

Political Science 104: Introduction to American Government
Spring 2017 - Rutgers University
Professor Ross K. Baker

Lecture Location: Loree Building 022, Douglass/Cook Campus

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

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

Teaching Assistants:

Arielle Bennett - arielle.bennett@rutgers.edu

Héctor Bahamonde - hector.bahamonde@rutgers.edu

Andrew Greve – andrew.greve@rutgers.edu

Professor:

Dr. Ross K. Baker - rosbaker@rci.rutgers.edu

Course Statement:

You will be taking this course in American government in the first months of the new Trump Administration. We political scientists lean very heavily on history to predict what a new president will do. With our new president, historical precedent may not be a very reliable guide because there has been no president like him. Without government or high-level military experience we find ourselves sailing in uncharted waters. Nonetheless, the president—as all presidents before him—must govern within the boundaries set by the U.S. Constitution. Our examination of the Constitution and Bill of Rights will be our first order of business.

But even before we get there, we will look at the theories that underlay the Constitution, most of which came from the experience of Great Britain and other places in Western Europe that shaped the thinking of those we call the “framers” of the Constitution.

After considering the Constitution and the Supreme Court decisions that interpreted it over the years, we’ll move on and have a look at the American people for whom the Constitution was designed: how they view government and their place in it, how they learn about government through the media, and what influences their votes.

From there, we’ll move on to discuss the institutions of government beginning with the political parties, Congress and the presidency. All the while, I’ll be open to answering your questions and/or comments. I consider this course more of a conversation than a lecture and even though your most thorough discussions will take place in the recitation sections, I will welcome your comments in the lecture hall.

Please understand that the recitation sections are not optional. They account for an important percentage of your grade. Non-attendance precludes any chance of your receiving an “A”.

Course Readings:

The 4 books for the course will consist of a textbook, *We The People* by Ginsberg, Lowi, & Weir (W.W. Norton, 11th edition 2017 or 10th edition, 2014) and 3 short supplemental books: *America the Unusual* by John Kingdon (Wadsworth/Cengage, 1999), and Ross K. Baker’s *Strangers on a Hill: Congress versus the Court* (W.W. Norton, 2007) as well as *Is Bipartisanship Dead?* (Paradigm, 2014). Also, various writings are assigned from the philosophers Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu and will be posted to Sakai. The books are available online as well as at the University Book Store at Barnes & 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 midterm exam worth 30% and a final exam worth 50% of your final grade. The remaining 20% of your grade will be based on your attendance and participation in lecture and recitation section

meetings. It is impossible to get an “A” in the course without attending/participating in lectures and 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/Cook, and Livingston campuses. The times and locations of these recitation sections are listed below, and you should already be registered for one of these sections. They will be taught under the direction of the Teaching Assistants (TAs).

Recitation Section Meetings:

Recitations do NOT occur every week – please check the lecture/reading schedule to find out when you need to attend recitations with your TA, based on which section you registered for. 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 it 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	11:30 AM - 12:50 PM	<u>HH-B6</u>	Greve
Section 2	Monday	1:10 PM - 2:30 PM	<u>SC-207</u>	Bennett
Section 3	Monday	4:30 PM - 5:50 PM	<u>SC-115</u>	Greve
Section 4	Wednesday	9:50 AM - 11:10 AM	<u>SC-206</u>	Bahamonde
Section 5	Wednesday	1:40 PM - 3:00 PM	<u>LSH-B112</u>	Bennett
Section 6	Wednesday	3:20 PM - 4:40 PM	<u>BE-101</u>	Greve
Section 7	Monday	3:55 PM - 5:15 PM	<u>HCK-130</u>	Bahamonde
Section 11	Wednesday	10:55 AM - 12:15 PM	<u>HCK-113</u>	Bennett
Section 12	Wednesday	12:35 PM - 1:55 PM	<u>HCK-127</u>	Bahamonde

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>.

Disability Accommodations:

Rutgers encourages students with any needs for disability accommodations to get assistance from the university. This includes test and note taking services for approved students. Please see the Rutgers Office of

Disability Services if you are interested: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/my-accommodations>. Please let me know if you have any questions.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week of January 17:

Class begins Tuesday, January 17

Reading: We The People, Chapter 1 “American Political Culture”

Week of January 24:

Reading: America The Unusual (entire book)

Week of January 31:

Reading: Selections from Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu posted on Sakai under “Resources” – read everything listed including the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy links

Week of February 7:

Reading: We The People, Chapter 2 “The Founding and the Constitution” and Chapter 3 “Federalism”

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

Week of February 14:

Reading: We The People, Chapter 4 “Civil Liberties” and Chapter 5 “Civil Rights”

Week of February 21:

Reading: We The People, Chapter 6 “Public Opinion” and Chapter 7 “The Media”

Week of February 28:

Reading: **Review all assigned readings for midterm next week**

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

Week of March 7:

Midterm Exam on Tuesday, March 7. NO CLASS ON FRIDAY, March 10.

Week of March 14:

NO CLASS THIS WEEK FOR SPRING BREAK

Week of March 21:

Reading: Strangers on a Hill (entire book) and We The People, Chapter 8 “Political Participation & Voting”

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

Week of March 28:

Reading: We The People, Chapter 9 “Political Parties,” Chapter 10 “Campaigns and Elections,” and Chapter 11 “Groups and Interests”

Week of April 4:

Reading: Is Bipartisanship Dead? (entire book) and We The People, Chapter 12 “Congress”

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

Week of April 11:

Reading: We The People, Chapter 13 “The Presidency” and Chapter 14 “Bureaucracy in a Democracy”

Week of April 18:

Reading: We The People, Chapter 15 “The Federal Courts”

Review for upcoming final exam

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

Week of April 25:

Reading: **Review all assigned readings for final exam**

LAST CLASS WITH DR. BAKER – Friday, April 28

Final Examination:

- **Date to be announced (on Sakai).** Rutgers final exams may occur anytime from May 4-10, or check your personal final exam schedule on <https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>
- Remember, please do not book any travel until you have confirmed your final exam schedule, as we will not accommodate different test dates for travel.

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.