

Intro to American Government
POLI 172-H01
Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Rachel Navarre
Office: Dr. Guy Clifford House 204
Office Hours: TTH 1:45-3:15

navarre@bridgew.edu
Class Time: TTh 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm
Class Location: LIB212

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why is Donald Trump the president if Hillary Clinton received more votes in the 2016 election? Why are there only two political parties in the United States? Why, even if the president and congress belong to the same party, it can still be difficult to pass laws? What is the role of the media in a democratic society?

Even if you are not interested in politics and the questions listed above, politics will have an effect on your life. Politics lead to the public policies that cover health care, education, food safety and environmental laws, set the minimum wage and consumer protections. Understanding how these policies get made and the role of different political institutions in making and carrying out these policies is the first step in understanding how the American political system will impact your day-to-day life.

II. REQUIRED TEXT

Gitelson, Alan R. Robert L. Dudley, and Melvin J. Dubnick. 2017. *American Government: Myths and Realities, 2016 Election Edition*. Oxford University Press,

If you prefer an ebook, you can rent it for [\\$42.95 here](#).

Michener, Jamilia. 2018 *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics*. Cambridge University Press

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to attend each lecture and complete the assigned readings before each meeting of the class and complete all assignments as described in the syllabus.

It is strongly suggested (but not required) that students keep up to date on current events related to American politics by browsing a national newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* online.

Course Requirements

- **Reaction papers (15%):** Students must submit two (2) brief reflection papers on the supplemental readings.
- **Book Review (15%):** Students will read one supplemental book during the semester – *Fragmented Democracy*- and will write a short book review; further instructions will be provided.

- **Debate Presentation (15%):** Several students will conduct a policy debate on each of the “debate days” scheduled on the syllabus. Working in teams, the students will argue either for or against the stated proposal or question. Each team will use outside information (newspaper articles, speeches, etc.) to support their arguments. Each team will have ten (10) minutes to make their arguments before I will “open the floor” to the rest of the class to discuss the topic; further instructions will be provided.
- **Practical Skills Worksheets (5%):** You will be required to complete three worksheets that emphasize practical citizenship skills. They will focus on quantitative reasoning; contacting your representative and finally, tracing a bill through the legislative process.
- **Midterm exam (20%):** The midterm will consist of short answer questions as well as an essay. I will provide more information on the exam (as well as study hints) throughout the first half of the semester.
- **Final exam (20%):** The final will be in the same format as the midterm. While it will not be “cumulative” per se, it will draw from some of what we have covered in the first half of the course, while focusing on the second half.
- **Class participation (10%):** Students’ participation grades are based on regular attendance and constructive involvement in class discussions. Any in-class assignments or quizzes are also counted in participation.
- **Bonus:** There will be several opportunities for bonus points in the class.

IV. COURSE POLICIES

Grading: This course will use plus/minus grades. Scores of 0.50 and higher will be rounded up, and scores that are 0.49 or lower will be rounded down.

Your final grade will be made up of the following:

Reaction papers (15%)	Mid-Term Exam (20%)
Book Review (15%)	Final Exam (20%)
Debate Presentation (15%)	Participation (10%)
Skills Worksheets (5%)	

Your final grade will be calculated and converted into a letter grade using the following percentages:

A >93	B- 80-82	D+ 67-69
A- 90-92	C+ 77-79	D 63-66
B+ 87-89	C 73-76	D- 60-62
B 83-86	C- 70-72	F <60

Grading Appeals/Questions: After I have returned your work or made the grades available to the class on Blackboard, you have one week from that day to question the grade. If you wish to appeal the grading on a question you must submit an appeal **in writing via email** that outlines your concerns, and why you think re-grading is required.

Penalty for Late Work: For any written work, the penalty for a late turn-in is 1/3 of a letter grade for every day that the assignment is late unless otherwise indicated on the assignment sheet. (therefore, a paper that would have been an A drops to an A- if it is one day late; to a B+ if it is two days late; to a B if it is 3 days late, etc.). No papers will be accepted a week after the due date. THERE ARE NO MAKEUPS FOR DEBATES.

If you experience a health issue that prevents you from submitting work on time or attending class, please make sure to contact me and provide me with documentation. That being said, please contact me with any problems or issues BEFORE your work is affected; it is always easier to make arrangements before a deadline than after one!

Absences/Makeup Exam Policies: Unexcused absences from examinations will result in a score of zero for that exam. Make-ups will only be allowed under extreme emergencies (accident, illness, or university or legal obligation per the University Handbook). You must present prior documentation, such as a letter from your doctor, or a letter from the appropriate university authority for university events if you need to take the make-up exam.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor about a missed exam. With the exception of documented hospitalization or other extreme circumstances, students are required to contact the instructor BEFORE the missed exam.

In case of unexpected emergencies, the student must contact the instructor within three (3) days of missing the scheduled exam. If the student fails to do so, they will be assigned a zero for that exam.

The instructor reserves the right to change the format of the exam for any exam given outside of normally scheduled exam times. The instructor will inform the student of the time and date of makeups.

Class Communication: In this class, I will use Blackboard (a web-based course management system). The syllabus, additional readings, and announcements will be posted there. Students are expected to check Blackboard on a regular basis. Please refer to [this site](#) or itsupport@brigew.edu if you need help in using Blackboard. Important announcements may also be made during class without other notice.

Class Email Policy:

- Email will be used to communicate class changes through Blackboard.
- Emails for class will only be sent to your BSU email.
- Recheck the syllabus before emailing.
- I answer emails Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm.
- Depending on the time you send me an email, you may not receive a response till the following business day.
- If more than 2 business days have passed, feel free to email me again.

It is the student's responsibility to check their BSU e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications. The complete text of the University's official e-mail student notification policy may be [found here](#). Send me a cat gif via email by the start of next class and you'll get a bonus point for your final grade.

Scholastic Dishonesty (AKA Cheating and/or Plagiarism): According to the University, "Academic dishonesty is an attempt to misrepresent one's efforts on any academic assignment or exercise submitted for evaluation" (Academic Integrity Policy). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Ghost written work
- Multiple submissions of the same work

For more information on academic dishonesty and how to prevent it, please [see this link](#).

By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to avoid academic and scholastic dishonesty as outlined BSU's Academic Integrity policy. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on BSU's email policy, [please visit this website](#).

Students with Disabilities Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Disability Resources Office at 508-531-2194 or disability_resources@bridgew.edu. The Disability Resources Office is located on the ground floor of the Maxwell Library within the Academic Achievement Center.

If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your accommodation letter to me early in the semester so we can work out arrangements. It is also the student's responsibility to schedule exams with DRO.

Religious Holy Days

By BSU policy, if you must miss a class or an examination in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. However, you must let me know **beforehand via email** that you will be missing class so arrangements can be made.

V. OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

At BSU, there are many resources for students dealing with academic or personal concerns. For academic support, see the [Academic Achievement Center](#) on the ground floor of Maxwell Library. You can also find links to many personal support services [here](#), including (but not limited to) Veterans, GLBTA, Title IX Issues, Diversity services and Counseling. These services are meant to be used by students, and I encourage you to use them as needed.

There are two food pantries on campus (RCC and Catholic Center), and a school supply pantry in the library. If you have issues with housing or food insecurity, please contact New Student and Family Programs (NSFP@bridgew.edu) or Diane Rocco in Student affairs (drocco@bridgew.edu).

The [CARE line number](#) is 508.531.1276. If you have a non-emergency concern regarding behavior, health and welfare of a member of the BSU community you can call or submit a report to the CARE team

VI. POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Analysis of Political Processes, Institutions, & Practices: Students will identify and assess the systematic factors that underlie political processes, systems, and practices in the United States and abroad as they exist today and have existed in the past.

Effective Written Communication: Students will effectively communicate about political systems, processes, and theories in a rigorous manner by developing cogent, logical arguments that properly employ and make use of relevant evidence.

Application of Quantitative &/or Qualitative Skills: Students will analyze a problem and draw correct inferences using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

VII. CLASS CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

I reserve the right to adjust the schedule as needed. Each date list the topic of class, the readings you should complete before that class starts. If an assignment is due, it will be noted after the class topic. If a reading is not in textbook, you will find a copy of it posted in Blackboard. If it is an online resource, this will be indicated by a link.

Thu., Sep. 6 Introduction to Course- What is Political Science?

Tue., Sep. 11 Quantitative literacy

- Resnick, Bryan. 2016. *What journalists get wrong about social science* (Blackboard)
- *How Political Scientists know what they know* (Blackboard)
- *Making Sense of Statistics*

Thu., Sep. 13 Government, Ideology and Democracy

- *Rise of Illiberal Democracies* (Blackboard)
- AG pg 10-25

Quant Worksheet due

Tue., Sep. 18 Constitution I- Background

- AG Chapter 2

Thu., Sep. 20 Constitution II- Compromise, Compromise

- “The Slave Trade Clause” Read the common interpretation, plus the commentary by Lloyd and Martinez. ([link](#))

- Tue., Sep. 25 Separation of powers
- Federalist 10 - Re-read principle 2: Republicanism if needed ([link](#))
 - Federalist 51 - Re-read principle 3: Separation of powers ([link](#))
 - **Who to call worksheet due**
- Thu., Sep. 27 Constitution III- Federalism
- AG Chapter 3
- Tue., Oct. 2 Bill of Rights- incorporation, 1st
- AG Chapter 4
- Thu., Oct. 4 Bill of Rights- **Debate Day – Topic: National Security vs. Personal Freedom**
- AG Policy Connection, pg 142-145
 - “Who’s right in Apple’s fight with the FBI?” ([link](#))
 - “Frontline: The United States of Secrets: Part II” ([video link](#))
- Tue., Oct. 9 Civil Rights
- AG Chapter 5
 - W.E.B. DuBois “Propaganda of History” excerpt ([link](#))
 - Excerpts from MLK and Malcolm x (Blackboard)
- Thu., Oct. 11 Civil Rights
- Jong “Why we still need the ERA” ([link](#))
 - Schlafly “Equal Rights for Women: Wrong then, wrong now” ([link](#))
- TUE., OCT. 16 MID-TERM EXAM**
- Thu., Oct. 18 Public Opinion/Ideology
- Chapter 6, section skip How Polls Work and Avenues of Political Participation
 - AG Beliefs and ideologies (25- 30)
 - Jacobs. *Ideology isn’t really about the issues* (Blackboard)
- Tue., Oct. 23 Public Opinion & Participation **Debate Day- Topic: Public Opinion and Policy**
- Chapter 6, Avenues of Political Participation
 - *Unequal citizen voice* (Blackboard)
 - *Yes, marches can make a difference* (Blackboard)
 - AG, Policy connection 205-207
- Thu., Oct. 25 Polling and Political Parties
- AG Chapter 6, section How Polls Work
 - AG Chapter 7
- Tue., Oct. 30 Political Parties and Elections
- AG Chapter 8

- Thu., Nov. 1 Elections **Debate Day: Topic- Public funds for Elections**
- Berman “How can the U.S. Shrink the influence of Money in Politics?” ([link](#))
 - Adams “The ‘Money in Politics’ Debate” ([link](#))
 - Sherman “The Electoral College vs. the Popular Vote” ([link](#))
 - Optional- John Oliver on Congressional Fundraising ([link](#))
- Tue., Nov. 6 Interest Groups
- AG Chapter 9
 - *Why U.S. Conservatives Shape Legislation across the Fifty States Much More Effectively than Liberals* (Blackboard)
 - LaPira “What lobbyist really do” ([link](#))
- Thu., Nov. 8 Media
- AG Chapter 10
- Tue., Nov. 13 Congress/ Gridlock
- AG Chapter 11
- Thu., Nov. 15 Congress/ Is congress broken?
- Levin “Congress is weak because its members want it to be weak” ([link](#))
 - Common Interpretation, Article 1, Section 1 ([link](#))
- Tracing a bill worksheet due**
- Tue., Nov. 20 Presidency
- Chapter 12
 - Rudalevige “As a candidate, Trump criticized...” ([link](#))
- THU., NOV. 22 NO CLASS**
- Tue., Nov. 27 Executive **Debate Day – Topic: Presidential Authority and War**
- Chapter 13, pg 402-404, skim rest of chapter
 - CSPAN Videos on War Power Resolution ([video 1](#); [video 2](#); [video 3](#))
 - NTY Editorial Board “A Fearful Congress sits out the war” ([link](#))
- Thu., Nov. 29 Judiciary
- Chapter 14
 - Re-read AG “The Case for- and against- the living Constitution” pg 65-66
- Tue., Dec. 4 Judiciary
- *Federalist Paper No. 78* ([link](#))
 - Policy Connection pg 465-468
- Book Review due**

Thu., Dec. 6 Policy – Domestic I

- Chapter 15 (blackboard), pg 15-2 – 15-10; 15-24 to 15-35
- Vogel “How the United States Became a Regulatory Laggard” (blackboard)

Tue., Dec. 11 Policy – Domestic II

- Chapter 15 (blackboard), pg 15-14 - 15-23
- “Why there is nothing scary about the U.S. National Debt” ([link](#))
- AG Policy Connection 362-365

December 20- EXAM III during final exam time 11am -1pm