
George Mason University

Department of Public & International Affairs
Summer 2002

GOVT 103-C02: Introduction to American Government
MTWR 9:30-11:35 a.m., Enterprise 178

6/28/02

Instructor: Ann Ludwick
Office Location: Robinson A201A
Office Hours: Tue/Thur 2:00 – 3:00 and by appointment
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Course Objectives: This course will help you to develop a deeper understanding of the basic facts and concepts concerning America's experiment in self-government. This semester's work is intended to expose you to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy. Most importantly, the goal of this course is to start you on the path to informed and active citizenship. Lectures, videos, discussion, group work, critical thinking exercises, and guest speakers will be used in this course.

Course Expectations: All members of the class - instructor and students alike - are expected to:

- 1) appear punctually for each class;
- 2) prepare conscientiously by reading and note taking on the assigned topics;
- 3) treat each other with respect, honesty and intellectual seriousness; and,
- 4) communicate with each other openly should it appear at any time that the first three expectations are not being met.

Should medical conditions or family responsibilities make it impossible for you to take an examination or complete an assignment on the scheduled date, you must inform the instructor **in advance**. Unless you have received permission before or (in case of a dire emergency) on that scheduled date, there will be no opportunity for make-up work. Voice mail at my telephone number is available to you 24 hours a day, as is my e-mail address. If we fail to speak in person, you should make it a point to leave a message.

If necessary, the instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus. Students are responsible for all announced changes to the syllabus.

Required Textbook: *American Government: Continuity and Change* O'Connor & Sabato (2002)

Course Requirements: There will be one project and two examinations that will cover both the reading material and lectures. There will be an opportunity for extra credit.

Class participation	10%
Project	25%
Mid term exam	30%
Final exam	35%

Grading Scale:

A (95-100)	B+ (86-89)	C+ (75-79)	D (60-69)	F (59 or less)
A- (90-94)	B (83-85)	C (70-74)		
	B- (80-82)			

Honor Code:

The Honor Code Policy endorsed by the members of the Department of Public and International Affairs relative to the types of academic work indicated below is set out in the appropriate paragraphs:

1.Quizzes, tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students during the taking of quizzes, tests, or examinations, whatever the type or wherever taken, unless the instructor specifically permits deviation from this standard.

2.Course Requirements: All work submitted in fulfillment of course requirements is to be solely the product of the individuals(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permissions of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of another type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement in the Department of Public and International Affairs. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.

The Project:

Students will choose one organization from the legislative, judicial, or executive branch (a sign up sheet will be provided) to study during the semester. The project will be conducted in three phases.

Phase I: Research the organization (1-2 pages)

Provide a description of your organization – Who is the department head? What is the purpose or mission of the organization? Describe the internal structure – is it divided into other agencies? What is the source of power?

→DUE July 8

Phase II: Research its position in the US policy and political process (1-2 pages)

How does your organization fit into the overall scheme of government (congress/presidency/judiciary)? Who are the constituents? Does the organization work with other agencies? What are some political factors that help describe what the organization does and how it does it (e.g., budget politics, turf battles, key supporters or critics)?

→DUE July 15

Phase III: Final Project: Issue Analysis (4-6 pages)

Choose an issue your organization is facing. Succinctly describe the issue. What is happening with that issue in the organization right now? Criticize or support the organization's involvement. The final project will be in the form of a research paper. Phases I and II will be integrated into your paper.

→DUE July 29

Course Outline:

1 July – Mon	Introduction to GOVT 103 Chapter 1: The Political Landscape
2 July – Tue	Declaration of Independence Chapter 2: The Constitution
3 July – Wed	Chapter 3: Federalism Video Clip: Can the States do it Better?
4 July – Thu	-Independence Day Holiday – <i>-no class-</i>
8 July – Mon	Chapter 7: Congress ® PROJECT PHASE I IS DUE
9 July – Tue	Chapter 8: The Presidency
10 July – Wed	Chapter 10: The Judiciary Guest Speaker: Mr. James Burroughs Review for Midterm Exam
11 July – Thu	Mid term Exam
15 July – Mon	Chapter 9: Executive Branch and Bureaucracy Video Clip: Case Study of the IRS ® PROJECT PHASE II IS DUE
16 July – Tue	Chapter 5/6: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights Guest Speaker: Dr. Priscilla Regan
17 July – Wed	Chapter 11: Public Opinion
18 July – Thu	Chapter 15: The Media
22 July – Mon	Chapter 13: Voting and Elections
23 July – Tue	Chapter 14: The Campaign Process case study/group exercise
24 July – Wed	Chapter 12/16: Political Parties and Interest Groups
25 July – Thu	Seminar on Capitol Hill
29 July – Mon	Foreign Policy and International Dimensions Guest Speaker: Mr. Harry Dinella ® FINAL PROJECT IS DUE
30 July – Tue	Last class meeting – extra credit is due Review for final
1 Aug – Thu	Final Exam 9:30 – 11:35 a.m.