

**Term: Winter 2016**

**Class Schedule and Location:**

Tuesdays AND Thursdays, 12:30-1:45 pm – Pray-Harrold, Room 421

**Instructor:**

Athena M. King, PhD, MPA

Email: [AKing56@emich.edu](mailto:AKing56@emich.edu)

Phone: 734-487-0058

**Winter 2016 Office Location/Hours:**

601G Pray-Harrold

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-2pm, *and by appointment as necessary*

**Course Description, Outcomes, and Learning Objectives:**

This course is an introduction to American governmental institutions and the political process. Students will understand how the basic functions of national governmental institutions influence human actions, as well as the importance of the U.S. Constitution, civil rights/liberties, and the role of the electorate in American society. Among the topics included are the political culture and socialization, political participation, the media, social movements and minority politics, and interest groups and political parties. Also, this course fulfills the requirement to study the United States Constitution.

**Course Competency:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the U.S. Constitution, an institution of national government, and the American political system as it relates to modern political events in American society.

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Critically analyze and critique the course material;
2. Comprehend key concepts and terms of American politics and develop an ability to apply the principles and concepts of American politics;
3. Understand the principles of American politics and their relationship to politics;
4. Describe the evolution of the American political system from historical developments to its current effect on American society;
5. Comprehend the practices of American politics and the relationship between principles and interests;
6. Explain the theoretical structure of constitutional democracy in America, especially as it applies to constitutional guarantees of civil rights and civil liberties;
7. Explain the role of political linkages between institutions of democracy and the American public;
8. Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the American national government and its role in national policymaking;
9. Understand the tension between power and freedom and how it shapes both the structure and practice of politics;
10. Develop a more discerning and critical view of information presented in the media.

*Throughout the course, we will examine course material through the lens of current domestic and international issues; therefore, we will pay particular attention to principles of American government and politics relative to issues raised by parties during/after the 2012 election, the current campaign cycle for the 2016 election, and the current/future implications of Obama's presidency on the topics we address. By doing so, it is anticipated*

*that students will gain a better understanding of the government, its function, and its actors for the purposes of being able to make informed decisions should they choose to become more active members in both the political process and society in general.*

**Textbook(s)/readings/Web assignment link:**

1. Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert and Spitzer. *We The People* (10<sup>th</sup> Essentials Edition)(green book); **note: US Constitution is in the BACK of this book**
2. Abramowitz, Alan: *The Polarized Public* (Pearson)
3. Canvas LMS (Eastern University): <https://canvas.emich.edu/>

There are two required texts for this course, both available in the EMU bookstore; for your convenience, the Ginsberg et al. text is also available as an e-book at <https://digital.wwnorton.com/> (note that the first three chapters of the book can be viewed here as well). However, you are free to purchase/rent these books from alternate sources such as Amazon.com, usually at reduced cost. *Note: If you choose to utilize an alternate source and you do not receive the materials in a timely manner, you are still responsible for all written assignments, exams, quizzes, and other methods of evaluation for this course.*

**The Ginsberg et al. text is the backbone to the class!!** In it, the key terms and concepts are described, explained, and applied. The text offers the usual narrative that texts provide as well as several asides: charts, tables and figures. All of these features are important. Given that 2012 was a presidential election year, we're in the middle of a second Obama Administration, and candidates are on the campaign trail for the 2016 election, Ginsberg et al. text provides an opportunity to examine two questions central to the course: (1) "Where are you in this story", and (2) "How does it factor into your decision to participate in the political process?" Abramowitz (*The Polarized Public*) examines the issue of party polarization and how this degree of disparity shapes elections, political outcomes, and general perceptions of socioeconomic/racial/ethnic groups by others. **The course is a mixture of (primarily) lecture and discussion. Time constraints make it impossible to cover everything in class. If something confuses you and requires clarification, you must ask questions. I facilitate the process of learning, but the ultimate responsibility for learning – and demonstrating what you've learned - lies with you.**

In addition to the texts, we will study the US Constitution (found in the back of the Ginsberg et al. text). What is a "constitution"? Officially, it is system for government (usually written) that defines the functioning of a government. Why are they adopted? Generally, to establish a supreme law of the land (whether it is a state, or an entire country). In that context, we will study the two in conjunction with the textbooks so as to provide students with greater understanding of things such as (1) government organization, (2) the granting/separating of powers, and (3) establishment of rights to be enjoyed by citizens of the state and/or nation.

The web link (Canvas LMS) will be used to complete quizzes and online assignments. **You are also expected to use this link as a supplement to the weekly readings.** The embedded course pack contains chapter outlines, flashcards of key terms, exercises (discussed later in the syllabus), and information regarding the latest in American Politics.

**Supplemental Instruction (Kangkana Koli)**

Students will have access to a "SI" (Supplemental Instructor) for this class, provided by the Holman Success Center. The SI for this course is Kangkana Koli. Outside of class, she can be reached at [Kkoli@emich.edu](mailto:Kkoli@emich.edu). The goal of the SI is to help students gain a better understanding of the material and assignments; therefore, the SI will conduct discussion sessions during the week to assist you. With regard to the SI, please note the following: (1) The sessions are **voluntary** and free to all students enrolled in the course. (2) Sessions are non-remedial; rather, they are proactive approaches to ensuring student success. (3) Sessions are presented 2-3 times weekly at times voted on by students. And (4) The sessions are NOT A SECOND LECTURE; rather, they are

collaborative review sessions for students to practice the material. You are expected to bring your textbooks and notes to the sessions, as well as means to access CANVAS (e.g., laptop or smartphone). More information about SIs and the Holman Success Center can be found here: <http://www.emich.edu/hsc/si/what-to-expect.php>. To reiterate, participation in the discussion sections is **voluntary**; however, students who participate will invariably gain a stronger understanding of the material. In turn, students may see considerable improvement in their exam/assignment scores (and overall grades) as a result of participation.

### Course Requirements and Evaluation:

The formal requirements for this course are as follows:

Requirements	% of Total Course Credit
Online assignments (e.g. chapter quizzes, simulations, You Decide exercises), COLLECTIVELY	15
Written Assignments (e.g., essays, research projects), COLLECTIVELY	15
First Exam	20
Second Exam – noncumulative	25
Third Exam (Final) – noncumulative	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading Scale:

All grades in this class will be based upon a 0 to 100 scale, whereas: A = 100 to 94; A- = 93 to 90; B+ = 89 to 86; B = 85 to 83; B- = 82 to 80; C+ = 79 to 76; C = 75 to 73; C- = 72 to 70; D+ = 69 to 66; D = 65 to 63; D- = 62 to 60; F = 59 and below.

### Class Participation and Attendance:

This class combines lecture and discussion; attendance is expected. I expect you to complete the readings for each day and will feel free to call on you. Participation may be factored into your grade along with attendance; therefore, a person who attends all class sessions *and* contributes regularly to the discussion may receive extra credit, compared to someone with frequent absences and little to no participation. As such, your level of participation and attendance may raise or lower your course grade. Students who contribute to the discussion regularly (i.e. when called upon, or asking questions that are *germane* to the material and discussion) may receive as much as two extra credit points (added to final grade) for the semester; students who fail to contribute to the discussion (i.e. can't/won't answer questions when called upon or ask irrelevant or tangential questions) will receive no extra credit points. ***Therefore, no matter how you may perform on the written material, your overall grade may be raised based on your attendance and class participation!***

- Students who are not present when the roll is called or who leave class prior to its dismissal will be considered absent for purposes of determining compliance with the attendance requirements (unless tardiness or early dismissal has been pre-planned and discussed with the instructor in advance).
- Students adding courses after classes begin are responsible for work covered from the first day of classes.

- All classes missed are counted as absences.
- Any student who is absent on the day of a quiz/exam will be assigned a grade of “0” UNLESS
  - Students with pre-planned absences should inform the instructor in advance of those dates; however, the absences will still count against the student.
  - *Make-up exams will be given in accordance with the reason for absence (i.e. you were rushed to the emergency room last night and the dean has contacted me about your situation – make-up will be scheduled; you overslept – no make-up).*
  - *If you show up late to class on the day of an exam (without a reasonable, valid excuse for tardiness), you can still take it; however, you will only have the remaining time left in the class period to finish.*

### **Exams:**

There are three exams given in this class; the final exam is one of the three. None of the exams are cumulative; rather, each exam covers the most recent 4-5 chapters covered in class. (For example, if Exam #1 covers Chapters 1-5, Exam #2 covers Chapters 6-10, and Exam #3 – the final – covers Chapters 11-14.) Each exam consists of 50 multiple-choice questions, worth 2 points each. In addition, 10 true-false questions are given for extra credit and are **optional**. For each true-false question answered correctly, a point will be added to the exam grade. Thus, each exam has a maximum value of 110 points (not a “regular A” grade, but a “super-A”). ☺

### **Quizzes:**

Quiz information will be gleaned from the Ginsberg, et al. chapters assigned. They will help you test how well you were able to pull out the key ideas and concepts. Take the online quizzes found on Canvas LMS (under the “Assignments” link). You will do the quizzes for the selected chapters shown on the schedule. The due dates for quizzes are listed on the syllabus, even if the chapter is still being covered in class. You can complete the quizzes any time up to 11:59 pm of the due date. If quizzes are not completed by the due date/time, you will be “locked out” and can no longer complete the quiz, which results in a grade of “0”.

The quizzes range from 20 to 25 questions (for a maximum 100 points) and are graded automatically based on the answers you provide. You can take the quiz no more than two times, with the highest score of the two recorded. *Many of the exam questions come from the quizzes and there is a correlation between exam performance and completing the quizzes; you are encouraged to do all of the quizzes – each chapter quiz for each chapter covered in class – but only a select few will apply to your actual grade. Should you choose to take a quiz more than once, you are expected to research the correct answer for questions missed using the book and lecture notes.*

### **Essays/Research Assignment/Film Sheets:**

Over the course of the semester, you will be given several written assignments. The assignments are given in conjunction with particular chapters to be discussed and supplemental information (e.g. videos watched in class or on your own time, along with other research materials). These will allow you to work on critical thinking and writing skills that are part of the General Education program. The written assignment details will be posted online and addressed in class several days prior to the due date.

### **Additional Web Assignments (Simulations/”You Decide” Exercises):**

This part of the class includes the Policy Debate: You Decides and Simulations found on Canvas LMS (under the “Assignments” link). You will do them for selected chapters as shown on the schedule. These are graded in part automatically based on the answers you provide; the short answer/essay parts of the assignments are graded by me. The goal of these assignments is to provide a “real world” context for the material addressed in the textbook. You are encouraged to review the chapter and your notes prior to beginning the assignments and to incorporate

material from them when answering the short answer/essay sections. Like the quizzes, online assignments are due by 11:59 pm of the due date, and students are “locked out” of the assignment once the date/time has passed.

### **Extra Credit:**

Due dates for specific extra credit assignments are also shown. Please note that the extra credit assignments are **OPTIONAL**; should you elect not to do them, your overall grade will not be negatively affected. The two extra credit assignments can add a maximum value of 4 points to your overall grade. No other extra credit assignments will be allowed.

### **Policies:**

I expect everyone to be on time to class and to complete all business before class so as not to disrupt the class by leaving early or answering phones. That means a) go to the bathroom before class and b) turn off your phones (completely – not just the ringer or putting it on vibrate). If you must leave class early, please tell me before class and sit near the door. I reserve the right to invite you to leave for a day if you miss a large segment of a class or are consistently late.

- (1) ***Due dates for assignments are important.*** Written assignments are due at the beginning of class. After the beginning of class, any written assignment is considered late; online assignments are due before 11:59 pm on its due date. For written assignments, the student will be penalized ½ letter grade for each day (defined as a 24-hour period marked from the beginning of class on the assigned due date) that the assignment is not submitted – beginning with a B after the time assignments are requested on the date the paper is due. A student may submit an “F” assignment for possible simple course credit (up to 50% of the assignment’s grade points). You should submit all written assignments directly to the instructor. However, you may put written work in my campus mailbox prior to its due date; written work submitted after the due date and put in my mailbox must be signed and dated by an official representative of the college such as an Administrative Assistant. **Do not E-mail written assignments** (*unless otherwise instructed to do so*).
- (2) All written assignments must be typed or word processed. I will inform you of certain exceptions which may be made during the course of the semester.
- (3) Instructors are prohibited by federal privacy law from public dissemination of a student’s performance or grades; this includes discussions with other people, E-mail, phone, or any public posting. Therefore, I cannot inform you of your grade in an email or phone call or give that information to another person (e.g., parents) without your permission.
- (4) E-mail protocol: When you use E-mail to contact an instructor, please follow these guidelines: In the subject heading, please include: **E-mail topic, class name, and student’s full name**. In the E-mail passage itself: greeting, body of the E-mail, and signature. I will not respond to E-mails sent without this format.

**I have a 48-hour (maximum) turnaround period for email responses. Weekends, holidays, and college closings do not count in that 48-hour period. Unless otherwise instructed, assignments are not to be E-mailed. Also, do not attach files to E-mail correspondence.**

### **Disability Statement:**

Any student eligible for and requesting academic accommodation due to a disability is requested to provide Documentation Confirmation from the Disability Resource Center (in the Student Center) ***within the first two***

*weeks of class*. Please call (734) 487-2470 (Email: DRC@emich.edu) if you have questions or if you need to schedule an appointment. Additional information can be found on the website: <http://www.emich.edu/drc/index.php>.

**Course Topic Outline/Course Calendar with Assignments:**

In order to get the most out of the course, students should read the assigned material prior to the classes for which it is assigned. It is imperative that students do the assigned readings and attend all classes in order to avoid falling behind.

Students should be aware that factors beyond our control (e.g. inclement weather, instructor absences) may alter the schedule. Additionally, an interesting discussion in class may prolong certain topics. In any event, we will endeavor to address as many topics shown below (and stay as close to the schedule) as possible. ***PLEASE NOTE: Should change become necessary, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the requirements, pace, or scheduling of this course. Any change will be announced (in class, posted online or via email) before it becomes effective.***

Class Week/Date	Reading(s)/Discussion Topic/Activity	Assignment Due Dates/Exam Dates
<b>Week 1 (Jan. 7)</b>	Introductions; syllabus/CANVAS LMS review Begin (Lowi) Chapter 1 - Introduction: The Citizen and the Government	
<b>Week 2 (Jan. 12 - 14)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 1 - Introduction: The Citizen and the Government (conclusion)  Begin (Lowi) Chapter 2 - The Founding and the Constitution	
<b>Week 3 (Jan. 19-21)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 2 - The Founding and the Constitution (conclusion)  Begin (Lowi) Chapter 3 - Federalism; US Constitution, Amendment 10	Quiz (Ch. 2) – due Jan. 21 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 4 (Jan. 26-28)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 3 - Federalism; US Constitution, Amendment 10 (conclusion)  Begin (Lowi) Chapter 4 - Civil Liberties and Civil Rights; US Constitution, Amendments 1-9, 13-15, 19, 24, 26	Quiz (Ch. 3) – due Jan. 26 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 5 (Feb. 2-4)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 4 - Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (continued)  (Lowi) Chapter 5 - Public Opinion	Simulation (Ch. 4) – due Feb. 2 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 6 (Feb. 9-11)</b>	<b>Exam #1 (Tuesday, Feb. 9; Chapters 1-5)</b>  (Lowi) Chapter 6 - The Media	Quiz (Ch. 6) – due Feb. 11 (CANVAS)

<b>Week 7 (Feb. 16-18)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 7 - Political Parties and Elections	Quiz (Ch. 7) – due Feb. 18 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 8 (Feb. 23-25)</b>	<b>WINTER BREAK – NO CLASSES; CAMPUS CLOSED</b>	
<b>Week 10 (March 1-3)</b>	(Informal) group presentations and discussion: <i>The Polarized Public</i> (March 3)  Writing assignment ( <i>The Polarized Public</i> ) distributed March 1  (Lowi) Chapter 8 - Interest Groups	<i>Boogie Man</i> (extra credit) due March 1    Quiz (Ch. 8) – due March 3 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 11 (March 8-10)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 9 – Congress; US Constitution (Art. I and Amendments 16, 18, 21, 27)  Research assignment (Congressional legislation) distributed March 9	Simulation (Ch. 9) – due March 10 (CANVAS)  Writing assignment ( <i>The Polarized Public</i> ) due March 10 (in-class)
<b>Week 12 (March 15-17)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 10 - The Presidency; US Constitution (Art. II and Amendments 12, 20, 22, 23, 25)  Video: <i>The Presidents – Carter to Bush</i> (in class)  Research assignment (the presidents) distributed March 17	Policy Debate: You Decide (Ch. 10) – due March 15 (CANVAS)    Interest group (extra credit) due March 17 (in-class)
<b>Week 13 (March 22-24)</b>	<b>Exam #2 (Tuesday, March 22, Chapters 6-10)</b>  Begin (Lowi) Chapter 11 – Bureaucracy; US Constitution (Amendment 10)	Research assignment (Congress) due March 24 (in-class)
<b>Week 14 (March 29-31)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 11 – Bureaucracy; US Constitution (Amendment 10)(conclusion)  Begin (Lowi) Chapter 12 – Judiciary; US Constitution (Art. III)	Quiz (Ch. 11) – due March 29 (CANVAS)  Research Assignment (the Presidents) due March 31 (in-class)
<b>Week 15 (April 5-7)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 12 – Judiciary; US Constitution (Art. III) Begin (Lowi) Chapter 13 - Domestic Policy	Simulation (Ch. 12) – due April 5 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 16 (April 12-14)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 13 - Domestic Policy (conclusion) Begin (Lowi) Chapter 14 - Foreign Policy	Policy Debate: You Decide (Ch. 13) – due April 14 (CANVAS)
<b>Week 17 (April 19)</b>	(Lowi) Chapter 14 - Foreign Policy (conclusion) Class evaluations (April 19)	Quiz (Ch. 14) – due APRIL 19 (CANVAS)

Final Exam (noncumulative): **Thursday, April 21, 2016, 11:30-1pm**

(Schedule set by University. You will be informed in advance of any changes in dates/times.)