Welcome to Honors American National Government. The course is an expansion of the student's basic understanding of our uniquely American national government. The course will cover the Constitutional foundations of the United States, characteristics of the population, how that population expresses its preferences, the institutions of government, and how the Constitution controls how our government functions in a modern era.

Course Goal

To investigate current political issues in the context of the Constitution, the presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court and other national political institutions and gain a greater understanding of the values and institutions which guide our national government.

Course Objectives

Define, explain, and correctly use terms and concepts used by the political system and its participants in the United States.

Provide a broad foundation to assist you as students to understand the nature and complexity of our society and governmental structure.

Improve your ability to think critically about issues which require your attention as citizens and voters.

Academic Integrity

You are encouraged to discuss assignments and study together. The written content of all assignments and exams, however, must represent your own individual effort. Any plagiarism, either from colleagues, printed materials, or internet materials will be treated in accordance with the Troy University "Standards of Conduct" policy on academic integrity found in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

Students with Special Needs

Wherever possible modifications to tests and other assignments and special arrangements for attending and recording lectures will be made to accommodate the needs of students
with special needs. Any student with such a need is encouraged to make an appointment with me early in the semester to obtain the necessary assistance. Additional information can be obtained from the Adaptive Needs Program (215 Trojan Center/670-3221).

**Idea Exchange**

Politics is a process of debate. The topics you and I select to discuss in this class will have many sides; some may be especially controversial. It is expected that individual students will have different opinions and will often hold these opinions strongly. Our discussions should be viewed as an opportunity to exchange different points of view. You or I may not agree with the specific opinion, but that disagreement should never be disrespectful or, especially, deteriorate into personal attack. Enjoy the chance to be in a university setting where ideas and questions can be exchanged openly. Students unwilling to honor this environment will be asked to leave the class session.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Required Text**


Other readings are assigned throughout the semester. **Typically these readings will be available through remote access through the Troy Library webpage (remote services) or the instructor’s webpage.**

Students are encouraged to keep current with national political events either by regular reading of a newspaper, the internet, or national television news shows.

**NOTE:** Readings are due the first class for that topic. This helps you to understand the lecture and discussions as well as improve your ability to participate.

**Course Work**

**NOTE:** Attendance is expected and will be taken each class session. Extra credit for attendance up to a total of 15 points will be given proportional to recorded attendance and
added to points earned through course assignments. Absences will be excused if
documented and in compliance with the Undergraduate Bulletin policy.

In addition to preparing for and participating in each class session, students will be
expected to complete short-answer assignments (some in groups), two newspaper article
summaries/presentations, two midterm exams, and a final exam.

- Short-answer assignments will be due every few class sessions and will cover
  material presented during class and from the required readings.

**NOTE:** Late assignments will be marked down the equivalent of one letter grade (1/10 of
the points given to the assignment) for each class period late to a maximum of 1/2 of the
assignment value. The period runs from the end of one class (11:50 AM) to the beginning
of the next class (11:00 AM). In other words, an assignment not turned in by the end of
the class period of the day it is due will be marked down one letter grade; by the end of
the next scheduled class period, two letter grades; and so forth. **NOTE:** A University-
excused absence [pre-scheduled event] does not waive the assignment deadline. A
medically-excused absence (with proof) on the day the assignment is due will waive
the assignment deadline until the FIRST unexcused day. The last day to submit late
assignments is the last day of regular class (December 3).

- Two newspaper article summaries and presentations (timing throughout the
  semester to be determined)
- Two midterm exams.

**NOTE:** Students can correct their midterm exams and receive the equivalent of one-half
of the original value of corrected answers to raise their exam scores.

- Final Exam.

**NOTE:** Exams may include some multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, true/false
questions, but they will emphasize written answers to short answer questions. The exams
will stress knowledge achievement and topic comprehension. They will cover
information from lectures and reading assignments. An alternative exam will be given
only when students provide a legitimate university-sanctioned excuse prior to the day of
the exam or a medical excuse (from a physician or clinic) at the FIRST class attended
within up to one week of the day of the exam. If an illness will require your absence
beyond one week, contact with me can be made by email to request an extension of this
deadline. No other reasons will be accepted for an alternative exam.

**NOTE:** Friday, October 19, is the last day to withdraw or drop without academic penalty.
After that date whether the student receives a WP/DP (withdraw pass/drop pass) or
WF/DF (withdraw fail/drop fail) will depend upon the grade of the student on the day
the request is submitted to the instructor.
ASSIGNMENT VALUES

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
<th>Maximum points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Answer Assignments (6)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper Article</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary/Presentations (2)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exams (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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GRADING REQUIREMENTS

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<td>D</td>
<td>360-419.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;360</td>
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There will be no additional "curve" in grading.

Course Schedule

**NOTE:** The schedule is a guide for both students and the instructor of the materials and assignments to be covered during the semester. It is subject to adjustments. **Every effort will be made to keep the dates for exams, however.**

COURSE SCHEDULE AND WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS

Introduction (August 15)

The Constitution (August 17, 20, 22, 24)

Students will be introduced to the principles of self- and limited government and democracy and the influence of those principles on the newly created Constitution.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 2
Federalism (August 27, 29, 31)

Students will be introduced to the development of federalism, such as the constitutional debate in 1787 over the relationship between a national government and the joining states. Equally important is how this concept and relationship has impacted American history and continues to influence our understanding of the role of the states and the national government.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 3

Federalist #10 (Appendix, Page A20)

August 31: Short Answer Assignment #1 due

Civil Liberties (September 5, 7, 10, 12)

This section is a deeper look at the civil liberties included in the Bill of Rights. These issues include both protections against governmental involvement in the lives of its citizens.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 4


September 7: Short Answer Assignment #2 distributed (due September 14)

Civil Rights (September 14, 17, 19)
This section is a deeper look at the civil rights in the Amendments to the Constitution. These issues include the tension of growing expectations that government should promote the rights of groups of its citizens.

Readings:       Ginsberg, Chapter 5

Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream”

September 14: Short Answer Assignment #2 due

**Midterm Exam #1: September 21**

**Political Participation and Ideology (September 24, 26, 28)**

The ideas held and expressed by the public and taken into account by government when making its decisions are commonly called public opinion. Public opinion is expressed by many different forms of participation, such as voting, campaign contributions, and letter-writing. This section will discuss how people participate politically and also how people develop their political opinions, often called political socialization.

Readings:       Ginsberg, Chapters 6 and 8

September 28: Short Answer Assignment #3 distributed (due October 5)

**Political Parties (October 1, 3, 5)**

Political parties serve as a link between the public and its elected leaders, but their importance in the American system has changed. Students will be introduced to the role that the two major political parties play in developing public opinion, campaigns, and assist in the functioning of government.

Readings:        Ginsberg, Chapter 9


October 5: Short Answer Assignment #3 due

October 8, 10, 12 (Fall Break): NO CLASS
**Groups and Interests (October 15, 17, 22)**

Many complain that interest groups have excessive influence in American politics and government. Others believe that they are critical in keeping government responsive to the public and providing a means for the less powerful to voice their opinions.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 11

October 17: Short Answer Assignment #4 distributed (due October 26)

**October 19 (Homecoming): NO CLASS**

**Campaigns and Elections (October 24, 26, 29)**

American political campaigns have become candidate-centered and very expensive. If the role of the political party is limited, what are the means that candidates use to get their message to the voters?

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 10

October 26: Short Answer Assignment #4 due

**Congress (October 31, November 2, 5, 7)**

Under the Constitution the Congress is considered the predominant branch of the national government. Its primary function is to pass legislation of national importance. At the same time, however, its organization encourages fragmentation and difficulty in dealing with issues of national significance. This section deals with the structure and interaction of Congress and how it achieves its Constitutional obligations.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 12

Constitution (Appendix, Page A8): Article I (again)

October 31: Short Answer Assignment #5 distributed (due November 7)
November 7: Short Answer Assignment #5 due

Midterm #2: November 9

November 12 (Veteran’s Day): NO CLASS

President (November 14, 16, 19)

The Presidency has become much more powerful than it was envisioned by the Founders. Many believe that the president is the most important person in government. Two possible reasons for this is the opportunity to focus singular attention on issues and the campaign as the only nationally elected official. This section will discuss the importance and role of the president in our national government process.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 13
Constitution (Appendix, Page A8): Article II

November 21, 23 (Thanksgiving): NO CLASS

Supreme Court (November 26, 28, 30)

The judiciary is probably the most misunderstood of the three branches, yet it has become increasingly important in validating or blocking policy priorities of both the other branches. Unlike the other two branches, its top officials are not elected through a popular vote. There are those who say that justices should be “strict constructionists” and others who want justices to be more “activist” in their decisions.

Readings: Ginsberg, Chapter 15
Constitution (Appendix, Page A8): Article III
Review and End-of-semester (December 3): Last day to submit late assignments.

December 3: Short Answer Assignment #6 (In Class) **NOTE: Students not in class will NOT be able to complete this assignment.**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The university has established standards and policies regarding academic honesty, which are outlined in the TROY UNIVERSITY Student Handbook. These policies will be adhered to in this course.

**A note about plagiarism and academic dishonesty:** your paper assignment must incorporate some system of appropriate citation of sources. Either the APA or MLA system is acceptable. All outside sources of fact or ideas must be attributed. This includes sources gathered from the Internet. **Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be grounds for failure of the course.**

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Any student whose disabilities fall within the Americans with Disabilities Act must inform their instructor at the beginning of the term of any special needs or equipment necessary to accomplish the requirements of the course.