

**Government and Politics 170: American Government**  
**University of Maryland**  
**Spring 2017**

**Monday & Wednesday, 10:00-10:50 AM**  
**0130 Tydings Hall**

**Professor:**

Dr. Kris Miler  
Email: kmiler@umd.edu  
Office: 3140Q Tydings Hall  
Office Hours: Mon 12-2pm and by appointment

**Teaching Assistants:**

Rob Campana (105, 108, 109)  
Email: rcampana@umd.edu  
Michael Coates (101, 106, 107)  
Email: azhain@umd.edu  
Charlie Hunt (102, 103, 104)  
Email: crh@umd.edu

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the study of American government. We will discuss the institutions that comprise the American political system, as well as the way in which individuals and actors (such as political parties, interest groups, and the media) interact with these institutions. We will approach the topics from a theoretical and analytical perspective. In other words, we will move beyond a mere description of American government to a discussion of why the American political system is organized as it is, how the institutions have changed over time, how the American system compares to other systems, what role citizens play in the political system, and the ways in which institutions and the political system might be improved.

**Requirements:**

You are expected to attend all lecture and section classes. You are also expected to have completed the assigned readings before each class period and to come prepared to ask questions, answer questions, and discuss the topic at hand. Participation is an important part of the course, especially in discussion sections. Sections are intended for you to have a chance to discuss and debate issues from lecture and the readings as well as recent developments in politics. You are invited to engage in lively discussions, but at no point will personal attacks or derogatory comments of any type be tolerated.

In addition to completing the readings, there are four major components of this course. First, there will be an in-class midterm exam on Wednesday, March 9th that will cover the material up to that day on the syllabus. Second, there will be a final exam at the end of the term. The University has scheduled the final exam for our class to be Friday, May 19th from 8:00AM – 10:00AM. The midterm and final exams will consist of both short answer and essay questions. Third, there will be two short writing assignments (approximately 3-4 pages each) during the course of the semester. The first short paper will be due on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, and the second short paper will be due on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. These papers are due at the beginning of your discussion section. More information about each short paper assignment will be posted on the course website no less than 2 weeks before the due date. Fourth, your attendance and participation in discussion section are important components of this course. Additionally, you will have reading quizzes and short assignments as part of discussion section that will count towards your grade in the course. These will be discussed in more detail in section.

## **Course Learning Objectives:**

The learning objectives for this course include: 1) the development of critical reading skills, especially the integration of theoretical argumentation and empirical evidence, 2) knowledge of the structure of American government as well as major theories and debates regarding American politics, and 3) development of analytical skills in political science.

## **Assignments and Grading:**

Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Writing Assignments	25%
Section	20%

The + and – grading system is used for this course. The T.A.s have primary responsibility for the grading of your exams and papers. Should you wish to talk about an assignment or if you have a question about a particular grade, please see your T.A. during their office hours. If you are disputing a grade, the course policy is that all grade inquiries must be made in writing no less than 24 hours and no more than 2 weeks after the exam or paper is returned to you. In addition, you must include the original exam or paper with your inquiry. In the rare circumstance where a dispute is not resolved with the TA, Dr. Miler will review the disputed assignment or exam and will make the final decision in the resolution of the dispute.

## **Course Policies:**

For a complete list of UMD course policies, please see: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courselatedpolicies.html>

## **Academic Honesty**

I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarizing. I expect you to work independently on your exams and to use proper citations in your written work. The University standards for academic honesty apply in this class and academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University policy. Please consult the University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity and the Student Honor Code to familiarize yourself with the University's policies:

<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html>

## **Accommodation of Disabilities**

If you have any condition that requires accommodation in this course, please contact the Disability Support Service office to obtain a letter of accommodation:

<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

## **Late Assignments & Exam Dates**

All exams must be taken on the designated day and all assignments must be turned in on time. The only exceptions to this policy are serious illness and emergencies. If you are in either of these situations, please contact me before the exam (or due date) to discuss your situation. If you have a conflict due to religious observance, please contact me beforehand to discuss your situation. Note that having other assignments/exams on the same day or having computer trouble are not considered emergency situations. There are no make-up exams, except in documented, legitimate emergencies. The date and time for the exams are listed in the syllabus and you should plan accordingly. The late penalty is a deduction of half a letter grade (or 5 points) if the assignment/exam is completed by the end of the same business day, and a full letter grade

(or 10 points) for every day that it is late after that. Please note that the absence policy (one sick absence without a medical note) does not apply to days where we have scheduled exams or papers are due.

### **Professionalism**

Once class has begun, please refrain from texting, emailing, talking on the phone, and other similar activities until class is over. In addition to being unprofessional and disrespectful, these activities will result in a penalty in your grade. Computers are only allowed in class for note-taking purposes. I reserve the right to revoke permission for computers in the classroom if this policy is abused.

### **Required Texts:**

There are two required books for this course. The first is primarily for use in lecture and the second is primarily for use in discussion section. The books can be purchased separately or bundled together. Please make sure that you buy the correct edition of the books since the content/selected readings vary by edition.

- Bianco, William, and David Canon. 2016. *American Politics Today*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Kollman, Ken. 2014. *Readings in American Politics: Analyses and Perspectives*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

### **Course Web Site:**

The course web site can be found at: <https://elms.umd.edu>. On the website, you will find a copy of the syllabus, links to certain readings, related news articles, and course announcements. Please check the website at least twice a week.

### **Course Schedule:**

<b>Wed 1/25</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Overview</b> Bianco and Canon, Chapter 1
<b>Fri 1/27</b>	<b>Discussion Section: Welcome</b> <i>No readings</i>
<b>Mon 1/30</b>	<b>The Constitution and the Founding</b> Bianco and Canon, Chapter 2
<b>Wed 2/1</b>	<b>Federalism</b> Bianco and Canon, Chapter 3
<b>Fri 2/3</b>	<b>Discussion Section: Constitution &amp; Federalism</b> <i>Kollman, Chapter 2.1 Madison, The Federalist No. 10</i> <i>Kollman, Chapter 2.2 Madison, The Federalist No. 51</i> <i>Kollman, Chapter 2.3 Brutus, The Antifederalist, No.1</i> <i>Kollman, Chapter 2.4 Dahl, How Democratic is the American Constitution?</i> <i>Madison, The Federalist No. 39</i>

- Mon 2/6**      **Public Opinion**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 6
- Wed 2/8**      **Public Opinion Polling**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 6 (cont)
- Fri 2/10**      **Discussion Section: Public Opinion and Polling**  
*Kollman, Chapter 9.2*    *Zaller, The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*  
*Kollman, Chapter 9.3*    *Kinder & Kam, Us Against Them*
- Mon 2/13**      **Citizen Participation**  
Excerpt from *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, by Steven Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen. Chapter 10.1 in Kollman book
- Wed 2/15**      **Voting**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 9 (pages 315-326)
- Friday 2/17**    **Discussion Section: Participation & Voting**  
*\*\* Short Paper #1 Due in Discussion Section*  
*Kollman, Chapter 10.3*    *Putnam, Bowling Alone*  
*ELMS, Bartels, Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996*
- Mon 2/20**      **Campaigns**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 9 (pages 286-314)
- Wed 2/22**      **The Media**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 7
- Fri 2/24**      **Discussion Sectio: Campaigns & Media**  
*Kollman, Chapter 13.2*    *Citizens United v. FEC (2010)*  
*Kollman, Chapter 13.3*    *McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, Polarized America*  
*Kollman, Chapter14.2*    *Abrajano, Campaigning to the New American Electorate*
- Mon 2/27**      **Political Parties**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 8
- Wed 3/1**      **Interest Groups**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 10
- Fri 3/3**      **Discussion Sections: Parties & Interest Groups**  
*Kollman, Chapter 1.2*    *Olson, The Logic of Collective Action*  
*Kollman, Chapter 11.1*    *Gilens, Affluence & Influence*  
*Kollman, Chapter 12.1*    *Aldrich, Why Parties?*  
*Kollman, Chapter 12.3*    *Cohen et al., The Party Decides*
- Mon 3/6**      **Review**  
No readings
- Wed 3/8**      **\*\*MIDTERM EXAM\*\* (in class)**
- Fri 3/9**      **No Discussion Sections**

**Mon 3/13**      **Civil Liberties**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 4

**Wed 3/15**      **Civil Rights**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 5

*Fri 3/17*      **Discussion Sections: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights**  
*ELMS Dawson, Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*  
*Kollman, Chapter 4.2*    *Brown v. Board (1954)*  
*Kollman, Chapter 4.4*    *Koppelman, Same Sex, Different States*  
*Kollman, Chapter 8.3*    *Lawrence v. Texas (2003)*

## **SPRING BREAK**

**Mon 3/27**      **Congress**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 11

**Wed 3/29**      **Congress**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 11 cont.

*Fri 3/31*      **Discussion Sections: Congress**  
*Kollman, Chapter 5.1*    *Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection*  
*Kollman, Chapter 5.2*    *Fenno, Homestyle*  
*Kollman, Chapter 5.4*    *Cox & McCubbins Setting the Agenda*

**Mon 4/3**      **Presidency**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 12

**Wed 4/5**      **Presidency**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 12 cont.

*Fri 4/7*      **Discussion Sections: Presidency**  
*Kollman, Chapter 6.2*    *Cameron, Veto Bargaining*  
*Kollman, Chapter 6.4*    *Howell, Power Without Persuasion*  
*Kollman, Chapter 6.5*    *Kernell, Going Public*  
*Kollman, Chapter 13.1*    *Koza et al. Every Vote Equal: A State-Based Plan*

**Mon 4/10**      **Bureaucracy**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 13

**Wed 4/12**      **Policymaking Process**  
Bianco and Canon, Pages 525-535 & 570-574

*Fri 4/13*      **Discussion Sections: Bureaucracy**  
*Kollman, Chapter 7.1*    *Wilson, Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*  
*Kollman, Chapter 7.4*    *Gailmard & Patty, Learning While Governing*

**Mon 4/17**      **No class**

- Wed 4/19**      **Policymaking Process**  
Documentary, "Frontline: Cliffhanger"
- Fri 4/21**      **Discussion Section: Public Policy**  
*Kollman, Chapter 16.1 Mettler, The Submerged State*  
*Kollman, Chapter 16.2 Bartels, Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*
- Mon 4/24**      **The Courts**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 14
- Wed 4/26**      **The U.S. Supreme Court**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 14 cont.
- Fri 4/28**      **Discussion Section: The Courts**  
*\*\* Short Paper #2 Due in Discussion Section*  
*Kollman, Chapter 8.1 Rosenberg, The Hollow Hope*  
*Kollman, Chapter 8.2 Marbury v. Madison (1801)*  
*Kollman, Chapter 8.5 Grutter v. Bollinger (2003)*
- Mon 5/1**      **Economic Policy**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 15
- Wed 5/3**      **Social Policy**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 16
- Fri 5/5**      **Discussion Sections: Review**  
*No readings*
- Mon 5/8**      **Foreign Policy**  
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 17
- Wed 5/10**      **Conclusions and Review**  
No readings
- FRI 5/19**      **\*\* FINAL EXAM\*\***  
**8:00 AM – 10:00 AM**