

**PSCI 3362  
American Political Institutions  
Spring 2013  
Syllabus**

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TA: TBD

This is an introductory course to American national political institutions. We will explore the constitutional foundation and historical development of the congress, executive and judiciary. To gain certain understanding of the American national government, we will examine not only the internal working of each department, but we will also examine the relationships and interactions between the three institutions. After an introduction and review of basic principles, this course will be divided into three sections. In the first section, we will investigate the function and operation of congress, with an increased emphasis on representation and law and policy making. In the second part, we will analyze the executive branch, and we will do so by tracing the historical evolution of the presidency with a view to exploring the increasing scope of executive power. And in the last unit, we will address the purpose and role of the federal judiciary, with added weight given to judicial review, oversight and rights protection.

**Required texts and links:**

*The American Presidency*, Milkis, CQ Press, ISBN 978-0-87289-336-8

*Congress and Its Members*, Davidson, CQ Press, ISBN 978-0-87289-967-4

*Judicial Process in America*, Carp, CQ Press, ISBN 978-1-60426-608-5

The Articles of Confederation may be found at: <http://www.usconstitution.net/articles.html>

The U.S. Constitution may be found at: <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.txt>

The *Federalist Papers* may be found at: <http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/federalist/>

The letters of Brutus may be found at: <http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus00.htm>

Cato Letter #4 may be found at:  
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1950>

**Course requirements, attendance policy and grading:**

There will be three exams, each weighted at 30% of your final grade. 10% of your final grade will be determined by attendance and quiz performance. Failure of four quizzes will result in the loss of 5% of your participation grade; failure of six quizzes will result in the loss of your full participation grade. There will be a grade reduction of 5% of your course grade for every two additional quiz failures. Grades are determined at the instructor's discretion; and the instructor retains the right to alter the syllabus at any time. Attendance is expected and required. The exams will consist almost equally of lecture and reading material. All exams and the course grade will be determined by the following scale:

**Grading scale:**

A: 94-100	B-: 80-83	D+: 67-69
A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79	D: 64-66
B+: 87-89	C: 74-76	D-: 60-63
B: 84-86	C-: 70-73	F: below 60

**Class rules:**

These rules are based on past experience and are nonnegotiable.

1. email: You must put your *full name* on all email correspondence. Emails sent without a name will not be answered.
2. You may not reschedule an exam for any reason—except for a documented medical emergency.
3. In order for you to receive an excused absence, you **must** notify me or the Teaching Assistant **prior** to class and it **must** concern a documented medical emergency or university sanctioned function; otherwise, all absences and tardies will be considered unexcused.
5. All grades are final (unless there is a mistake when determining a grade—this does happen).  
The time to be concerned with a grade is during the semester, not after. When challenging a grade, it is the responsibility of the student to produce the requisite materials. There is no extra credit given in this class.

**University Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:**

It is the policy of the University of Texas at Dallas that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Violations will result in immediate disciplinary action to the fullest extent of the policy, which can range from automatically failing an exam to dismissal from the University. See the University catalog for a detailed explanation.

You should allow yourself ample time to complete the reading prior to class. You should expect each week's reading to take anywhere from six to twelve hours (the academic rule of thumb for weekly reading is to assign approximately 3 hours of reading for each class hour.)

**Spring reading schedule and course outline:****Introduction:**

Jan 14—course introduction  
Jan 16--*The American Presidency*, ch 1  
Jan 18—*Federalist* #10& #51  
Jan 21—MLK Day no class  
Jan 23—*Federalist* #39 & #46

**Congress:**

Jan 25—Article 1; 17<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Amendments, U.S. Constitution  
Jan 28—*Federalist* #57 & #62  
Jan 30—*Brutus Letters* #3 & #6  
Feb 1--*Congress and Its Members*, chs 1 & 2  
Feb 4—*Congress and Its Members*, chs 3 & 4  
Feb 6—*Congress and Its Members*, chs 5 & 6  
Feb 8—*Congress and Its Members*, chs 7 & 8  
Feb 11—*Congress and Its Members*, chs 9 & 10  
Feb 13—*Congress and Its Members*, chs 11 & 12  
Feb 15—*Congress and Its Members*, chs 13 & 14  
Feb 18—*Congress and Its Members*, ch 15  
Feb 20—lecture, exam #1 review  
Feb 22—**EXAM #1**

**Presidency:**

Feb 25--Article 2; 12th , 20th, 22nd, 23rd , 25th Amendments, U.S. Constitution  
Feb 27--*Federalist* #68 & #70;Cato Letter #4  
Mar 1--*The American Presidency*, chs 2 & 3  
Mar 4--*The American Presidency*, chs 4 & 5  
Mar 6—*The American Presidency*, chs 6 & 7

Mar 8—reading day  
Mar 11—Mar 15 Spring Break  
Mar 18--The American Presidency, chs 8 & 9  
Mar 20--The American Presidency, chs 10 & 11  
Mar 22--The American Presidency, chs 12 & 13  
Mar 25--The American Presidency, chs 14 & 15  
Mar 27--The American Presidency, ch 16  
Mar 29—lecture, exam #2 review  
Apr 1—**EXAM #2**

**Judiciary:**

Apr 3--Article 3, 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment  
Apr 5--Federalist #78 & #80  
Apr 8--Brutus #11 & 12  
Apr 10--Judicial Process in America, chs 1 & 2  
Apr 11--Judicial Process in America, chs 3 & 5  
Apr 15--Judicial Process in America, chs 4 & 6  
Apr 17--Judicial Process in America, ch 7  
Apr 19--Judicial Process in America, ch 8  
Apr 22--Judicial Process in America, ch 12  
Apr 24--Judicial Process in America, ch 13  
Apr 26--Judicial Process in America, ch 14  
Apr 29--Judicial Process in America, ch 15  
May 1--lecture and exam #3 review  
May 3—**EXAM #3**

**News and editorial sources:**

Realclear Politics <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/index.html> Excellent source of political news and opinion.

Drudge Report <http://drudgereport.com/>

Political polling <http://www.pollster.com/>

Fox News <http://www.foxnews.com/> “Conservative” or right-leaning news site.

CNN <http://www.cnn.com/> “Liberal” or left-leaning news site.

Dallas Morning News <http://www.dallasnews.com/> State and local news.

Washington Examiner <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/> Political news with a conservative slant

The Politico <http://www.politico.com/> Political news with a liberal slant.

Just One Minute <http://justoneminute.typepad.com/main/> Generally high-quality conservative/right political commentary.

Talking Points Memo <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/> Generally high-quality liberal/left political commentary.

Redstate <http://www.redstate.com/> Partisan conservative political commentary.

Daily Kos <http://www.dailykos.com/> Partisan liberal political commentary.