American Government: A Historical Introduction, Spring 2018
POLSC 110(w)
Lecture: Monday & Thursday, 11:10-12:00, 714 West Building

Professor Sanford F. Schram
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Office hours: M/TH 9-10 am & by appt.

Teaching Assistants
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Hours: W11 am-12 pm

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Hours: M1:10-2:10 pm

Discussion Sections
Sec1D01 M 12:10-1 HW1729 Logan Sec1D06 TH 12:10-1 HW706 Makhene
Sec1D02 W 12:10-1 HW1729 Logan Sec1D07 M 12:10-1 HW208 Ibur
Sec1D03 TH 12:10-1 HW1729 Fuerderer Sec1D08 W 12:10-1 HW208 Ibur
Sec1D04 M 12:10-1 HW706 Makhene Sec1D09 TH 12:10-1 HW208 Ibur
Sec1D05 W 12:10-1 HW706 Makhene

Course Objectives
This course has both a substantive focus and developmental goals. In this course I will introduce you to the workings of American Government and Politics historically. We will use key concepts from competing schools of thought for theorizing American politics: historical institutionalism, rational choice and behavioralism. Teaching assistants will guide you to develop your thinking regarding the readings, lectures and discussion. We will begin with a discussion of important ideas about politics and democracy. This will be followed by a detailed introduction to the Constitution to help you understand the foundations of our government. We will then explore the opinions and beliefs of the American people, and the ways we express these beliefs by participating in politics through voting, parties, and interest groups. In the third segment of the course, the structures of our national government—Congress, the presidency, and the courts—will be introduced. Lectures and readings explore each topic from a historical perspective, tracing the development of institutions and practices from the founding era to the present. We will also investigate class topics in greater depth through the analysis of primary source documents and secondary readings.

At the same time, this course aims to 1) improve your critical thinking skills, meaning your capacity to grasp abstract concepts and theories, 2) help you understand how concepts and theories are translated into concrete empirical claims, 3) help you learn how to use evidence to evaluate the validity of empirical claims. You will be pressed to interrogate evidence – to ask questions about whether it is conclusive or indeterminate, to reconcile conflicting evidence that seems to support different theories (or no theory), and to consider why particular authors select certain evidence and omit other material. Finally, the assignments and exams are designed to improve different writing skills and oral presentation skills, including your ability to summarize the main points of an argument succinctly, to explain theories clearly, to use language precisely and demonstrate command of political science terminology, and to make an argument in which you state a thesis and support it through the use of evidence.

Resources & Requirements
1) American Government by Glen Krutz, University of Oklahoma, PDF version ISBN-10 1-947172-19-0. OpenStax. Download for free at https://openstax.org/details/books/American-government. This is an open source textbook, which means there is no cost to you for reading it online or downloading it.

2) Top Hat: $26 for one term (see different pricing options). Top Hat is a tool that allows you to interact with course material using your phone or laptop or tablet in the classroom. I will use it to take attendance beginning with the 2nd class meeting, and to encourage your participation and engagement with the class. Please enter your complete first and last name when registering in Top Hat. You must visit Student Quick Start Guide, which shows you how to register for a Top Hat account, provides a brief overview, and gets you up and running on the system. Once you have registered and entered in your subscription code, your course can be directly accessed via the following:

Top Hat course name: Spring 2018 American Government
Direct URL: https://app.tophat.com/e/971518
6-digit course code: 971518
Student support: if you have questions about anything (and Top Hat means anything!), please email support@tophat.com or hit the ‘Support’ button in your account. This saves a lot of time and trouble and lets Top Hat help you directly.

3) You are required to check out the *New York Times* every day so you can come to class with familiarity of major political developments, especially those related to the U.S. As a Hunter student, you have access to the paper online for free through this link: *Free Digital New York Times for Hunter students*. If you want a real paper delivered to your home, discounted home delivery for students is available, which includes access to NYTimes.com and the apps for tablets and smartphones. Go to [nytimes.com/collegerate](http://nytimes.com/collegerate) to subscribe. M-F home delivery typically costs $3.50 per week. The syllabus, announcements, and any handouts will all be posted on [Blackboard](http://blackboard) and emailed to you via Blackboard. Check your Blackboard page frequently.

4) Read and write reaction papers for assigned textbook and additional readings.

5) Complete a Short Historical Paper as discussed at the end of the syllabus.

6) Email. You are required to check your Hunter College email regularly. Communications to you about the course will be through your Hunter email account. The best way to reach me is also by email at my Hunter email address. Make sure you read this before sending emails to your professors: [https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay)

### Grading Policy

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<th>Grading Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Final Exam (cumulative)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Weekly writing assignments critiquing assigned reading (5 will be graded)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Short historical paper, class presentation</td>
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<td>5) Attendance &amp; Participation (using Top Hat in lecture)</td>
<td>5% &amp; 5%</td>
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Incompletes will only be given when you have a valid reason for not completing the course requirements, and still have a chance to pass the course. Refer to the Hunter College Catalog for the college’s policy on incompletes, CR/NC, and academic dishonesty.

### Exams

The exams will be taken in-class. They will be multiple-choice and cover lecture/discussion and reading materials. No notes, books or electronic devices will be allowed during exams. If you need to reschedule an examination, you must contact me as soon as possible and produce a substantial reason for rescheduling the exam, such as a physician’s excuse or a letter from an employer.

### Academic Misconduct

Suspected cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to the procedures described in the Hunter College Catalog.

### Weekly writing assignments. (No late assignments accepted)

You are required to turn in critiques of the readings. Papers are due at the beginning of your weekly discussion section. Emailed copies are not accepted. Critiques should be one page in length. The critiques should include 2 or 3 key points from part or whole of the reading for that week, emphasizing what is significant for American Politics today, and conclude with two or three questions the readings raised for you. All assignments must be typed in 12-point font with one inch margins and include your name, date and title of reading. **Though these assignments are due every week, only 5 of your papers will be graded.**

### Short historical paper, and class presentation. (No late papers accepted)

Paper assignment details are attached below. This is a four to five page paper based on a visit to a historical site in the area. You choose the site, but you must get the site approved by your teaching assistant. Final papers must be submitted to turnitin.com. Go to turnitin.com and use your class ID (given below for each section) and the enrollment password POLSC110 to submit your paper. Papers are due at 11:10 am. Late papers are not accepted. Class presentations start on April 16th in discussion section in small groups of five students.

### Attendance and Participation.

We will use Top Hat technology to take attendance at each lecture. Sometimes at the beginning of class, sometimes at the middle, and sometimes at the end of class. You must be present in the classroom when attendance is taken—no exceptions. After three unexcused absences, your participation grade is reduced 5 out of 100 points for each additional unexcused absence. Excused absences require advance notice to the instructor. During each lecture, I will also be asking you questions about the readings, key concepts, and main points of the material. Getting at least 80% of these questions correct will result in full credit for lecture participation. Your answers must be submitted using Top Hat while in class. There is no other way to receive credit for attendance and participation.
Arrangements for Students with Disabilities
I would like to hear from anyone in this class who has a disability that may require some modification of the seating, testing, or other class requirements. I am reasonably sure that we can work out whatever arrangements are needed.

Other Considerations
Students are expected to arrive on time and remain for the entire period. If you cannot, do not attend that class or make prior arrangements with me. All students should behave in a manner that is neither distracting nor disruptive to the class. If you are going to use a laptop for note taking you must sit in the front of the classroom. Laptops are only permitted for note taking and interacting with Top Hat. If you are caught doing otherwise, you will no longer be allowed to use a laptop in class.

Course Outline and Textbook Reading Schedule
This is the outline of lecture topics. We will do our best to keep to this outline. You will be notified of any changes in class. You will get the most out of lectures if you do the readings before class.

January 29      Introduction. Why do people establish governments?

February 1-5    U.S. Politics. Key theoretical concepts.
                1) *American Government*, Chapter 1.1-1.2
                2) *Articles of Confederation,*
                3) *Declaration of Independence.*

February 8      The Constitution (1st session of 2)
                1) *American Government*, Chapter 2
                3) *Madison, James, Federalist no. 51.*

February 12     No classes at Hunter. Lincoln’s Birthday

February 15     The Constitution (2nd session of 2)
                3) *Madison, James, Federalist no. 51.*

February 19     No classes at Hunter. President’s Day.

February 20-22  Federalism. Note that February 20th is a Tuesday, but follows a Monday schedule.
                2) Sadie Gurman, “Justice Department Ending Obama Policy that Let Legal Pot Flourish,”

Feb. 26         Civil Liberties
                1) *American Government*, Chapter 4.
                2) Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1941 State Of The Union Address “The Four Freedoms” (6 January 1941).

March 2         Civil Rights
                2) *Slave Petition to the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts, May 25, 1774.*
                3) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

March 5         Review Session

March 8        MIDTERM EXAM

March 12-15    Public Opinion, Voting, Elections
                2) *Letter of Thomas Jefferson (1787) to Colonel Edward Carrington.*
March 19-22  Political Participation

March 26-29  Who Voted for Trump?

March 31-April 8  SPRING BREAK
April 9  Political Parties: Elite and Mass

April 12  Media.

April 16-19  Interest Groups
2)  Madison, James, *Federalist no. 10*.
Historical Paper due in lecture & In-Class Presentations begin 4/16.

April 23-26  Congress

April 30-May 3  Presidency
*George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796).*

May 7-10  The Courts
2)  *Marbury v. Madison*.

May 14  Review Session

May 21  Monday, 11:30 am-1:30 pm    FINAL EXAM
POLSC 110, Spring 2018
Paper Assignment and class presentation

The Paper (20% of final grade)
Papers are due April 16th, 11:10am in lecture. Late papers are not accepted.
The class will be visiting the library in March for a presentation on library resources for this paper assignment. Attendance is required.

This is a descriptive assignment where you will write an essay about an historic site in the New York City area that has political relevance. You will visit the site and take pictures of the area to be included in your report.

You choose the site, but you must get the site approved by your teaching assistant for the course. Final papers must be submitted to Turn-it-in.com. Go to turnitin.com and use your class ID listed below for each section and enrollment password Iscamognas8 to submit your paper.

Turnitin.com class ID for each section

<table>
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<th>Section</th>
<th>Day</th>
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The following questions need to be answered in your assignment:

Who? List and describe the significant participants at the historical site.
When? When the event happen? Or in what time period did the event happen?
What happened? Describe the sequence of events that occurred at the historical site.
Why is the site important to American politics? Describe the significance of the event and site to American politics.
What is there now? Describe the current neighborhood of the site. Briefly describe the major changes and developments in this neighborhood from the time of the event to present day.

Papers should be 4-5 pages in length. All papers must be typed and printed on hard-copy paper. Use 12-point font with one-inch margins, page numbers centered at the bottom of the page, and one staple in the upper left corner. Proper citations and references must be used following the American Political Science Association Style Manual, which can be found at http://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/APSA%20Files/publications/APSAStyleManual2006.pdf

The Presentation (5% of final grade)
Student presentations will be in discussion sections, and will begin on the same day that papers are due (April 16th). You will give a ten minute oral presentation of your paper. Your presentation should describe the historical site, the event that occurred there, and the political significance of the event. Pictures of the site should be included in the presentation.