socialization, public opinion and the manner in which they operate.

Next, we’ll move on to the structures, processes and institutions associated with American democracy– federalism, elections, political parties, and interest groups. Finally, we will look at the institutions of the federal government: Congress, the presidency, and the Supreme Court. I will, of course, have occasion during the course of the semester to refer to events that are unfolding while the course is taking place, and hope that you will take the initiative and ask me about current issues in American politics.

Although the recitation sections are the places where you can ask questions and discuss things at length, do not hesitate to raise your hand in the lecture if there is something that puzzles you or for which you need clarification. I do not mind the occasional interruption. It’s my expectation that you will take away from this class a firm and thorough knowledge of the institutions of American government established by the Constitution and the processes that define American democracy. It’s my hope that the course will also make you better “consumers” of government. This course will be a kind of “user’s manual.”

***Course Readings:***

Our four books for the course will consist of a textbook, *We The People* by Ginsberg, Lowi, and Weir (W.W. Norton, 9th edition, 2013) and three short supplemental books: *America the Unusual* by John Kingdon (Wadsworth/Cengage, 1999), andRoss K. Baker’s *Strangers on a Hill: Congress versus the Court* (W.W. Norton, 2007) as well as *Is Bipartisanship Dead?* (Paradigm, 2014). Make sure you buy the 9th edition of *We The People*, not earlier editions. The books are available at the University Book Store at Barnes and Noble on Somerset Street and at New Jersey Books, 37 Easton Avenue. Recommended, but not required is *House and Senate*, 4th ed. by Ross K. Baker.

***How Your Grade Is Calculated:***

There will be a Mid Term Exam worth 30% and a Final Exam worth 50% of your final grade. The remaining 20% of your final grade will be based on your attendance and participation in your recitation section meetings. As you can see, it is impossible to get an “A” in the course without attending and participating in the recitations.

***Course Organization:***

This course consists of Dr. Baker’s *lectures (*all of which will be in Loree 022), and *recitation sections* which will meet in various locations on the College Avenue, Douglass, and Livingston campuses. The times and locations of these recitation sections are listed below and in the university course schedule, and you should already be registered for one of these sections. They will be under the direction of the Teaching Assistants (TAs), Arielle Bennett, Christabel Cruz, and Mr. Héctor Bahamonde.

***Recitation Section Meetings:***

Several times a semester you will attend recitation sections with your TA instead of Friday lecture with Dr. Baker. It is important that you know which section you are registered in so that there is no confusion. You must attend the section that you are registered for.

The recitation sections are *not optional*. Attendance is important because they will give you the opportunity to have discussions and answer questions that you may have. Your TAs determine your participation grade primarily through your recitation meetings with them, therefore recitations constitute an important percentage of your course grade.

**Section # Day Time Room Location TA**

**Section 1 Monday 11:30am-12:50pm HH-A3**

**Section 2 Monday 1:10pm-2:30pm SC-207**

**Section 7 Monday 3:55pm-5:15pm HCK-130**

**Section 3 Monday 4:30pm-5:50pm SC-115**

**Section 4 Wednesday 9:50am-11:10am SC-206**

**Section 5 Wednesday 1:40pm-3:00pm LSH-B205**

**Section 6 Wednesday 3:20pm-4:40pm BE-101**

**Section 11 Wednesday 10:55am-12:15pm HCK-113**

**Section 12 Wednesday 12:35pm-1:55pm HCK-127**

**Recitation Section Meetings (also indicated on the schedule of lectures below):**

**Sections 1, 2, 3, 7 will meet the following Mondays:** 1/26, 3/2, 3/23, 4/6, 4/20

**Sections 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 will meet the following Wednesdays:** 1/28, 3/4, 3/25, 4/8, 4/22

***Absence from Exams:***

Only a note from your college dean stipulating a medical or family emergency will be acceptable as an excuse for missing an exam. If at all possible, I need to be notified before the exam of your inability to take it. Absence from an exam because of travel plans will not be excused.

***Cell Phones & Laptops:***

Make sure your cell phones are **TURNED OFF** before entering class. Laptops should only be used during this class for note taking and course-related purposes.

***Academic Integrity:***

The instructors for this course will not tolerate any breach of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy, which includes cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of deception. Penalties for violations will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES & READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week of January 20:** Introductory lecture. Reading: We The People, Chapter 1

**Week of January 26:** Reading: America The Unusual, pp.1-100

* ***First recitation meeting this week with your TA (instead of Friday lecture with Dr. Baker).***

**Week of February 2:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 2 and 3

**Week of February 9:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 4 and 5

**Week of February 16:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 6

**Week of February 23:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 7

**Week of March 2:** Reading: **Review for all assigned readings for midterm**

* ***Recitation meeting this week with your TA (instead of Friday lecture with Dr. Baker).***

**Week of March 9:** **Midterm Exam on Tuesday, 3/10. NO Friday lecture on 3/13.**

Reading:We The People, Chapter 8 and 9

**Week of March 16: No classes this week - SPRING BREAK**

**Week of March 23:** Reading: Strangers on a Hill, pp. 1-126

* ***Recitation meeting this week with your TA (instead of Friday lecture with Dr. Baker).***

**Week of March 30:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 10 and 11

**Week of April 6:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 12 and 13

* ***Recitation meeting this week with your TA (instead of Friday lecture with Dr. Baker).***

**Week of April 13:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 14 and Is Bipartisanship Dead?

pp. 1-144

**Week of April 20:** Reading: We The People, Chapter 15 and 16. **Review for final**

* ***Recitation meeting this week with your TA (instead of Friday lecture with Dr. Baker).***

**Week of April 27:** Last lecture on Tuesday, April 28. **Review all assigned readings for final**

**Final Examination: Date to be announced (on Sakai)**

***A Final Note*:** Because I do entertain questions from students, I am not a slave to the syllabus, so my lectures may lag behind the readings. Don’t despair, it will all turn out right in the end.

A small group of students who, in the opinion of their TAs, excel in the recitation sections and have a demonstrated interest in American Politics, will become eligible for selection as members of Baker’s Dozen and receive invitations to join the advanced seminar in Congressional Politics for Fall Semester, 2016. Membership in the seminar includes an all-expenses paid visit to Washington, D.C. and breakfasts with Professor Baker at his home.