General Education Learning Objectives: This course examines the institutions and operations of American national government and politics. We examine the development of the government over time and the impact on citizens and groups in society. This course also describes and analyzes how groups and individuals try to get government to do what they want and sets the stage for other courses you may take on American political institutions and behaviors.


Assignments: There will be 3 exams, 2 midterms and 1 final. Additionally, there will be one 4-page paper analyzing a scholarly article concerning an area of politics of your interest. There will also be assigned online activities that will be graded.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Exam 1 – 20%
Exam 2 – 20%
Final Exam – 30%
Paper – 20%
Online Assignments – 10%
For the paper, you will pick an article from a list that will be provided. Your paper will explain the topic, what the author(s) are examining, how they went about studying it, and what were their findings. You will then conclude with a critique of the article and if you agree with the findings or not. All papers must be double-spaced with Times New Roman 12-point font, and must be at least 3 pages but no more than 4. The pages must be numbered. The final paper will be due April 30th. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a whole letter grade deduction from your final paper grade for each day the paper is late.

The online activities will be through the Cengage Mindtap application. Each chapter will have a set that will be posted and you will have a week to complete them. In total they will count for 10% of your grade.

Disclaimer: Class schedules and assignments are all subject to change. Regular attendance in class will assure that students will have all the needed information to successfully complete the course.

Classroom Etiquette: Students are expected to be in class on time at 9:30 AM. All cell phones, laptops and tablets should be in silent mood for the duration of the class so as to not disturb the learning environment. And it should go without saying that students are expected to pay attention for the duration of the session; no one should be sleeping, eating meals, or texting on their phones. It is important that you attend all class sessions, both for the information presented and to engage with the material, not just read it out of a book.

Absences: If you are sick or otherwise can’t make it to a class session, please notify the instructor via email ahead of time.

Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities: Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center. Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let his or her faculty member know as soon as possible. Students who need academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability will be encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center if they have not done so already. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v], 815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu

Department of Political Science Web Site: Undergraduates are encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of
information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to http://polisci.niu.edu. For the most up-to-date information on scholarships, internships, and other department news, I encourage you to “like” the department on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/NIU.PoliticalScience) or follow us on Twitter (@niupols).

**Undergraduate Writing Awards:** The Department of Political Science will recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Winners are expected to attend the Department’s spring graduation ceremony, where they will receive a certificate and $100.00. Papers, which can be submitted by students or faculty, must be supplied in triplicate to a department secretary by the end of March. All copies should have two cover pages – one with the student’s name and one without the student’s name. Only papers written in the previous calendar year can be considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year’s competition even if the student has graduated.

**Grading System:**

Grades are determined by the following scale:

A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (70-76), D (60-69), and F (0-59).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about grades from the NIU Registration and Records website is available at: [http://www.niu.edu/regrec/grading/gradingfaqs.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/regrec/grading/gradingfaqs.shtml)

**Academic Dishonesty:** The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is of vital concern to the Department of Political Science and the University community. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. If we find that you have plagiarized your academic work, you will receive an F on the assignment – no exceptions. If you are caught cheating, falsifying, or otherwise misrepresenting your work twice, you will fail the class. In addition, if we suspect academic dishonesty your name will be turned over to the Chair of the Political Science Department who will make a determination as to further disciplinary action which may include academic probation or expulsion.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, and misrepresentation to avoid academic work. If you are unsure whether something is considered academic dishonesty, ask. It is much better to be overzealous at the outset and ask many questions to avoid being accused of cheating, plagiarism, and so forth.
Extra Credit: During the semester opportunities for students to earn extra credit may be provided. Any extra credit offered will be made available to all students in the class. Individual extra credit opportunities will not be offered.

Course Schedule: While we will try to adhere to this schedule, some topics may run over into the next week, especially on weeks that contain a day that class does not meet.

I. The American System

Week 1
- The Democratic Republic (Chapter 1)
  - January 15-NO CLASS for MLK DAY
  - January 17

Week 2
- The Constitution (Chapter 2)
  - January 22
  - January 24

Week 3
- Federalism (Chapter 3)
  - January 29
  - January 31

II. Civil Rights and Liberties

Week 4
- Civil Liberties (Chapter 4)
  - February 5
  - February 7

Week 5
- Civil Rights (Chapter 5)
  - February 12
  - February 14

III. People and Politics

Week 6
- Public Opinion and Political Socialization (Chapter 6)
  - February 19- Exam 1
  - February 21

Week 7
- Interest Groups (Chapter 7)
  - February 26
  - February 28

Week 8
- Political Parties (Chapter 8)
  - March 5
  - March 7

Week 9
- Campaigns and Elections (Chapter 9)
  - March 19
  - March 21

Week 10
- The Media (Chapter 10)
  - March 26
  - March 28

IV. The American System

Week 11
- The Congress (Chapter 11)
  - April 2- Exam 2
  - April 4

Week 12
- The President (Chapter 12)
  - April 9
  - April 11

Week 13
- The Bureaucracy (Chapter 13)
  - April 16
  - April 18

Week 14
The Courts (Chapter 14)
- April 23
- April 25

V. Public Policy

Week 15

- Foreign Policy (Chapter 16)
  - April 30- Final Paper Due
  - May 2

Week 16

- Final Exam- May 9