

# Political Science 205: American National Government

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Text: \_\_\_\_\_ James Q. Wilson & John DiIulio, JR (2006). *American Government*. Dolphin Edition.  
New York, Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 0-618-57682-7

## Course Description

National politics affects virtually every aspect of American society. Citizens are continuously impacted by the actions of federal officials, the taxes necessary to finance the operation of the government, and the legal codes enacted by legislators. This course is designed to familiarize each student with the Constitutional foundation of the U.S. government and the institutional framework of the system. It also involves an examination of the most important ideas, actors, and interests that affect national politics in America. Upon the completion of this course, students should have a strong basic knowledge of the American political system and a solid academic foundation for upper-division courses in the subject.

## REQUIREMENTS and GRADING

### Overall Grading Policy

Grades will be based on a total point system. Final grades will be determined by the number of these points earned during the course of the semester and allocated on the basis of the following scale (A=89.5% and above; B=79.5%-89.4%; C=69.5%-79.4%; D=59.5%-69.4%; F=less than 59.4%). Grades will be posted periodically throughout the semester. They may be accessed from the course web page using your name and an assigned password.

### Examinations

Four examinations will be given. These exams may be comprised of any combination of True/False, multiple choice, matching, short answer/identification, and/or essay questions. The first 3 examinations cover approximately ¼ of course material. The final exam covers the final ¼ of course material plus a comprehensive section drawn from the previous three exams. Each test must be completed on the announced date. Make-ups will be allowed only with advance approval, or if you can produce documentary evidence of illness (or death). **All make-up tests will be in essay format** and must be taken within 1 week of the date you return to classes during the makeup exam period. (Makeup exams are given at 3:00pm on Monday & Thursday). ***No electronic devices may be used during any exam period.*** This includes all wireless phones, portable music players, translators, electronic dictionaries and other similar devices.<sup>1</sup> Any unexcused absence on an examination day or use of electronic device will result in an automatic grade of zero for the examination.

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<sup>1</sup>Students for whom English is a second language may request the use of a paper dictionary during exam periods subject to examination and approval by the professor.

### Tentative Exam Schedule\*

Exam 1: Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

Exam 2: Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>

Exam 3: Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am (9:00 Section)

Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm (1:00 Section)

\*I reserve the right to alter the timing of each exam. All such changes will be announced.

### Quizzes

Students are given reading assignments from the textbook and/or other sources throughout the semester. Each student is expected to complete the assigned reading prior to class each day and will be responsible for all information contained in the day's assignment.

A number of quizzes will be given throughout the semester. All students must complete three quizzes covering the Constitution which will be scheduled through the testing center. All other quizzes will cover a set of assigned readings and may be completed using the Moodle course site. Each quiz will be worth 20 points and must be taken before Sunday at Midnight on the week the reading is assigned. No make-up quizzes or time extensions will be given, but the lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

### Assignments

There may be a small number of outside assignments in which you will be asked to examine and evaluate materials covered in class, assigned readings, or video presentations or to conduct some basic research on topics relevant to the course. Point values will be given when each assignment is made. No credit will be given for assignments turned in after the announced due date.

### Class Attendance/Participation/Behavior

Regular class attendance is required of all students. Students are expected to arrive on time, having completed all reading and homework assignments. Each student's behavior must conform with Harding's code of conduct at all times while attending class. Students are expected to come to class prepared and remain attentive to class discussion. Disruptive behaviors such as carrying on private conversations, using wireless phones or other communication devices (even text messaging!), sleeping, burning public figures in effigy, or speaking in tongues must be avoided out of respect for others' ability to learn. Students causing such disruptions may be counted absent, removed from the class, or handed over to the authorities.

### Attendance Blessings and Curses:

#### Blessings:

Blessed are the studious. Students with perfect, or near perfect, attendance will receive a bonus at the end of the semester. Those who have no unexcused absences will receive 12 bonus points. Those with 1 unexcused absence will receive a 6 point bonus and those with 2 unexcused absences will receive a 3 point bonus.

### Curses:

Cursed is the sluggard. Students who exceed 3 unexcused absences will be penalized 5 points for each additional unexcused absence. Students who accumulate 8 or more unexcused absences will be removed from the class roster with an automatic grade of “F”. When you are dropped from the class, you may not then “withdraw.” All excuses must be submitted within 2 weeks of the date of the absence in order to be considered. If a student accumulates more than 15 absences, excused or unexcused, the nature of the course has been changed to an independent study. Consequently, a 20 page (15 source) research paper on an approved topic related to American Politics will then be required for a passing grade.

Tardiness/Leaving Class Early: It is important for all students to be present and prepared at the beginning of each class period and to actively participate throughout the entire class period. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to check after class to make sure that you are not charged with an absence. Tardiness on 3 occasions will be counted as an unexcused absence. If you must leave class early, it is your responsibility to inform me prior to the start of class. Otherwise, anyone leaving class before it is dismissed (by the instructor, not the bell) will be charged with an unexcused absence.

### Extra Credit:

These are the ONLY Extra Credit Assignments given during the semester.

1. Up to 12 points may be earned by those who maintain perfect attendance during the course of the entire semester as described in the attendance section of this syllabus.
2. The American Studies Institute arranges for speakers to address the University each semester. Each student may submit a typed, summary and critique (1 page of summary and 1 page of critique) that analyzes and evaluates the content of one of those presentations to earn up to 15 points of extra credit. **Extra Credit Points may be earned for attendance at only 1 of these Presentations.** All extra credit papers must be turned by the Monday following the presentation. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** This semester’s speakers are:
  - a. Nonie Darwish – September 17<sup>th</sup>
  - b. Cynthia Cooper – November 12<sup>th</sup>

### University Policy Statements:

#### Students with Disabilities

It is the policy for Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Therefore, any student with a documented disability condition (e.g. physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations, must contact the instructor and the Disabilities Office at the beginning of each semester. (If the diagnosis of the disability occurs during the academic year, the student must self-identify with the Disabilities Office as soon as possible in order to get academic accommodations in place for the remainder of the semester.) The Disabilities Office is located in Room 102 of the Lee Academic Center, telephone, (501) 279-4019.

#### Academic Integrity

Honesty and integrity are characteristics that should describe each one of us as servants of Jesus Christ. As your instructor, I pledge that I will strive for honesty and integrity in how I handle the content of this course and in how I interact with each of you. I ask that you join me in pledging to do the same.

Academic dishonesty will result in penalties up to and including dismissal from the class with a failing grade and will be reported to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. All instances of dishonesty will be handled according to the procedures delineated in the Harding University catalog.

## Assessment

Harding University, since its charter in 1924, has been strongly committed to providing the best resources and environment for the teaching-learning process. The board, administration, faculty, and staff are wholeheartedly committed to full compliance with all criteria of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The university values continuous, rigorous assessment at every level for its potential to improve student learning and achievement and for its centrality in fulfilling the stated mission of Harding. Thus, a comprehensive assessment program has been developed that includes both the Academic units and the Administrative and Educational Support (AES) units. Specifically, all academic units will be assessed in reference to the following Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose: The University provides programs that enable students to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their academic disciplines for successful careers, advanced studies, and servant leadership.