

**PS 201 – INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS
SUMMER 2013**

Professor David Bernell
Gilkey Hall 312
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Chapter/article summaries	15%
Political updates	15%
Participation	10%
Weekly Exams (4)	60%

There will be an exam on Thursday of each week. Chapter/article summaries ARE due each Thursday at the beginning of class. Political updates are due each Wednesday at the beginning of class.

READINGS

The text for the course is *We The People* by Thomas Patterson (8th, 9th or 10th edition is acceptable). Other readings will also be assigned throughout the class. Materials must be read prior to class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

- July 22** **Introduction; The Constitution**
Patterson, Chapter 2
- July 23** **The Constitution in Theory and Practice -- Federalism**
Patterson, Chapter 3
- July 24** **The Constitution in Theory and Practice – Liberties**
Patterson, Chapter 4
- July 25** **The Constitution in Theory and Practice – Equal Rights**
Patterson, Chapter 5
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," 1965.

Week 2

- July 29** **Bringing the Demos into Democracy – Public Opinion and Participation**
Patterson, Chapters 6 and 7

July 30 **Bringing the Demos into Democracy – Parties and Elections**
Patterson, Chapter 8

July 31 **Bringing the Demos into Democracy – Interest Groups**
Patterson, Chapter 9

August 1 **Bringing the Demos into Democracy – The Media**
Patterson, Chapter 10

Week 3

August 5 **The Institutions of American Democracy – Congress**
Patterson, Chapter 11

August 6 **The Institutions of American Democracy – Congress, The Presidency**

August 7 **The Institutions of American Democracy – The Presidency**
Patterson, Chapter 12

August 8 **The Institutions of American Democracy – The Bureaucracy**
Patterson, Chapter 13

Week 4

August 12 **The Institutions of American Democracy – The Courts**
Patterson, Chapter 14

August 13 **The Results of American Democracy – Domestic and Foreign Policy**
Patterson, Chapters 15

August 14 **The Results of American Democracy – Domestic and Foreign Policy**
Patterson, Chapter 16

August 15 **The Results of American Democracy – Domestic and Foreign Policy**
Patterson, Chapter 17

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Your assignment is to complete a summary of each of the assigned chapters in your textbook. The idea is for you to gain an understanding of the arguments and main ideas in the textbook each and to be able to explain how the author characterizes American politics. Be certain that each summary addresses the following:

- What are the author's main points?
- How are these main points supported? (What is discussed? What is offered as evidence?)

Each summary should be about one page in length, single spaced. The summaries for each week's reading are due every Thursday in class.

POLITICAL UPDATES

Your assignment is to follow a political topic/issue of over the four weeks of the course. You will write an update each week on your topic (you may choose your topic). You'll need to provide information that should include (but not be limited to) the following items: What is the background/context for your issue? What are the different sides to the issue? Does the issue involve legislation, regulation, elections, etc.? Explain the legislative/regulatory/political process that has happened thus far. How do the Republicans and Democrats see the issue; what are the party politics involved? What interest groups are involved and what is the nature of their support/opposition? How is the issue represented in the media, do different media outlets report the issue differently, how is the media used by politicians and interest groups? What is the likely outcome of this issue?

Each weekly update should be about 1-2 pages, single-spaced. Political updates are due each Wednesday in class.

EXAMS

Weekly exams will consist of about 20-30 questions. Questions will be multiple choice or short answer. There will be four exams.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who have any alternative needs as a result of a disability should see me right away. Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability and Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT

Students are expected to follow the academic and professional standards of the university and their academic units. These are described at <http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm>.