

AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (POS 200.001)

Dr. Carl Doerfler
Credit Hours: 3
Room: Jeter 202
Time: MWF 10:00-10:50
Prerequisites: None

Spring 2006
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Office Hours: MWF 8-10; 1-1:30
R 2:30-5 or by appointment

Catalog Description: Constitutional background and development of American government, including the institutions, issues, and practical workings of the government today.

Required Text: Magleby, David B., et al. 2006. *Government by the People, 21st Edition*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

In addition to the required textbook, students should regularly read a major newsweekly (such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *U.S. News and World Report*) in order to complete the writing assignment described later.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To gain a sound understanding of the constitutional principles upon which our government is founded;
- 2) To become familiar with and acquire the skills to analyze the political process in the United States;
- 3) To develop knowledge of U.S. policy-making institutions;
- 4) To appreciate the rights and liberties guaranteed by our political system;
- 5) To explore current policy debates in light of knowledge gained previously in the course.

Requirements and Grading: Your grade will be determined by your performance on three multiple-choice tests and a semester-long writing assignment worth the following amount of points:

Test 1: 100
Test 2: 100
Test 3: 100
Writing Assignment: 100

Test three will be a comprehensive final examination covering all course topics, but it will stress material covered after the first exam. **Students must bring their own scantron to all three tests!!!** Scantrons are available at the UM Bookstore.

Written Assignment: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write twenty papers. Each paper should be approximately 300 to 350 words in length (about 1

typed, double-spaced page in a normal font). Each paper should tie in something that you have read in a major newsweekly (or a newspaper of comparable quality) with something that we have read about in the required readings and/or discussed in class. Papers will be graded according to the following criteria:

- 1) Does the paper tie in something that appears in a major newsweekly (or a newspaper of comparable quality) with something that we have read about in the required readings and/or discussed in class?
- 2) Does the writer support generalizations with specific examples?
- 3) Does the writer display depth of thought?
- 4) Is the paper written well? (For example, is the paper organized well? Is the paper written in an engaging style? Are there few, if any, usage or punctuation errors?)

Five papers will be due on the dates given below in the course schedule. At the top of each paper, please include the title of the article being analyzed, the newsweekly or newspaper in which it appeared, and the date the article was published. Please do not do all five papers shortly before you turn them in!!! I have many pedagogical reasons for requiring this assignment instead of a term paper, reasons which are undermined if students hastily churn out glib prose shortly before the assignment is due. Five papers must be turned in together on the day they are due (before the end of class), otherwise that group of five papers will incur a penalty of two full letter grades for each class session that they are late. (For example, five papers that would have earned 23 out of 25 points, if turned in by the end of class on the Friday they were due, would be worth 18 points if turned in by the end of class on the following Monday, 13 points on the following Wednesday, etc.) Your papers may address any topic covered previously in the course, but you will only get credit for writing about articles printed since the last set of papers were due.

Grades will be determined according to how many points you have earned based on the following scale:

A	360-400
B	320-359
C	280-319
D	240-279
F	0-239

Attendance Policy: Attendance is not required for this course, but please keep in mind that anything discussed in class may appear as a test question.

Make-up Tests: If a student must miss a test for any university-approved reason, the student must discuss the situation with the professor, before the absence if possible, as soon as possible after the absence in the case of an emergency. **Make-up exams will not be administered unless a written, university-authorized excuse is submitted to the instructor.** Make-up exams will be essay format. They will be administered on reading day at 10:00 at my office. Lecture notes will not be provided by the instructor when students miss classes. No extra credit will be offered.

ADA Statement: The University of Montevallo provides equal opportunity to qualified students. If you have a disability (medical, physical, learning, psychological, etc.) and wish to request disability-related accommodations to complete course requirements, contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (located in Main Hall, rear entrance; 665-6250). Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course objectives. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

Plagiarism Statement; Academic Dishonesty: As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.

Course Bibliography: The most recent bibliography can be found in the text.

Tentative Schedule: (Dates and activities are subject to change. Please complete assigned readings for a given day before class meets. All readings are from the assigned text.)

Jan. 9	Introduction
Jan. 11-13	Chp. 1: Constitutional Democracy
Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday—No Class
Jan. 18-20	Chp. 2: The Living Constitution
Jan. 23-25	Chp. 3: American Federalism
Jan. 27-30	Chp. 4: Political Culture and Ideology
Feb. 1-3	Chp. 5: The American Political Landscape (5 Papers Due Feb. 3)
Feb. 6-8	Chp. 6: Interest Groups
Feb. 10-13	Chp. 7: Political Parties
Feb. 15	Test #1 (Students must bring a scantron and a #2 pencil.)
Feb. 17-20	Chp. 8: Public Opinion, Participation, and Voting

Feb. 22-24	Chp. 9: Campaigns and Elections (5 Papers Due Feb. 24)
Feb. 27-Mar. 1	Chp. 10: The Media and American Politics
Mar. 3-6	Chp. 11: Congress
Mar. 8-10	Chp. 12: The Presidency
Mar. 13-15	Chp. 13: The Federal Bureaucracy
Mar. 17-20	Chp. 14: The Judiciary (5 Papers Due Mar. 17)
Mar. 22	Test #2 (Students must bring a scantron and a #2 pencil.)
Mar. 24-Apr. 3	Chp. 15: First Amendment Freedoms
Mar. 25-Apr. 2	Spring Break – No Classes
Apr. 5-7	Chp. 16: Rights to Life, Liberty, and Property
Apr. 10-12	Chp. 17: Equal Rights Under the Law
Apr. 14-17	Chp. 18: Making Economic and Regulatory Policy (5 Papers Due April 14)
Apr. 19-21	Chp. 19: Making Social Policy
Apr. 24-26	Chp. 20: Making Foreign and Defense Policy

Final: Wednesday, May 3, 4:00-6:00—Bring a scantron and a #2 pencil.