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2017

### Syllabus for American Government Course with Openstax - Zero Textbook Cost

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*CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College*

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## Borough of Manhattan Community College

Course: American Government POL100.0801 Fall 2017  
Mon - Wed 8:00-9:15 AM Fiterman Hall, room 207

Instructor: T. Leontaridis  
Office Hours: Mon 2-3 PM or by appointment  
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### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the American political system. We will examine the structural foundations, key institutions, players, and themes that will help us understand and analyze how government works. We will also discuss public opinion, interest groups, social movements, and political parties as elements of our democracy. Finally, we will focus on the interaction between government and citizens as the framework for political processes. The goal of this course is to enable students to gain deeper understanding, stimulate critical thinking, and form their own informed opinions about the forces that shape American politics.

### **Zero Cost Textbook (required):**

Krutz, Glen, Sylvie Waskiewicz. 2016. *American Government*. Houston, Texas: Rice University (Openstax)

This textbook can be accessed online and/or downloaded as PDF:

**Download for free at <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government>**

If you prefer a printed copy, you may order it online (around \$27, plus shipping).

### **Assessment and Grading**

Assessment	Percent
3 Tests	50%
Quizzes	20%
Homework Assignments	20%
Attendance and Participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A 100-90%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F 0-59%
a passing grade is 60%

- Three **exams**, two midterms and one final, consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Don't be absent on exam days! Make-up tests are worth less points, and they are only made available to students who provide legitimate reasons for their absence and appropriate documentation.
- There will be three or four **quizzes** on key terms of a specific chapter.
- Regular **homework** assignments are submitted on Blackboard.
- Come to class on time and **attend** all classes. If you cannot attend class, you should notify me by Email. It is your responsibility to make up missed work.
- All assignments, quiz and exam dates will be posted on **Blackboard**. Please check Blackboard regularly for updates.

### **Learning Goals\***

1. To advance students' understanding of the essential elements of the US political system, including its Constitutional system, political processes, governmental institutions, and political culture(s).
2. To advance students' understanding of how political power operates in the US. Students will be able to explain political outcomes from a variety of different perspectives on US politics and evaluate critically the political institutions and processes of democracy in the US.
3. To promote students' ability to think critically about different perspectives and ideologies on US politics among the public, political parties, and scholars.
4. To promote students' ability to engage in political debates effectively orally and in writing. Students will learn how to write and speak about important issues in US politics coherently & knowledgeably.

### **Assessment \***

1. Assessment will be done with homework assignments, quizzes, and exams that contain multiple-choice and true-false questions, as well as short answer type questions.
2. Homework assignments which will require students to reflect and critically think about political institutions and processes. Following current events and searching for appropriate materials relating to the issues at hand will help students connect abstract knowledge with everyday life.
3. Participation in class discussions and writing short essays on corresponding issues such as the topics discussed in class.
4. Assessment will be done with exams, homework assignments, and class discussions (participation).  
(\*BMCC Social Sciences Guidelines)

**NOTE:** Electronic devices are only allowed for accessing class materials or taking notes. Any cell phone use during an exam or quiz will automatically result in a failing grade.

### **BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work.

Plagiarism carries a range of penalties. You may receive a failing grade for the course or be referred to the dean's office.

### **How to give credit:**

<http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext>

### **Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. BMCC is committed to providing equal access to all programs and curricula to all students

<http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/disabled/>

**Semester Deadlines** and other important dates can be found at:

[http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/calendar/fall\\_2017.jsp](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/calendar/fall_2017.jsp)

## Tentative Class Schedule:

Session	Date:	Topic	Chapter
			Additional readings posted on Blackboard
1.	Aug 28	Syllabus and Intro	
<u>Defining the Framework</u>			
2.	Aug 30	What is Government?	1
	Sept 4	<b>no class</b> (Labor Day)	
3.	Sept 6	Origins of the Constitution	2
4.	Sept 11	Constitutional Change	2
5.	Sept 13	American Federalism and the Division of Power	3
6.	Sept 18	Advantages and Disadvantages of Federalism	3
	Sept 20	<b>no class</b> (admin)	
<u>Individual Agency and Action</u>			
7.	Sept 25	Civil Liberties	4
8.	Sept 27	Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties	4
9.	Oct 2	<b>Test 1</b>	
10.	Oct 4	Civil Rights	5
	Oct 9	<b>no class</b> (Columbus Day)	
11.	Oct 11	Civil Rights and social groups	5
<u>Informal Institutions</u>			
12.	Oct 16	Public Opinion and its Effects	6
13.	Oct 18	The American Electoral System	7
14.	Oct 23	Voting and Democracy	7
15.	Oct 25	Emergence and Impact of the Media as a Political Actor	8
16.	Oct 30	Media, Political Parties, and Partisanship	9
17.	Nov 1	Political Parties and Interest Groups	9
18.	Nov 6	Interest Groups and Lobbying	10
19.	Nov 8	<b>Test 2</b>	
<u>Formal Institutions</u>			
20.	Nov 13	Congressional Representation, The House	11
21.	Nov 15	Congressional Representation, The Senate	11
22.	Nov 20	The Presidency	12
23.	Nov 22	Evolution of the Presidency	12
24.	Nov 27	The Court system	13
25.	Nov 29	The Supreme Court	13
<u>Output of Government</u>			
26.	Dec 4	Domestic Policy	16
27.	Dec 6	Foreign Policy	17
28.	Dec 11	Foreign Policy	17
29.	Dec 18	<b>Final Exam</b>	