



~Fall 2011~

Dr. Steven L. Taylor

sltaylor@trov.edu

<http://spectrum.trov.edu/~sltaylor>

331A MSCX

670-3759

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES. Honors American National government provides a comprehensive introduction to American government and politics with an emphasis on the constitution. Special attention is paid to the development and evolution of the constitution and the institutional structure of the U.S. government.

Students will be provided a comprehensive introduction to the following:

- A basic understanding of American government and politics
- A specific understanding of the origins and contents of the US Constitution.
- A connection of abstract key abstract concepts dealing with the above to contemporary news.

READINGS. There is one required text and a number of additional reading required for this course:

Ackerman, Erin and Benjamin Ginsberg. 2011. *A Guide to the United States Constitution*, 2nd edition.

The New York Times.

Dr. Taylor's [Classroom Rules](#).

Additional readings as noted below.

GRADING. Students will be evaluated on a standard 100 point scale (A=100-90, B=89.9-80, C=79.9-70, D=69.9-60, F=59.9-0). Grades will not be curved.

Keep in mind the following: A=Outstanding, B=Above Average, C=Average, D=Below Average and F=Failing. If you need a particular grade, start working towards it from DAY ONE. It is difficult to be sympathetic to students who “need to get X, but who did not put effort into the course from the start of the term.

Breakdown. Your grade will be composed of the following:

Three Exams	75%
<i>NYT</i> clippings journal/participation	25%

Exams. Exams will be short answer/short essay and will derive from the study guide (more on that below).

NYT Journal. Students are to read the *New York Times* on a daily basis (the expectation is that you will read the national political news, not the whole thing cover-to-cover). The paper is available for free at various locations around campus (Eldridge Hall, Smith Hall, Pace Hall, Adams Admin., Wallace. Trojan Center, Patterson Hall, Bibb-Graves Hall, McCall Hall, Dining Hall, Hawkins Hall, Malone Hall and Wright Hall).

We will devote 5-15 minutes each class period to discuss relevant stories. To help encourage this process you will be required to keep a notebook with clipping and notes about those clippings. Specifically I want you to find three types of stories (and label them as such): 1) stories that are linked specifically to class *concepts*, 2) stories that raise *questions* and, 3) stories that are simply *interesting*.

I want you record how the stories in category 1 illustrate class concepts, to write down specific questions for class for category 2, and to detail why you find stories in category 3 interesting.

You will need to bring the notebook to class and turn it in for a check with each exam, with a final grade being assigned at the end of the semester.

I expect a minimum of five stories a week (more is fine).

We will also be especially utilizing the *Times* in the final unit of class (which we will discuss at greater detail at that point in time).

Online Study Guide. Students will be expected to contribute weekly to an online study guide based on the readings and the lectures. I will go back and edit the document as needed. We will use the Wiki function in Blackboard to construct the study guide.

The exams will be based off the study guide. Further, 10% of your exam score will come from the study guide. **Students who failed to participate will not only lose 10% off their exam, but will not be allowed to participate in in-class reviews.**

The exact process will be discussed in class.

Participation. All students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to the start of class. Class discussion is a vital part of any college class. Students who fail to read and participate will be penalized.

ADA Policy: Troy University supports Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which insure that postsecondary students with disabilities have equal access to all academic programs, physical access to all buildings, facilities and events, and are not discriminated against on the basis of disability. Eligible students, with appropriate documentation, will be provided equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic skills and potential through the provision of academic adaptations and reasonable accommodations. Further information, including appropriate contact information, can be found at the following link: <http://www.troy.edu/humanresources/ADAPolicy2003.htm> .

Cell Phone and Other Electronic Device Policy. Use of any electronic device by students in the instructional environment is prohibited unless explicitly approved on a case-by-case basis by the instructor of record or by the Office of Disability Services in collaboration with the instructor. Cellular phones, pagers, and other communication devices may be used for emergencies, however, but sending or receiving non-emergency messages is forbidden by the University. Particularly, use of a communication device to violate the Troy University “Standards of Conduct” will result in appropriate disciplinary action (See the Oracle.)

In order to receive emergency messages from the University or family members, the call receipt indicator on devices must be in the vibration mode or other unobtrusive mode of indication. Students receiving calls that they believe to be emergency calls must answer quietly without disturbing the teaching environment. If the call is an emergency, they must move unobtrusively and quietly from the instructional area and notify the instructor as soon as reasonably possible. Students who are expecting an emergency call should inform the instructor before the start of the instructional period.

Class Outline and Reading Schedule

Note:

1. The professor reserves to right to make adjustments to the following as needed.
2. Each day a few minutes will be set aside to discuss the New York Times.

8/17: Introduction/Class Overview

Unit I: Founding & Design

A. Pre-Founding (8/19 & 8/22)

Benedict, 37-60 (Blackboard)

B. First Founding (8/24, 8/26)

1. The Declaration of Independence (A&G, 63-67) + Locke (Blackboard)
2. Articles of Confederation (A&G, 68-74)
3. Madison selections (Blackboard)

C. Second Founding (8/29, 8/31, 9/2, 9/7)

1. Roche article (Blackboard)
2. Plans: VA, NJ, Hamilton, and Pinckney (external links in Blackboard)
3. US Constitution (A&G, 4-31)
4. Bill of Rights (A&G, 32-44)
5. Other Amendments (45-62)

9/5: Labor Day Holiday

D. Republicanism (9/9, 9/12)

1. *Federalist 39* (first half—via external links in Blackboard)
2. Diamond (Blackboard)
3. Additional reading TBD.

E. Federalism (9/14, 9/16, 9/19)

1. Article I, Sections 8, 9, and 10; Article IV; Article VI, 10th, 11th & 16th Amendments.
2. *Federalist 51*, part 2 (A&G), *Federalist 39*, second half.
3. *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) (via external links in Blackboard)

9/21: Exam 1

Unit II: Separation of Powers

A. Overview (9/23)

Federalist 51, part 1. (A&G)

B. The Legislative Branch (9/26, 9/28, 9/20, 10/3)

1. Article I; 17th, 23rd and 27th Amendments
2. Mayhew (Blackboard)
3. CRS reports on legislative process (Blackboard)

C. The Executive Branch (10/5, 10/7, 10/10, 10/12)

1. Article II; 12th, 22nd, 23rd, and 25th Amendments.
2. Neustadt (Blackboard)
3. Wilson (Blackboard)

D. The Judicial Branch (10/14, 10/17, 10/19)

1. Article III; Article I, Sec 3, para 6 and Sec 8, para 9; 11th Amendment
2. Benedict, C6 (Blackboard)

10/21: Exam 2

Unit III: Rights, Liberties and The Things They Didn't Really Consider

A. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (10/31, 11/2, 11/4)

1. Amendments 1-9, 13, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24 and 26
2. Additional readings TBD

B. Parties and Elections (11/7, 11/9 11/14)

1. Article I, Sec 2, 3 and 5; Article II, Sec 1; 12th, 19th, and 26th Amendments
2. *Federalist 10* (A&G)
3. NYT + Additional reading TBD

11/11: Veteran's Day Holiday

C. Interest Groups (11/16)

NYT + Reading TBD

D. Media (11/18, 11/28)

NYT + Reading TBD

11/21-11/25 Thanksgiving

E. Pubic Opinion (11/30, 12/1)

NYT + Reading TBD

12/5: Overflow/Review

12/7: Dead Day

12/9 (Friday): Final Exam, 11-1.