

POLI2052: Honors American Government

Fall 2022

TTH 9:00-10:20 a.m., 234 Coates Hall

Dr. Anna Gunderson

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Office: 235 Stubbs Hall

Office Hours: TTH, 1:00-2:00 p.m. or by appointment (<https://calendly.com/agunderson/30min>)

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to American government and politics. Grappling with complex and demanding ideas, this class will empower you as students to confidently, deliberately, and informatively speak to questions paramount to American national discourse. By examining the historical and institutional development of American political systems, we will improve on our ability to make sense of how American politics works (or doesn't work). This course will provide essential context to the current state of American politics and major issues facing the country. We will analyze American government from a social science perspective, using political science to interrogate key questions in American politics and will cover topics like the key terms and basic concepts of American politics, how political fundamentals shape current events and government action, among other important questions.

This class engages directly with theoretical and empirical material, often through the reading of academic articles and books. I expect you to thoroughly read and engage with that week's readings and you will need to do so in order to succeed in this course.

Here are the four key objectives of this course:

1. Articulate the foundations of American government, including its history, critical concepts, and important documents and achievements.
2. Explain the main institutions of American government, including their roles and interrelationships.
3. Describe the roles and relative importance of major entities and influences in American political life.
4. Analyze the development and impact of important governmental policies.

Required Materials

The assigned book in this class is *The Logic of American Politics (Tenth Edition)* by Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck (abbreviated LAP below). Please buy the tenth edition if you can as you are responsible for the content included in this edition that may not be in other editions.

Free tip: the textbook website (<https://edge.sagepub.com/kernell10e>) has chapter summaries, review questions, practice quizzes, and lots of other useful content. The Tenth Edition website has some of this information, but for more, see the website for the Ninth Edition: <https://edge.sagepub.com/kernell9e>

Grading Policy

Weekly Quizzes	20% (80 points)
Short Papers	25% (100 points)
Midterm Exam	25% (100 points)
Final Exam	30% (120 points)

Total: 100% (400 points)

20% of your grade is determined by completion and success on **weekly quizzes**. Throughout the semester, we will have a quiz about once a week (see dates on syllabus below). These quizzes will each be worth 10 points and will be available **either** in-class (dates noted) or on Moodle, open from the **end of the previous class period to the next class period**. Once you begin, you have 10 minutes to complete the quiz. You will automatically receive 5 points (50%) if you complete the quiz. In total, there will be 10 quizzes and I will drop the two lowest grades. There are no make-ups.

25% of your grade is determined from two graded **short papers** worth 50 points apiece. The first short paper allows you to choose one prompt and write a 700–800-word essay on the topic (rubric and more details on Moodle). The first paper will be due by midnight on **Tuesday, September 20** and will preferably be submitted via Moodle. The second paper will be due by midnight on **Tuesday, November 22**, also submitted via Moodle, and also gives you the choice of a few prompts (rubric and details on Moodle).

25% of your grade is determined by a **midterm exam** on **Tuesday, October 18**. This exam will contain multiple choice, short answer, true-or-false, matching, and essay questions.

30% of your grade is determined by a **final exam** on Thursday, December 8 from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. This exam will contain both multiple choice and short answer questions. It is **not** cumulative.

Grade Scales

The final grades will be allocated according to the table below.

A+	97-100%
A	93-96.99%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D+	67-69.99%
D	63-66.99%
D-	60-62.99%
F	0-59.99%

At the end of the semester, I will consider “bump-ups” for students who are within 1% of the next highest final grade. In determining whether to grant a “bump-up”, I will consider demonstrated effort throughout the semester, improvement throughout the semester, engagement in the course (as demonstrated through attendance, attentiveness, and participation), communication with the instructor, and responsiveness to feedback. **There is no guaranteed rounding in this course.**

Grading Disputes and Questions

I will follow the 24-hour rule when it comes to the return of graded assignments. Students must wait a minimum of 24 hours after receiving a graded assignment before contacting me regarding their grade.

If a student disputes their grade, they must do so in writing within one week of the date that grades are made available to the class. When requesting reconsideration of a grade, you should provide a clear explanation as to why a different grade is in order. You should also indicate what grade you believe is appropriate for your work. When work is reviewed for a grade dispute, the grade may be left unchanged, raised, or lowered. All grade disputes are due in hard copy within one week of the date that grades are returned in class. Grade disputes will not be considered if submitted past the one-week statute of limitations.

COVID-19 Policies and Concerns

COVID-19 has changed all our lives, and university life is no exception. I pledge to communicate promptly about any potential move to online education and any other changes that may be necessary as we move through the semester. If you need accommodations because of COVID-19, please let me know and I will work with you to ensure you are able to complete the course. For instance, if you are required to self-quarantine, please do so and let me know so we can establish a plan to complete the work necessary for the course. While I have no current plans to record my lectures, I will post the lecture slides and will aid you in finding a classmate to share notes with you. You may schedule a meeting with me anytime to go over any class material you have missed. For LSU policies on COVID-19, see: <https://lsu.edu/roadmap/>. ***LSU has mandated that students receive the vaccine or formally opt out. As much as possible, we will social distance and use other precautionary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For information on the COVID-19 vaccine and its benefits, see:*** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Mental Health and Other Services

We are all living through a traumatic, stressful, and isolating time. For many of us, the pandemic has created a wide range of mental health challenges or has worsened existing challenges. Sometimes it is difficult to even understand or fully realize when we are struggling with mental health challenges that are negatively impacting our lives. Please know that I am here to support you and I care about your well-being. If you need support, I highly encourage you to contact Mental Health Services (MHS) at LSU (<https://www.lsu.edu/shc/mental-health/mhshome.php>) and if you need accommodation, encouragement, or support, please let me know and I will help in any way possible.

Other services that you may need:

1. *If you need to talk to someone*, call or text 225-924-5781, ThePhone. ThePhone is a 24– hour crisis counseling and support line serving the students of LSU. Callers to the LSU line are connected to volunteer paraprofessional counselors trained in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
2. *If you are experiencing a personal crisis*, contact MHS. MHS is located on the second floor of the LSU Student Health Center. LSU students may call MHS at 225-578-8774 to either set an appointment or to speak with the crisis counselor about their situation. Students experiencing a mental health crisis, may also come to MHS during office hours to meet face-to-face with a crisis counselor.
3. *If you are concerned about a friend at LSU*, contact LSU CARES. LSU CARES is a university initiative dedicated to the well-being of students and promotion of a community that cares about each of its members. To learn more or to report a student of concern, please see information at: <https://www.lsu.edu/saa/lsu-cares/>.
4. *If you have experienced sexual violence, assault, harassment, or stalking*, see the Lighthouse Program at LSU (<https://www.lsu.edu/shc/wellness/the-lighthouse-program/index.php>) or the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX (<https://lsu.edu/support/>).

Contacting Me

I am available by email Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You are welcome to stop by my office, 235 Stubbs Hall, if I am available, but an appointment is preferred. You can make an appointment via Calendly online here: <https://calendly.com/agunderson/30min>. You can also visit during my office hours, Tuesday/Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m. There is no guarantee I will respond to emails either in the evenings or on the weekends, so plan accordingly. A note on etiquette: please sign your emails with your name and include an appropriate salutation. (Hint: you can't go wrong with, "Hi, Dr. Gunderson.")

During Class

I will begin the semester giving students the benefit of the doubt and allow laptops. However, I reserve the right to ban laptops at any point, should they prove to be a distraction or to disrupt to the operation of the course. Students should only use laptops to access course readings and take course notes. No phones are permitted. *Thank you for reading the syllabus! If you see this note before the start of our first class, please send me an email with your favorite .gif (appropriate ones only, please) for two extra credit points. Note that your .gif may be shared in the first class.*

American politics centers on topics and issues about which people hold strong opinions. Opinions are more than ideas; they are deeply rooted in a person's values, beliefs, life experiences, and interests. We'll work together and hold each other accountable in respecting perspectives that differ from our own. I will be here to support you as you challenge your pre-existing opinions and beliefs about the world. It is critical that we maintain a socially, emotionally, and psychologically safe environment. While classroom debates will be something we fully embrace, disrespectful behavior and attitudes or personal attacks cannot be tolerated.

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom.

Filming and Recording

You may not film or record this class without permission.

Course Materials

All course materials are protected by U.S. copyright law and by university policy. I am the exclusive owner of the copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may also share those materials with another student who is registered and enrolled in this course. You may not reproduce, distribute or display (post/upload) course materials without my express written consent. You also may not allow others to do so.

Policies on Incomplete Grades and Late Assignments

You will be penalized for late assignments or missed exams unless the absence/delay is excused (whether due to illness, serious family emergency, participation in university events, religious holidays, etc., but must be cleared with me). The penalty for unexcused late assignments five ten percentage points per day *BUT I am flexible if you talk to me ahead of time*. Extensions may be made on a case-by-case basis to accommodate unexpected difficulties.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. The LSU Code of Student conduct defines plagiarism as “the unacknowledged inclusion, in work submitted for credit, of someone else's words, ideas, or data.” Please review the University's guidelines on plagiarism here:

https://www.lsu.edu/hss/english/university_writing/faculty_resources/policies_and_procedures/plagiarism.php

and the guidelines on academic integrity here: <https://www.lsu.edu/saa/students/academicintegrity/index.php>.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Accommodations for Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course. To have any accommodations met, you must be registered with the LSU Office of Disability Services, located in 124 Johnston Hall and can be reached at 225-578-5919. More information on registering and accommodation is available on the ODS website here:

<https://www.lsu.edu/disability/>.

Weekly Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. Always check Moodle for the most recent version.

Tuesday, August 23, 2021	Syllabus Day
Thursday, August 25, 2021	The Logic of American Politics - LAP Chapter 1
Tuesday, August 30, 2021	The Constitution - LAP Chapter 2, pages 33-62 (up to <i>Substantive Issues</i>)

Thursday, September 1, 2021	The Constitution - LAP Chapter 2, pages 62-87 Quiz 1 on Moodle until next class period
Tuesday, September 6, 2021	Federalism - LAP Chapter 3
Thursday, September 8, 2021	Civil Rights - LAP Chapter 4 Quiz 2 on Moodle until next class period
Tuesday, September 13, 2021	Civil Liberties - LAP Chapter 5, pages 185-203 (up to <i>Freedom of Religion</i>)
Thursday, September 15, 2021	<i>No class – Dr. Gunderson at a conference</i>
Tuesday, September 20, 2021	Civil Liberties - LAP Chapter 5, pages 203-230 Quiz 3 on Moodle until next class period Note: Paper 1 DUE BY MIDNIGHT!
Thursday, September 22, 2021	Congress - LAP Chapter 6, pages 231-256 (up to <i>Organizing Congress</i>)
Tuesday, September 27, 2021	Congress - LAP Chapter 6, pages 256-296 Quiz 4 on Moodle until next class period
Thursday, September 29, 2021	The Presidency - LAP Chapter 7, pages 297-320 (up to <i>The President as Legislator</i>)

Tuesday, October 4, 2021	<i>No class – Dr. Gunderson giving a talk at another university</i>
Thursday, October 6, 2021	The Presidency - LAP Chapter 7, pages 320-346 Quiz 5 on Moodle until next class period
Tuesday, October 11, 2021	<i>Midterm Exam Review</i>
Thursday, October 13, 2021	<i>No class! Fall break</i>
Tuesday, October 18, 2021	MIDTERM EXAM
Thursday, October 20, 2021	The Bureaucracy - LAP Chapter 8, pages 347-365 (up to <i>Bureaucracy in Action</i>)
Tuesday, October 25, 2021	The Bureaucracy - LAP Chapter 8, pages 365-390 Quiz 6 on Moodle until next class period
Thursday, October 27, 2021	The Federal Judiciary - LAP Chapter 9, pages 391-412 (up to <i>Judicial Decision-Making</i>)
Tuesday, November 1, 2021	The Federal Judiciary - LAP Chapter 9, pages 412-434 Quiz 7 on Moodle until next class period (November 3)
Thursday, November 3, 2021	<i>No class – Dr. Gunderson giving a talk at another university</i>
Tuesday, November 8, 2021	Public Opinion - LAP Chapter 10

Thursday, November 10, 2021	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections - LAP Chapter 11 Quiz 8 on Moodle until next class period
Tuesday, November 15, 2021	Political Parties - LAP Chapter 12
Thursday, November 17, 2021	Interest Groups - LAP Chapter 13 Quiz 9 on Moodle until next class period
Tuesday, November 22, 2021	Media - LAP Chapter 14 Note: Paper 2 DUE BY MIDNIGHT!
Thursday, November 24, 2021	<i>No Class! Gobble gobble</i>
Tuesday, November 29, 2021	Conclusion and Where to Go from Here - Skim LAP Chapter 15 Quiz 10 (in-class assignment)
Thursday, December 1, 2021	<i>Final Exam Review</i>

Your final exam will be from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, December 8!