

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

POLITICAL SCIENCE 220: 0-20/27032

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

WINTER TERM 2010-2011

INSTRUCTOR: SWEET  
OFFICE: SCOTT HALL 208  
CELLULAR PHONE: 561.537.0006

ROOM: FISK HALL 217  
TIME: 3:30– 4:50  
DAYS: TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

m-sweet@northwestern.edu  
www.martinjsweet.com

OFFICE HOURS: TR 2:15 P.M. – 3:15 P.M. AND BY APPOINTMENT

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to American government and politics, primarily focusing on the United States national government but with some attention paid to foreign governments and state institutions as well. The course begins with a discussion of the foundations of American government: democratic theory, the Constitution and civil liberties, and federalism. We then examine America's political institutions: the Presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, state and local institutions, and the courts, with the goal of understanding how these separate institutions share power with one another. Next we explore political behavior via participation, public opinion, and interest groups. These topics will be covered directly in lecture, through textbook and assigned readings, discussion section, student writing, and indirectly from your attention to current events. Throughout the term, we will use health care policy as an example of a public policy that binds together the seemingly disparate areas of our government system. This is an ideal course for students who will (a) eventually enroll in a Ph.D. program in political science, (b) take an upper level course at Northwestern University in American politics, or (c) vote at some point during his or her life.

## REQUIRED PURCHASES

I have listed the textbook and the “clicker” available for purchase at the campus bookstore. There will be other assigned readings, made available via the web or Blackboard. Additionally you must read a national newspaper each day for coverage of ongoing political events; this is a course requirement (and a particularly good idea for all). Acceptable papers would include: *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, or *Washington Post*. Please ask me if you have other ideas regarding acceptable coverage.

*Understanding American Politics and Government, 2/E*



John J. Coleman, Kenneth M. Goldstein, William G. Howell,

ISBN-10:0205806597

ISBN-13:9780205806591

Publisher: Longman

Copyright: 2011

Format: Hardbound Book; 832 pages

*Turning Point Response Card*



## REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

•Discussion Section Participation	= 10 %
•Opinion Editorial (02/01; 03/01)	= 15 %
•Pop Quizzes	= 10 %
•Examination I (01/25)	= 20 %
•Examination II (02/22)	= 20 %
•Final Examination (03/15, 12:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M.)	= 25 %
•Research Study Participation	= NA

## ASSIGNMENT EXPLANATIONS

### DISCUSSION SECTION PARTICIPATION (10%)

Weekly discussion sections, led by Teaching Assistants, are a critical part of this course. The Teaching Assistants will direct these small sections of the course and focus on clarifying the readings and lectures, but will also engage in a discussion of current events as they relate to key concepts in this course. You should complete the assigned readings *before* the topic is discussed in class. The quality of your active participation in class discussion sections will complete this component of your course grade.

### OPINION EDITORIAL (15%)

Attempting to sway public sentiment through public pronouncement of one's own views is one of the oldest methods of democratic participation. This assignment requires each student to write an opinion editorial (op-ed) of approximately 500-750 words about a contemporary policy issue (other than health care) that can be solved by the government. Your analysis should contain a succinct statement of the problem, a brief discussion of feasible alternatives, and advocacy for how our government should respond. Each student will eventually submit his or her op-ed to an appropriate newspaper or other media outlet. The first draft of this assignment is due in discussion section the week of February 1, and the final draft is due in discussion section the week of March 1. While the substance of the writing that each student will complete for this course is crucial, the means by which ideas are transmitted in any writing often shapes how an audience understands the communication. A poorly written, awkwardly formatted essay generally fails to inspire confidence in the author. This can translate into a much weaker assessment of the author's substantive points. *All* writing for this class prepared outside of class must be typed and thoroughly vetted for (1) organization, (2) marshalling of evidence, (3) style, and (4) grammar, spelling, punctuation. Drafts must be double spaced, with one inch (36 point) margins, and stapled once in the upper left hand corner. There should not be a cover page. Include your last name and page number on each page (other than the first page) as a footer in the bottom right corner, as is done on this syllabus. Final drafts should be single spaced with a full line between paragraphs. Usage and citation should comport with *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

### QUIZZES (10%)

From time to time there will be pop quizzes administered during lecture via the *Turning Point Response Cards*. These quizzes will not be announced ahead of time, but the two lowest scores (including any "zeroes" for absences) will not be counted toward a final grade.

### EXAMINATIONS (65%)

There are three exams in this course, including a cumulative final examination. These exams may consist of multiple choice questions, short answers, and essays. The examinations will cover the assigned readings, lectures, and current events.

## RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT (PASS/FAIL)

Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 4 hours of research study participation. These studies require that students set up an appointment to complete participation at a laboratory on campus. Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the quarter describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. Students who prefer not to participate in research as subject may opt for an alternative that entails reading any one chapter about political science research and writing a five page reaction paper. The typical chapter is about 20 pages and thus reading it and writing a five page paper should take approximately four hours.

During the first or second week of the quarter, students will receive an e-mail asking them whether they prefer study participation or the alternative assignment. The e-mail will also include details on how to complete either requirement. Failure to complete the requirement during the quarter will result in an incomplete. Failure to complete the requirement during the following quarter will result in a failing grade for the class. *Note that if you are enrolled in multiple classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time. Also, if you already completed the requirement in another course in a previous quarter, you are excused from the requirement.*

This requirement is not factored into the final course letter grade, but its completion is required to pass the course.

## GRADING

I will give each student a final letter grade, based on the discussion section grade, the opinion editorial, quizzes, and examinations. Additionally I will consider each student's demonstrated quality of learning, by taking into account improvement on the examinations.

Day	Date	Subject	Assignment	Readings
T	Jan. 4	Foundations	Introduction	
R	6	Democratic Theory I		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•CGH, Chapter 1</li><li>•Amy Gutman, "Ian Shapiro's Democratic Justice" <i>The American Prospect</i>. December 20, 1999:[www] <a href="http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=ian_shapiro_democratic_justice">http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=ian_shapiro_democratic_justice</a></li></ul>
T	11	Democratic Theory II		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2010": [www] <a href="http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=130&amp;year=2010">http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=130&amp;year=2010</a></li><li>•Diamond, "Is the Third Wave Over?" <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 1996: [www] <a href="http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v007/7.3diamond.html">http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v007/7.3diamond.html</a></li><li>•Uwe Reinhardt, Peter S. Hussey, P. S., &amp; Gerard F. Anderson (2004). U.S. Health Spending in an International Context. <i>Health Affairs</i>, 23 (3): 10-25:[www] <a href="http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/23/3/10">http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/23/3/10</a></li></ul>

R	13	The Constitution and Civil Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 3</li> <li>•CGH, Chapter 5</li> <li>•Corwin, “Constitution as Instrument and Symbol” [pdf]</li> <li>•Corwin, “War and the Constitution” [pdf]</li> </ul>
T	18	Federalism I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 4</li> </ul>
R	20	Federalism II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•“Health Care Reform and Federalism,” Scott L. Greer and Peter D. Jacobson. <i>Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law</i>, Vol. 35, No. 2, April 2010: [www] <a href="http://jhppl.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/35/2/203">http://jhppl.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/35/2/203</a></li> <li>•“Why Federalism Fails,” Ezra Klein. <i>American Prospect</i>, August 30, 2007: [www] <a href="http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=why_federalism_fails">http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=why_federalism_fails</a></li> </ul>
T	25		<b><i>Examination I</i></b>
R	27	<b>Institutions</b> Executive I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 14</li> </ul>
T	Feb. 1	Executive II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Timothy Noah, “Health Care Reform: An Online Guide”: [www] <a href="http://www.slate.com/id/2220222/">http://www.slate.com/id/2220222/</a></li> <li>•Skocpol, Theda (1995). “The Rise and Resounding Demise of the Clinton Plan.” <i>Health Affairs</i> 14, no. 1: 66-85: [www] <a href="http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/14/1/66">http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/14/1/66</a></li> </ul>
R	3	Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, 16</li> <li>•James Morone, “The Health Care Bureaucracy: Small Changes, Big Consequences.” <i>Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law</i>, Vol. 18( 3):723, 1993:[www] <a href="http://jhppl.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/18/3/723">http://jhppl.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/18/3/723</a></li> </ul>
T	8	Legislative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 13</li> <li>•PPACA (“ObamaCare”):[www] <a href="http://democrats.senate.gov/reform/patient-protection-affordable-care-act-as-passed.pdf">http://democrats.senate.gov/reform/patient-protection-affordable-care-act-as-passed.pdf</a></li> </ul>
R	10	State and Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 17</li> <li>•Governor Phil Bredesen, “ObamaCare’s Incentive to Drop Insurance,” <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>, October 21, 2010:[www] <a href="http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304510704575562643804015252.html#printMode">http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304510704575562643804015252.html#printMode</a></li> </ul>
T	15	Judicial I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 15</li> <li>•Downs and Sweet, “Supreme Court” [pdf]</li> </ul>
R	17	Judicial II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sweet, “<i>Mereby Judgment?</i>” (Chapter 5) [pdf]</li> <li>•<i>Florida v. US HHS</i> [www] <a href="http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/files/vinsonhealth-care-opinion.pdf">http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/files/vinsonhealth-care-opinion.pdf</a></li> </ul>

T	22		<b><i>Examination II</i></b>
R	24	<b>Behavior</b> Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 7</li> <li>•Scott Rasmussen and Doug Schoen, “Why Obama Can’t Move the Health-Care Numbers.” <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>, March 9, 2010: [www] <a href="http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704784904575111993559174212.html">http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704784904575111993559174212.html</a></li> </ul>
T	Mar. 1	Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 8</li> <li>•Census – Voting Registration and Participation Statistics: [www] <a href="http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0406.pdf">http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0406.pdf</a></li> </ul>
R	3	Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CGH, Chapter 12</li> <li>•Dan Eggen, “How Interest Groups Behind Health-Care Legislation Are Financed Is Often Unclear” <i>Washington Post</i>, January 7, 2010: [www] <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/06/AR2010010605160_pf.html">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/06/AR2010010605160_pf.html</a></li> </ul>
T	8		WCAS Reading Week
R	10		WCAS Reading Week
T	15	12:00-2:00 PM	<b><i>FINAL EXAM</i></b>