

This course introduces American politics and national government after the attacks of Sept. 11th, as the midterm elections of 2002 loom on the horizon. We will pay attention to current events to illustrate broader patterns, and will seek to understand our politics by comparison with other industrial democracies, such as Canada or France.

We start with political culture; it is informal but very powerful, deeply influential in the political choices we and our leaders make. We will explore the choices voters and citizens make ? both in the abstract and embodied in candidates ? and the consequences of those choices in government. How is the political system organized and how does that organization shape our choices (and even the way we think about our choices)? These are among questions we will address, but if you have broad questions about our politics or government, please raise them. I welcome such questions; we will take time to consider them.

We turn first to politics: American political culture (and the Constitution), civil liberties and civil rights, public opinion, the press and media, elections, interest groups, and political parties. We then turn to the institutions of government; the presidency is the most visible office in the national government but Congress actually writes the laws. The bureaucracy implements the law and public policy. The courts and legal system interpret both the law and the Constitution. We will conclude with a look at public policy, focusing on policies of interest to students. Influencing policy is the "payoff," ? the reward ? most of the political "players" are seeking. Public policies establish the rules under which all of us live.

In a survey course such as this, you probably will have many questions. If you have a question, be assured that you are not alone. Many others almost certainly share it, but may be too timid to speak up. So do it for both of you; there are no "dumb" questions! **IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, ASK IT; IF YOU HAVE A COMMENT, MAKE IT!** I value and reward class participation (but please respect the ability of your classmates to participate as well).

Required readings and assignments:

Newspaper: The New York Times is assigned for stories on contemporary political events. It is available on the web (www.nytimes.com) and on paper at the bookstore. This assignment will be discussed further in class.

Required books and readings:

1. John W. Kingdon, *America: The Unusual* (1999)
2. William Lunch, *Inside The Beltway* (Sept., 2001 edition)
3. David Price, *The Congressional Experience*, 2nd ed., (2000)
4.
 - o See the specific reading and other assignments associated with each subtopic listed later in this document.

Evaluation: Grades will be calculated from weekly questions (to be written in anticipation of topics we will cover), writing assignments tied to the New York Times, a number of unannounced in-class quizzes, and occasionally, writing briefly about a campus event or a

videotape. Together, these small "in-progress" assignments will be worth about 60% of the grade; and the final exam (about 40%), on Monday, June 10th. at 9:30 am - Please make a note of the date and time. We will discuss course evaluation in more detail on the first day of class, but note well... missing large numbers of routine in-progress assignments will be very damaging to your understanding of the material and to your course grade.

Assignments: Those marked with an asterisk (*) will be available on reserve or distributed in class. Videotape assignments will either be shown in class or will be on reserve at the library, where viewing equipment is available.

- Note that in addition to the readings listed below, many short readings will be handed out in class; they are part of the required reading.
- As noted, students are expected to keep current on political developments in the New York Times.

Topics	Readings	Notes and Videotapes (Subject to change)
1. Introduction: inside the New Deal beltway (with a visit from James Madison)	Lunch, "Inside the Beltway," sect. 1-6 Kingdon, "Introduction," pp. 1-5. Price, chap. 1	
2. American Political Culture, the Constitution, and Interest Groups	Kingdon, chap.2-3 Lunch, sections 2 (review) & 10 Price, chap. 2-3	Cooke, "Inventing a Nation..."
3. Federalism & Regionalism	Lunch, sections 8-9 Kingdon, chap. 4, (particularly pp. 63-68)	"Seven Days," asst. suicide debate
4. Civil Rights & Liberties	Lunch, "Social Control Policies"* Luker, "The Wars Between..."* Price, chap. 10	Williams, "Bridge to Freedom"
5. Public Opinion	Kingdon, pp. 38-41 (review) Lunch, section 5 (review)	
6. The Press & Media	Lunch, section 7	TV news & analysis
7. Parties & Elections	Lunch, sections 3-4, 8 & 10 2000 Political Ads	

	(review)	
	Price, review chap. 2-3 & pp. 159-164	
	Pomper, "The 2000 Election,"*	
	Lunch, section 12	
8. Congress	Price, pp. 165-189 & chap. 9	To be announced
	Lunch, sections 11 & 15	
9. The Presidency	Price, chap. 8	To be announced
10. The Bureaucracy	Lunch, sections 13-14	Kingdon, chap. 5
11. The Legal System	Lunch, section 16	

PLEASE NOTE: There are more than ten topics here, so we will have less than a week to cover each subject (though the length of time we spend on each subject will vary, at least in part in response to the level of student interest). The large number of subjects will require moving quickly through the material. Under such circumstances, missing class and/or failing to do the reading will pose more difficulty for students than in courses covering fewer subjects.

Professor: Bill Lunch can be found on the 3rd floor of the Social Science Building, Room 300 (the South end of the hall), call 737-2811. Office hours will be announced in class, but you can also send me e-mail at... BLunch@oregonstate.edu.

Reaction Note Guidelines

What is a reaction note? It is a very brief -- no more than one page (about three hundred words), typewritten or computer-printed (I stop reading at the bottom of the page) -- note in which you react to a development, article, lecture or seminar, videotape, or assigned subject giving your thoughts, ideas, comments and reactions. (These notes should be brief; don't single space or expand the margins to get 1,000 words on a page because... the shadow knows.)

On some days, more informal, handwritten reactions will be assigned in class and turned in during that class period. For those notes, being prepared -- by keeping current in reading the New York Times and election news generally -- will be very important.

Reaction notes, both in and out of class, will sometimes be assigned in this course. Most commonly, you will be asked to prepare a reaction note on a videotape, campus event, a reading, or an article in the New York Times related to the election. Reaction notes, at times, will also concern your thoughts about developments in the context of political theories we discuss in class. Thinking about and discussing the application of the theories with other students (and with me)

will therefore help you both in the short and long run. While missing any one assignment will not be critical to your grade, missing any substantial number of them will be.

Reaction notes should not simply summarize videos, New York Times articles, or assigned readings or other sources, though a small amount of summarization will be needed in the first section of your note. Reaction notes should include:

1. **Synopsis:** a brief synopsis or description of the topic at hand; what were the central points argued or presented?
2. **Analysis:** think broadly ("open minds") and make comparisons, link the topic to history, to comparisons with patterns in other states or nations, and if you can, make connections with your own experience (as an intern in the legislature or as a campaign worker, for example);
3. **Comments and Opinions:** your own reaction to and opinion of the material you've just read, seen, or heard. So you can think of the reaction note as offering an opportunity to present your own interpretation, which may agree or disagree, in part or in the whole, with the interpretation offered by the authors of readings, lectures, videotapes, or other material.

As you consider the topics associated with this course, try to make use your own experience, but remember that you need to support your points with broader evidence. In other words, your experience can help illustrate and "bring alive" points you have to make, but you should not assume your experience is shared by everyone. You need to explain how your experience bears on the topic at hand. If you do this, bringing into consideration your own experience or observations will almost always strengthen your writing.

Advisories: We are now required to advise students of certain policies:

1. **Plagiarism:** Academic work is work. I am not Picasso nor Einstein (nor are you); if you or I painted a picture or did an experiment that was a copy of work done by Picasso or Einstein but claimed to have done it ourselves, outside of the academy it would be described as fraud. The same applies to work (such as writing, exams, or presentations) done by anyone other than the author named. Here we call such disreputable behavior plagiarism. It is as unacceptable here as it would be elsewhere. Any plagiarized writing or work turned in for this course will result in a course grade of "F."
2. **Disrespectful behavior:** In the university we are all students, seeking truth and understanding. Skin color, gender, age, or other characteristics over which individuals have no choice are irrelevant to that pursuit, as are religious preference or sexual orientation. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others in the course is unacceptable and can result in a grade of "F."

3. **Disabilities:** Students with documented disabilities should be registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD). Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodation should make an appointment with the professor as early as possible, but no later than the first week of the quarter. The same requirements apply to students who may need to have known emergency medical information. Alternative testing requests and arrangements should be made by the student at least one week in advance of the test.