

**Syllabus for PS 1100, Section 2  
American Government  
Spring 2016**

**Location:**

TR 11:00am–12:15pm, 142 Middlebush Hall, Johnson Auditorium

**Professor:** Bryce J. Dietrich

Office: 204 Professional Building  
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Web Page: <http://www.brycejdietrich.com>  
Office Hours: MW 12:00–3:00pm, and by appointment

**Teaching Assistants:**

*David Breed*

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Office Hours: T, 2:00–5:00pm; R 9:00am–10:30am; W 3:00–5:30pm

*Alicia Dunn*

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Office Hours: F 9:00a–12:00pm

**Text:** *American Politics Today*, William T. Blanco and David T. Cannon, Core Fourth Edition, ISBN 9780393937015

*American Government Blackboard w/Etext Custom Code*, Pearson Learning, ISBN 9781269519304

**Other Readings:** The rest of the readings will be available on Blackboard.

**Material to be Covered:** This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the study of American government and politics. The course will cover four broad areas: the foundations of American politics, individuals and politics, linking citizens and government, and institutions and policymaking. Within each of these areas we will focus more on theory and less on description. By the end of the course, students should be able to answer the following questions. First, why is the American system organized the way it is? How does it compare with other systems? Second, how has the American system changed over the years? What caused these changes? Third, how do citizens interact with the American system? How do they organize their beliefs? How do they participate in politics?

**Journal Entries:** Students are expected to participate in class. This means students should have finished all the assigned readings before class and be an active participant in discussion. However, given the number of students, it will be difficult for every student to participate. Given that, students will be asked to complete some journal entries. At the end of the semester, you will be assigned two journal grades.

First, you must complete five journal entries. These journals entries will be **DUE** at **11:59PM** on the following dates: **1/29, 3/11, 3/18, 4/15, and 4/22**. 10% of your final grade will be the number of journals you successfully completed, meaning if you miss one journal your grade automatically goes down 2%. Here, “completion” simply means you have a reasonable journal entry that is 250-500 words long, where “reasonable” implies you put forth some effort towards completing the assigned task.

Second, we will randomly select one of your journal entries. We will grade this (and only this) entry using the rubric outlined on Blackboard. Your grade on this entry will be worth 10% of your final grade. Also, In the meantime, if you would like to know how you are doing, feel free to bring your journal entries into our office hours. We will be happy to go over them. Email submissions will not be accepted. You must come in person.

**Quizzes:** In weeks where journal entries are not assigned we will have an online quiz. These quizzes will help you prepare for the exams. These quizzes will be **DUE** at **11:59PM** on the following dates: **2/5, 2/12, 2/26, 3/4, and 4/8**. There will also be three review quizzes. These quizzes will be **DUE** at **10:59AM** on the following dates: **2/16, 3/22, and 5/5**.

**Midterm Exams:** There will be two midterm exams, each of which will be multiple choice. These exams will be on **2/18** and **3/24**. Each midterm exam will be worth 20% of your

final grade.

**Final Exam:** The date final exam will be on **Monday, May 9th from 10:00AM–12:00PM**. The final exam will be worth 20% of your final grade. The final exam will be multiple choice, with half of the questions covering material since the midterm and half of the questions covering material from the whole course.

**Grading:**

Final Exam	20%
Midterm Exam #1	20%
Midterm Exam #2	20%
Quizzes	20%
Journal Entry	10%
Journal Completion	10%

**Scale:**

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D+	67-69.99%
D	63-66.99%
D-	60-62.99%
F	0-59.99%

**Late Work and Make-Up Exams:** Late work will not be accepted and no make-up exams will be given. There should be no problems meeting the expectations of the course. All the due dates are given, and I will make sure to give you plenty of notice ahead of time.

**Academic Honesty:** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. If caught, you will be punished under the guidelines provided by the University of Missouri. Please consult the *Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities* for more information:

<http://osrr.missouri.edu/academicintegrity/index.html>

**Provisions for Students with Disabilities:** If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Disability Center (<http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

**Calendar** The calendar below gives the dates of exams and other important deadlines for the course. Readings should be completed **prior** to the start of class. This calendar is subject to change. Any changes will be announced and posted on Blackboard.

## Unit I: Foundations of American Politics

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Week 1: The Origins of Government  
Tuesday 19 Jan Welcome and Introductions  
*No Readings*  
Thursday 21 Jan Why Do We Need Government?  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 1*

Week 2: The Founding Fathers  
Tuesday 26 Jan Early American Government  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 2*  
Thursday 28 Jan Early Missouri Government  
*No Readings*  
Friday 29 Jan **Journal Entry #1 Due**  
*Upload to Blackboard by 11:59PM*

Week 3: Federalism  
Tuesday 2 Feb Separation of Powers  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 3*  
Thursday 4 Feb Challenges to Federalism  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 3*  
Friday 5 Feb **Quiz #3 Due**  
*Complete on Blackboard by 11:59PM*

## Unit II: Individuals and Politics

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### Week 4: Public Opinion

- Tuesday 9 Feb Dynamics of Public Opinion  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 6*
- Thursday 11 Feb Is America Polarized?  
*Fiorina 2006*
- Friday 12 Feb **Quiz #6 Due**  
*Complete on Blackboard by 11:59PM*

### Week 5: Exam

- Tuesday 16 Feb **Review Quiz #1 Due**  
*No Readings*
- Thursday 18 Feb **Midterm Exam #1**  
*No Readings*

### Unit III: Linking Citizens and Government

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#### Week 6: The Media

Tuesday 23 Feb Traditional Media  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 7*

Thursday 25 Feb New Media  
*Prior 2005*

Friday 26 Feb **Quiz #7 Due**  
*Complete on Blackboard by 11:59PM*

#### Week 7: Political Parties

Tuesday 1 March US-Canada Relations  
*Consul Roy Norton*

Thursday 3 March Political Parties  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 8*

Friday 4 March **Quiz #8 Due**  
*Complete on Blackboard by 11:59PM*

#### Week 8: Electoral Politics

Tuesday 8 March Elections  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 9*

Thursday 10 March Campaign Finance  
*"Citizens United," eReader, Ch 5*

Friday 11 March **Journal Entry #2 Due**  
*Upload to Blackboard by 11:59PM*

#### Week 9: Interest Groups

Tuesday 15 March Interest Groups  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 10*

Thursday 17 March Interest Groups in Action  
*"Legislative Hearings," eReader, Ch 5*

Friday 18 March **Journal Entry #3 Due**  
*Upload to Blackboard by 11:59PM*

#### Week 10: Exam

Tuesday 22 March **Review Quiz #2 Due**  
*No Readings*

Thursday 24 March **Midterm Exam #2**  
*No Readings*

## Unit IV: Institutions and Policy-Making

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- Week 12: Congress
- Tuesday 5 April Congress as an Institution  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 11*
- Thursday 7 April No Class  
*No Readings*
- Friday 8 April **Quiz #11 Due**  
*Complete on Blackboard by 11:59PM*
- Week 13: Congress Continued
- Tuesday 12 April Legislative Behavior  
*No Readings*
- Thursday 14 April Understanding Its Members  
*"The Electoral Connection", eReader, Ch 6*
- Friday 15 April **Journal Entry #4 Due**  
*Upload to Blackboard by 11:59PM*
- Week 14: The Other Branches
- Tuesday 19 April The Presidency  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 12*
- Thursday 21 April The Supreme Court  
*Bianco and Canon, Ch 14*
- Friday 22 April **Journal Entry #5 Due**  
*Upload to Blackboard by 11:59PM*
- Week 15: Know Your Rights
- Tuesday 26 April Civil Liberties  
*"Mapp v. Ohio", eReader, Ch 7*  
*"Griswold v. Connecticut", eReader, Ch 7*
- Thursday 28 April Electing Judges  
*"History of Merit Selection", eReader, Ch 6*
- Week 16: Know Your Rights
- Tuesday 3 May Civil Rights  
*"Brown v. Board of Education I", eReader, Ch 7*  
*"Brown v. Board of Education II", eReader, Ch 7*
- Thursday 5 May **Review Quiz #3 Due**  
*No Readings*