



Course Purpose and Description:

This course is an introduction to American politics. As the United States has arguably the oldest republican government based on a single constitutional document, understanding past and present American politics helps us understand the character of popular government more generally.

This course is intended to provide the basic foundation for the future study of American politics and policymaking and the fundamental conceptual tools for full and active participation in the American polity. We will examine the historical and philosophical foundations of the American political system; the rights, liberties, and responsibilities of citizens and non-citizens; the institutions of American government; and the intersection of mass political behavior and institutional dynamics in the formation of American public policy.

Course Learning Objectives:

Students should be able to do the following:

1. Describe and explain the historical and philosophical foundations of popular government in the American context.
2. Articulate and evaluate the various roles of the public—as individuals and as groups—in the American polity.
3. Explicate the rights and liberties enjoyed by citizens and the rights and liberties enjoyed by non-citizens.
4. Explain the powers and responsibilities of each of the three branches of government and describe their interactions.
5. Understand the various types of unelected government officials—both in the bureaucracy and the judiciary—and explain their significance within the American polity.
6. Explain the role of the media in American politics.
7. Describe the dynamics of the policymaking process and analyze its efficiency and effectiveness.
8. Effectively communicate—orally and in written form—thoughtful and informed perspectives on important issues relating to American government.

Course Requirements:

Beginning **January 29, 2019**, *each student will be fully responsible for acquiring information sent by us through the [ELMS](http://elms.umd.edu) website for this class (see elms.umd.edu)*

Dr. Irwin L. Morris
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Office Hours
Tydings 3140B
By appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Neil Lund
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Class Meetings

Monday & Wednesday
10:00am– 10:50am
Tydings 0130

Discussion Sections

Friday
Various times and
locations

Course Communication

Time sensitive information will be distributed via ELMS announcements. You are welcome to contact me via ELMS or email.

The course includes four graded components: three (3) exams (including the final exam), an editorial assignment, classroom/discussion section participation, and GVPT Subject Pool participation. Your final grade will be based on your performance on these components. The weights of the various graded components for the determination of your final grade are as follows:

Mid-term exams	40% (20% for each exam)
Final exam	25%
Editorial Assignment	20%
Class participation	10%
GVPT Subject Pool	5%

Each exam will include some mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Students should arrive at class with no more in their hands than a UMD student ID and pencils. Exam books will be provided. Students will not be allowed to use electronic devices such as cell phones or computers during the exam. Further information about the Editorial Assignment will be forthcoming. Attendance, evidence of preparation, and consistent and significant involvement in class activities and discussions are all important components of classroom participation. Information on GVPT Subject Pool participation is provided at the end of the syllabus. Also, students should be aware that make-up exams might differ from those given in class. On a related note, I do not -- as a general rule -- give Incompletes. Obviously, students are required to abide by the standards of academic integrity established by the university.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet in my office.

Late work will not be accepted for course credit so please plan to have it submitted well before the scheduled deadline. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards

and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same this as making the cut (89.99 ≠ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	96.00%	+	86.00%	+	76.00%	+	66.00%		
A	93.00%	B	83.00%	C	73.00%	D	63.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

Required Texts:

The Logic of American Politics. 2018. 8th edition. Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. Sage. [LAP]

Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings. 2018. 7th edition. (paperback). Edited by Samuel Kernell and Steven S. Smith. Sage. [PP]

You are also expected to read a newspaper of record on a regular basis. If you have a question about a specific paper, please see me.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Course-Specific Policies

No computers, phones or tablet devices are permitted during our class meetings. I understand and have considered arguments for permitting laptop and tablet computers in the classroom. However, in my experience (and based on the research evidence) the reality is that they present an irresistible distraction and detract from the cooperative learning environment. Researchers have found that these distractions do in fact interfere with learning and active participation. For that reason, the use of computers and phones will not be permitted during class meetings (except when required for ADS accommodations). If a computer is needed to accomplish a class objective for the day I will provide it or give you advanced notice to bring one with you.

I expect you to make the responsible and respectful decision to refrain from using your cellphone in class. If you have critical communication to attend to, please excuse yourself and return when you are ready. For more information about the science behind the policy watch: <http://youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk>

For this course, some of your assignments may be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#)

Get Some Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for you own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting <http://ter.ps/learn> and schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting <http://ter.ps/writing> and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <http://www.counseling.umd.edu>.



Everything is free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help...** all you have to do is ask for it.

Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

General Course Outline: With the exception of the first day's readings, you are expected to complete the readings for a particular day prior to class that day.

M - 1/28 - Course Introduction
--Chapter 1, LAP

W - 1/30 --
--Chapter 1, LAP
--Chapter 1, PP

F - 2/1 - Discussion sections

M - 2/4 - *Constitution (Guest Speaker)*

--Chapter 2, LAP

W - 2/6 -- *Constitution*

--Chapter 2, LAP

--Chapters 2-1 and 2-2, PP

F - 2/8 - Discussion sections

--Chapter 2-3, PP

M - 2/11 - *Federalism*

--Chapter 3, LAP

--Chapter 3-1, PP

W - 2/13 - *Civil Rights*

--Chapter 4, LAP

F - 2/15 - Discussion sections

--Chapter 4-2, PP

M - 2/18 - *Civil Rights*

--Chapter 4-1, PP

W - 2/20 - *Civil Liberties*

--Chapter 5, LAP

F - 2/22 - Discussion sections

--Chapters 5-2 and 5-3, PP

M - 2/25 - *Civil Liberties*

--Chapter 5-1, PP

W - 2/27 - **Exam 1**

F - 3/1 - Discussion sections

--Chapters 11-1 and 11-3, PP

M - 3/4 - *Voting and Elections*

--Chapter 11, LAP

W - 3/6 - *Voting and Elections*

--Chapter 11-2, PP

F - 3/8 - Discussion sections

--Chapter 11-4, PP

M - 3/11 - *Public Opinion*

--Chapter 10, LAP

W - 3/13 - *Public Opinion*

--Chapter 10-1, PP

F - 3/15 - Discussion sections
--Chapters 10-2 and 10-3, PP

F - 3/15 - Discussion sections
--Chapter 12-2, PP

M - 3/18 - Spring Break

W - 3/20 - Spring Break

F - 3/22 - Spring Break

M - 3/25 - *Political Parties*
--Chapter 12, LAP
--Chapters 12-1 and 12-3, PP

W - 3/27 - *Interest Groups*
--Chapter 13, LAP
--Chapter 13-1, PP

F - 3/29 - Discussion sections
--Chapter 13-2, PP

M - 4/1 - *Media and Politics (Guest Speaker)*
--Chapter 14, LAP

W - 4/3 -- **Exam 2**

F - 4/5 - Discussion sections
--Chapter 14-1, PP

M - 4/8 - *Congress*
--Chapter 6, LAP

W - 4/10 - *Congress*
--Chapter 6-2, PP

F - 4/12 - Discussion sections
--Chapter 6-1, PP

M - 4/15 - *Presidency*
--Chapter 7, LAP

W - 4/17 - *Presidency*
--Chapters 7-1 and 7-2, PP

F - 4/19 - Discussion sections

--Chapter 7-3, PP

M - 4/22 - *Bureaucracy*
--Chapter 8, LAP

W - 4/24 - *Bureaucracy*
--Chapter 8-1, PP

F - 4/26 - Discussion sections
--Chapter 8-2, PP

M - 4/29 - *Judiciary*
--Chapter 9, LAP

W - 5/1 - *Judiciary*
--Chapter 9-3, PP

F - 5/3 - Discussion sections (**Editorial Assignment Due**)
--Chapters 9-1 and 9-2, PP

M - 5/6 - *Public Policymaking*
--Chapter 15, LAP

W - 5/8 - *Public Policymaking*
--Chapter 13-2, PP

F - 5/10 - Discussion sections

M - 5/13 - *Course Summary*

Final Exam - TBA

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary - monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.

Government and Politics Department Subject Pool

Scholar discovery depends, in large part, on research methods. Exposure to research methods is a valuable learning tool for students trying to understand research in political science. Some of the most exciting and cutting-edge research is being conducted right here at Maryland, so there's no better opportunity to learn about research in political science than by participating in research studies. The Government and Politics department encourages students to gain hands on research experience and knowledge. To support students in gaining this knowledge, our GVPT undergraduate courses (GVPT 170, GVPT 200, GVPT 201) will give participation credit to students who take part in studies conducted by GVPT faculty and graduate students.

Each study will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. If you prefer not to serve as a participant, you may elect to satisfy the requirement by writing a 3-5 page review of a quantitative research article. (If you are under 18 years old, you must have parental assent on file for you to participate in a research study or you may choose to write the paper instead.) However, you must notify the Research Administrator (William Bishop, wbishop@terpmail.umd.edu) before the last day of schedule adjustment for the semester if you wish to register for the research alternative. You will have to either participate in all of the studies or write the review paper.

Papers cannot be used to make up for a study at the end of the semester.

Students who are under 18 years of age must obtain parental permission to participate in research. If you are under 18, please contact William Bishop and he will provide you with instructions on how to participate in the research studies.

If you choose to participate in research, you will sign-up for two/three research studies. Throughout the semester, you will be sent two/three separate emails of studies to participate in. There will be a link in the email in which you will click on to schedule a day and time to take the study. All studies take place in **Chincoteague Hall room 4101**.

Please treat your scheduled research appointments like any professional meetings. If you sign up for an experiment and do not show up at the time you signed up for (and do not cancel properly within 24 hours because of an emergency), you will lose the research credit. We will keep a record of your participation. At the end of each study, we will inform you TA that you participated in the study.