

United States National Government (section 001)

Spring 2020

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PSCI 100-001 (20268), TR 9:30-10:45, Michener L0108
Office hours: McKee 305, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:00, and by appointment
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Description

The course is an introduction to American national politics. It surveys issues surrounding the founding of the government, major institutions, government-society relations, the federal judiciary, and foreign policy. By the end of the course, students should be able to develop critical perspectives on the fundamentals of U.S. national government.

Books

I ask that you please buy paper copies of the books because we will reference specific page numbers in class. If shopping online, you can buy new copies of all books for roughly \$100.

- (1) Hudson, William E. 2012. *American Democracy in Peril*, 8th ed. Los Angeles: CQ Press.
ISBN: 9781483368580.
- (2) Kaplan, David A. 2018. *The Most Dangerous Branch*. New York: Crown.
ISBN: 978-1524759902.
- (3) Gaddis, John Lewis. 2005. *The Cold War: A New History*. New York: Penguin.
ISBN 978-0-14-303827-6.
- (4) Walt, Stephen M. 2018. *The Hell of Good Intentions*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
ISBN 978-0374280031.
- (5) Ritchie, Donald A. 2016. *The U.S. Congress*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
ISBN 978-0190280147.

Grades

The course has a total of 470 points, divided according to the assignments below. (Letter grades will be assigned to averages as follows: >93= A; 90-92.9= A-; 86-89.9= B+; 83-85.9= B; 80-82.9= B-; 76-79.9=C+; 73-75.9= C; 70-72.9= C-; 66-69.9= D+; 63-65.9= D; 60-62.9= D-; <60= F.)

Quiz no. 1: 60 pts

Quiz no. 2: 60 pts

Mid-term exam: 150 pts

Final exam: 200 pts

Quiz no. 1 is short answer, based primarily off the readings. Students will answer a few brief questions, demonstrating knowledge of the course material. The mid-term is an in-class blue book essay. Quiz no. 2 is a one-page practice mini-essay, based on the Kaplan book. The final exam is another in-class essay, like the first exam. Please note that exceptional participation may positively impact your grade, and poor attendance may negatively impact your grade (albeit not formulaically).

Three Notes: Attendance, Conduct, and Disability Resources

(1) You are expected to be in class for each session. Poor attendance will negatively affect your grade. (2) While in class, students are expected to treat one another with respect and hold themselves to high academic standards. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will likely fail the course and may face disciplinary action. Furthermore, students who distract themselves or others with phones and laptops may expect to be asked to leave the class, find their grades reduced, or both. Grade penalties for poor attendance and use of electronic devices shall be assessed at the discretion of the instructor, in a non-formulaic manner. It is not the obligation of the instructor to inform the student of such a penalty. (3) Students who believe they might benefit from the Disability Resource Center should contact its office at the start of the semester (970-351-2289; www.unco.edu/disability-resource-center). Please feel free, of course, to contact the instructor with any questions or concerns.

Schedule

Each day, you are expected to read materials before coming to class, to have the reading in front of you during class, and to be ready to discuss the reading or take a pop-quiz.

I. Course Introduction

Tuesday, January 14th: Welcome to U.S. National Government

Thursday, January 16th: What is Democracy?

Hudson, pp. 1-23

Tuesday, January 21st: What is the Best Model of Democracy?

Thursday, January 23rd: Launching the Ship of State... and Re-launching

Hudson, pp. 25-33

II. The Founding

Tuesday, January 28th: Number 10

Federalist No. 10. This is available on Blackboard.

Thursday, January 30th: Number 51
Federalist No. 51

Tuesday, February 4th: Communitarian vs. Individualist Thinking
Hudson, pp.103-135
Quiz no. 1 (short answer, on Hudson and “The Federalist”)

III. Organization of Government

Thursday, February 6th: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems
Hudson, pp. 33-63
Ritchie, Ch. 1

Tuesday, February 11th: Article I—the Legislative
Ritchie, Ch. 2

Thursday, February 13th: Campaigns or Governing?
Ritchie, Ch. 3 and 4
Hudson, pp. 173-217

Tuesday, February 18th: The Seat of Power?
Ritchie, Ch. 5 and 6

Thursday, February 20th: The Executive
Michael Lewis, “Inside Trump’s Cruel Campaign Against the U.S.D.A.’s Scientists,”
Vanity Fair (November 2, 2017)→ read 1st half
Mid-term study guide handed out

Tuesday, February 25th: The Bureaucracy
Lewis article→ read 2nd half

Thursday, February 27th: **Mid-term exam**

IV. Domestic Policy

The Court and Public Policy
Kaplan, Ch. 1 and 2

Tuesday, March 3rd: Issuing a Ruling
Kaplan, Ch. 3

Thursday, March 5th: Ideas of the Court
Kaplan, Ch. 5
*Course withdrawal deadline Monday, March 9th

Tuesday, March 10th: Towards a Critique
Kaplan, Ch. 6 and 7

Thursday, March 12th: Ideology or Judicial Logic?
Kaplan, Ch. 8, 9, and 10

Tuesday, March 17th: No Class—Spring Break

Thursday, March 19th: No Class—Spring Break

Tuesday, March 24th: A Fix?
Hudson, pp. 65-101
Kaplan, Ch. 15

V. Foreign Policy

Thursday, March 26th: No Class—Prof. Williams is at a conference

Tuesday, March 31st: Polarity, the Balance of Power, and the Early Cold War
Gaddis, Ch. 1

Thursday, April 2nd: Catch up on course material
Quiz no. 2 (mini-essay on Kaplan book)

Tuesday, April 7th: Cuban Missile Crisis
Gaddis, Ch. 2

Thursday, April 9th: No Class—Prof. Williams is at a conference

Tuesday, April 14th: Vietnam
Gaddis, Ch. 4

Thursday, April 16th: After the Cold War
Walt, Introduction and Ch. 1
* Schedule withdrawal deadline Friday, April 17th

Tuesday, April 21st: The Aimless Nineties
Walt, Ch. 2

Thursday, April 23rd: Rhetorical Packaging
Walt, Ch. 4

Tuesday, April 28th: The Future of American Foreign Policy
Walt, Ch. 6 and 7
Study guide for the final exam handed out

Thursday, April 30th: National Security in the Twenty-First Century

Thursday, May 8th at 8:00am: Final Exam