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

**Fall Semester, 2015 - Rutgers University**

**Professor Ross K. Baker**

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

**Lecture Time:** Tuesdays & Fridays\* 10:55AM-12:15PM

*\*****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

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**Professor:**

**Dr. Ross K. Baker -** rosbaker@rci.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 also 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:***

The 4 books for the course will consist of a textbook, *We The People* by Ginsberg, Lowi, & Weir (W.W. Norton, 10th edition, 2014) and 3 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 or 10th edition of *We The People*, not earlier editions. Also, various writings are assigned from the philosophers Locke, Hobbes, and Montesquieu will be posted to Sakai. The books are available 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 total 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 and participating in the 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 in the university course schedule, 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 – CHECK THE SCHEDULE BELOW TO FIND OUT WHEN YOU NEED TO ATTEND RECITATION WITH YOUR TA.** 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 R1 Wednesday 1:40pm-3:00pm BE-003**

**Section 1 Wednesday 9:50am-11:10am SC-104**

**Section 2 Wednesday 9:50am-11:10am SC-204**

**Section 3 Wednesday 11:30-12:50pm HH-B5**

**Section 4 Wednesday 11:30-12:50pm HH-A6**

**Section 5 Friday 9:50am-11:10am HH-A4**

**Section 6 Friday HH-B6**

**Section 7 Friday 9:50am-11:10am HH-B5**

**Section 8 Friday 1:10pm-2:30pm SC-115**

**Section 9 Friday 1:10pm-2:30pm SC-119**

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

**Sections R1, 1, 2, 3, 4 will meet the following Wednesdays:**

**Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 will meet the following Fridays:**

***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 September 1:**

 **Class begins Tuesday, 9/1**

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

**Week of September 8:**

 Reading: America The Unusual (entire book)

**Week of September 15:**

 Reading: Selections from Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu posted on Sakai under

 “Resources” – read everything listed including the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy links

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

**Week of September 22:**

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

 Chapter 3 “Federalism”

**Week of September 29:**

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

**Week of October 6:**

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

**Week of October 13:**

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 October 20:** **Midterm Exam on Tuesday, 10/20. NO CLASS ON FRIDAY, 10/23.**

**Week of October 27:**

Reading:We The People, Chapter 8 “Political Participation & Voting” and

 Chapter 9 “Political Parties”

**Week of November 3:**

 Reading: Strangers on a Hill (entire book)

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

**Week of November 10:**

Reading: We The People, Chapter 10 “Campaigns and Elections” and

 Chapter 11 “Groups and Interests”

**Week of November 17:**

Reading: We The People, Chapter 12 “Congress” and Chapter 13 “The Presidency”

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

**Week of November 24:**

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

 Is Bipartisanship Dead? (entire book)

 **NO CLASS ON FRIDAY, 11/27 - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week of December 1:**

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 December 8:**

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

 **LAST CLASS WITH DR. BAKER – TUESDAY, 12/8**

**Final Examination: Date to be announced (on Sakai)**, **or check your exam schedule on** [**https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/**](https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/)

***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.