

Syllabus
Political Science 206
American National Government

Instructor: Lyman A. Kellstedt
Office: Allen Building 2059
Phone: 845-2138

Email: lak@polisci.tamu.edu
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 3:30-4:30
Or by Appointment

The Subject: Course Objectives

- A. To help students gain a deeper appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. political system.
- B. To guide students in the development of a worldview to help them interpret and respond to political stimuli.
- C. To familiarize students with the origins of American government, the political behavior of citizens, political institutions, and public policy.
- D. To give students an understanding of the discipline of political science in its various dimensions.
- E. To improve student capacity to engage in informed political discussion.
- F. To assist student understanding of current events and to help place these events in their appropriate context.

I. Required Texts.

Jon R. Bond, Kevin B. Smith, and Richard A. Watson, *Promise and Performance of American Democracy*, 7th edition (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2006).

Lyman Kellstedt, *Introduction to American Government*, (McGraw-Hill)

II. Grades

Exams and Weights:

Exam One (50 Questions)	50 points
Exam Two (65 Questions)	65 points
Exam Three (65 Questions)	65 points
Exam Four (80 Questions)	80 points
TOTAL	260 points

Exams are multiple-choice (or matching) with questions from both lectures AND assigned reading and will be scheduled at least one week in advance and after the completion of each unit (see Course Organization and Assignments). Exams are NOT cumulative.

Grading Scale:

- A 234-260 points
- B 208-233 points
- C 182-207 points
- D 156-181 points
- F 0-155 points

There is no extra credit in this course.

III. Miscellaneous Policies:

- A. Attendance. Attend as you wish but you are responsible for the materials if you miss class. Outlines will be posted on the course web site, but detailed notes will have to be obtained from a fellow student, NOT from the instructor.
- B. Missed Exam and Makeup Policy. A makeup is possible ONLY if you have a documented University recognized excused absence, AND arrange for a makeup either prior to the exam or

within two days after the exam is given. Contact my office or leave a message at the department office (845-2511). NO EXCEPTIONS.

- C. Grade changes will be made ONLY if I make an error in computation.
- D. Turn off all electronic devices in class.
- E. Cheating. “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.” Accordingly, cheating will not be tolerated. Evidence of cheating will lead to an F on the exam. Suspicion of cheating will lead to you taking another exam.
- F. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination law that provides protection for persons with disabilities. All students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. If this applies to you, contact the Department of Student Life at 845-1637.

IV. Course Organization.

The course is organized into four distinct units that characterize the study of American politics and government:

- A. The constitutional framework.
- B. The branches of government.
- C. Citizen linkages to government.
- D. Civil liberties, civil rights, due process and equal protection of the laws.

V. Assignments.

- A. Constitutional Framework.
 - 1. The Promise of Democracy. Read Bond, Ch. 1. Federalist # 10 (Appendix)
 - 2. The American Constitution. Read Bond, Ch. 2. The U.S. Constitution, The Declaration of Independence, Federalist # 51 (all in the Appendix)
 - 3. Federalism. Read Bond, Ch. 3. Kellstedt, pp. 32-41
- B. Governmental Structures.
 - 1. The Judiciary. Read Bond, Ch. 14. Kellstedt, pp. 1-19. Reread Article III of the Constitution (Appendix)
 - 2. Congress. Read Bond, Ch. 12. Kellstedt, pp. 42-46, 161-163. Reread Article I of the Constitution (Appendix)
 - 3. The Presidency. Read Bond, Ch. 13. Kellstedt, pp. 20-31. Reread Article II of the Constitution (Appendix)
 - 4. The Bureaucracies. Read Bond, Ch. 14.
- C. Connecting the Citizenry to Government.
 - 1. Interest Groups. Read Bond, Ch. 6
 - 2. Political Parties. Read Bond, Ch. 7
 - 3. The Media. Read Bond, Ch. 8
 - 4. Public Opinion. Read Bond, Ch. 9
 - 5. Nomination and Election of the President. Read Bond, Ch. 10
 - 6. Voting Behavior and Participation. Read Bond, Ch. 11
- D. Civil Rights and Liberties. Read Bond Chs. 4-5
 - 1. Free Speech and Restraints on Speech. Read Kellstedt 47-77, 133-136, 164-168
 - 2. The Religion Clauses. Read Kellstedt 78-97
 - 3. Due Process of Law. Read Kellstedt 98-110, 137-142
 - 4. Civil Rights. Read Kellstedt 111-125
 - 5. Women’s Rights. Read Kellstedt 126-132, 156-160
 - 6. The Right to Privacy, Abortion, and Gay Rights. Read Kellstedt 143-155, 169-184