

Rutgers University
American Government
790:104
Spring 2017

Online Course
Sakai

Instructor: Rebecca Biebel **Email:** rebecca.biebel@rutgers.edu

Course Description: This course is a comprehensive examination of the basic principles of the U.S. constitutional system. It focuses on the operation of the democratic process; the organization, powers, and procedures of Congress; the presidency and the federal judiciary; interest groups; political parties; media; and voting. It emphasizes the leading political, economic, and social influences affecting, democratic government.

Required Text:

GOVT 8th edition. Edward I. Sidlow; Beth Henschen
ISBN-10: 130566082X | ISBN-13: 9781305660823

Learning Objectives:

Expose students to the central concepts of political behavior. This involves exploring the philosophical and practical problems of political organization, action, and governance.

Recognize and explain the major historical developments that led the pathway to the current American political system.

Apply critical thinking skills to interpret and debate contemporary political problems.

Help students understand existing research and prepare them to engage in original research, both here as Rutgers students and in their future careers.

Prepare students for successful career paths in politics, business, and society; and

Create engaged citizens of the world.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Readings

It is very important to stay on top of the readings. Each week will be a different chapter and tasks, discussions, and test questions will all be derived from the readings.

Announcements

It is important to check your announcements often, as this will be my primary means of communication to relay important information and updates on the course.

PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint presentations for course chapters are located in each week's folder.

Grading:

Scale:

A	90-100
B+	87-89
B	80-86
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	59 & below

Grading

Your grade for the semester will be based on the following:

6 semester tests	50%
Written Assignments	25%
Discussions/Participation	25%
	100%

Your final grade will be determined by these factors:

1. Online Tests (50% of Final Grade)

Since we do not meet as a class where lectures, in-person interaction and discussion augment student readings, we shall use frequent testing to assure that students read the assigned material and follow the course schedule. Tests are to be taken in accordance with the Course Schedule. There will be a test for every 2-3 chapters.

Tests will be available beginning on Monday at 8am and till midnight on Sunday. They should be taken after you have read, outlined, and studied the material in each chapter. You may use your textbook and notes, but understand that reading the chapter is necessary for passing the test. You will have 70 minutes to answer 30-40 randomized multiple-choice questions along with 3-4 open-ended questions. Failure to take a test within the designated time period will result in a grade of a zero for that test.

Testing is done online, and the results are forwarded electronically to each student and to the Instructor, after the testing period has closed.

2. Written Assignments: (25% of Final Grade)

You will be graded on two written assignments or short essays. Each should consist of a 4 page analysis of the topic and how it relates to what we are studying in American Government.

Detailed instructions for writing the paper can be found on the Written Assignments tab.

Last Date to Submit Paper #1: Sunday February 26th.

Last Date to Submit Paper #2: Sunday March 26th.

No papers will be accepted through email, all must be submitted through the Turnitin Link on the Homepage!!!

The Turnitin Link expires after 11:55 pm on the date it is due—this means the Assignment becomes invisible and there is nowhere to submit it. These must be turned in on time. If they are sent through email, they will be deleted. You are always welcome to turn Assignments in early. Directions will also be posted on Sakai.

3. Online Discussions (25% of Final Grade):

Since we will be creating a "virtual classroom", you are expected to post a minimum of two comments per week. Your first post will be a response to the question posed on the forum or you may create a post based on something you found interesting in the chapter and want to discuss in further detail. The first post must be done by Friday of each week.

Your second post, a response to another student, must include content - not just a statement of agreement or disagreement with their post. Both posts should show that you have read the material in the text as well as your peers' posts and have applied all of that to the question at hand.

Your posts should be grammatically correct, so others can understand your point. It's not a formal writing forum, but it's not Facebook either.

We will have weekly discussions in the Discussion tab based on the readings and other materials in each week's folder. **The weekly discussions will be posted at 8:00 am each Monday and will close at midnight on Sunday. Your initial post each week should be completed by Friday. You can miss one week's discussion throughout the semester without losing credit.**

Participation Policy

The outcome of this course depends entirely on your active participation. Since it is an online course, we will spend all our time together online expressing opinions on readings, current events, and giving feedback to each other's work. You are expected to complete the readings, participate in online discussions, give feedback to your peers through comments, share how you connect readings to classroom experiences, and so on. You are expected to participate in a variety of ways throughout the semester, and your various assignments will incorporate participation as part of the grade. In summary, you will be expected to do the following:

- Log into our website platform at least 8-9 times a week to keep updated on assignments, and peer discussions.
- Use study guide resources, including PowerPoint presentation and chapter reviews, to help you engage with and understand the content that is presented throughout the semester.
- Participate in online discussions via the threaded discussion boards under the Discussion Board section, to illustrate your understanding of weekly readings and how they connect to your daily lives.
- Meet deadlines for assignments.

Academic Honesty

Rutgers expects unwavering integrity with submitted work from its students. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action as detailed in the student handbook. Students are expected to give credit to all individuals who contributed to the completion of any assignment. Specific resources of all information, ideas and quotations not original to the author must be referenced.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All written assignments will be submitted through Turnitin.

Students should acquaint themselves with the college policy on plagiarism. Full text of the Interim Academic Integrity Policy available at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

Students are also advised to refer to the Office of Student Conduct website: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/>

Special Needs

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs and contact the Office for Disability Services. Also, students are also strongly encouraged to speak with the instructor whenever there is a problem. If family or work obligations, or any other extenuating circumstance threatens to interfere with the student's attendance or his/her completion of the course work, the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Additional links, videos, and readings will be posted in each week's folder on Sakai

Week 1

1/17-1/22

Carefully read syllabus & complete journal entries(2)

Chapter 1 America in the Twenty-First Century

****EVERY Week's Discussion posted on Monday at 8:00 am and closes on Sunday at 11:55pm****

****Tests will be posted the week before they are due and will close Sunday at 11:55pm****

Week 2

1/23-1/29

Chapter 2 The Constitution

Week 3

1/30-2/5

Chapter 3 Federalism

Test 1 Chapters 1, 2 & 3 due 2/5 at 11:55pm

Week 4

2/6-2/12

Chapter 4 Civil Liberties

Week 5

2/13-2/19

Chapter 5 Civil Rights

Test 2 Chapters 4 & 5 due 2/19 at 11:55pm

Week 6

2/20-2/26

Chapter 6 Interest Groups

***Written Assignment #1 due 2/26 at 11:55pm**

Week 7

2/27-3/5

Chapter 7 Political Parties

Test 3 Chapters 6 & 7 due 3/5 at 11:55pm

Week 8

3/6-3/12

Chapter 8 Public Opinion and Voting

Week 9

3/13-3/19

Spring Break

Week 10

3/20-3/26

Chapter 9 Campaigns and Elections

***Written Assignment #2 due 3/26 at 11:55pm**

Week 11

3/27-4/2

Chapter 10 Politics and the Media

Test 4 Chapters 8, 9, & 10 due 4/2 at 11:55pm

Week 12

4/3-4/9

Chapter 11 The Congress

Chapter 12 The Presidency

Week 13
4/10-4/16 Chapter 13 The Bureaucracy
Test 5 Chapters 11, 12, & 13 due 4/16 at 11:55pm

Week 14
4/17-4/23 Chapter 14 The Judiciary

Week 15
4/24-4/30 Chapter 15 Domestic Policy

Week 16
5/1-5/7 Chapter 16 Foreign Policy
Test 6 Chapters 14, 15, & 16 due 5/7 at 11:55pm
(Week 16 will open on 4/24)

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and the needs of the class