

BOWDOIN COLLEGE
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
GOVERNMENT 1100
FALL 2017

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Office Hours: Monday, 10-12; Thursday, 1:00-2:00; or by appointment

It is certainly fashionable to lament the state of American politics – but then, it always has been. This course aims to allow you to make reasoned and thoughtful assessments of our political system by introducing you to the institutions and processes of government in the United States. We will examine the American polity from the outside in (the public) – from the inside out (the institutions of government) – and in between (via the entities which connect the two). Then we'll analyze the complex ways these players interact to make public policy across different policy arenas, from formulation to implementation, from Congress to the courts. In so doing we will take advantage of a wide range of scholarly and journalistic writings as well as relevant on-campus offerings.

All readings on the syllabus are required unless otherwise indicated. We will not cover every reading orally in class, but I should stress that this does not relieve you of your responsibility to know the material covered therein. The following books are available for purchase at various on-line booksellers; I would strongly encourage you to check prices on different sites.

- Theodore Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power and Purpose*, Brief 14th edition (Norton, 2017)
[ISBN 9780393283778]
- David Wessel, *Red Ink* (Crown Business, 2013)
[ISBN 9780770436162]
- Anthony Lewis, *Freedom for the Thought that We Hate* (Basic Books, 2010)
[ISBN 9780465018192]

A copy of the *Federalist Papers* is also recommended; various inexpensive editions are available, for instance at the Gulf of Maine bookstore in downtown Brunswick. The *Federalist* will come in very handy in this course and in life, since owning a copy will make you both smarter and (if possible) better-looking. Its contents are, however, also widely available on-line.

Other assigned readings may also be found on-line, with links through Blackboard. Note that in the required reading the judicial opinions are normally abridged somewhat, but they can be read at full-length by the brave and curious at a number of sites, for instance www.oyez.org.

More generally, you are expected to keep up to date with current events by reading a national newspaper each day; keep in mind the inexpensive print subscriptions to the *NY Times* or *Washington Post* available to students (there is free online access to the latter if you have Amazon Prime). Note that current political goings-on *will* be included on exams.

Course Requirements:

· *Participation in class and outside events* (5% of your grade). Class sessions are a vital complement to the assigned reading materials; thus, you are expected to participate actively and politely in discussion during class, on Blackboard, and when outside events are announced during the semester (in lieu of or in addition to class sessions.)

· *Two essays* (17.5% each), taking and defending a point of view on a topic relevant to contemporary public policy, in approximately 1000 words. A series of five possible topics will be presented for your choice during the semester: you will choose two of these. You may write as many as three papers, and only the top two grades will count: however, this option is only available if you write one of the first two papers. Late papers will be penalized by one grade per day or part of a day; extensions will be granted only well in advance, and only in exigent circumstances.

· *A midterm exam* (25%), in class on **October 19**, largely based on identification questions drawn from the readings and class sessions.

· *Final exam (partly cumulative)* (35%): **December 17, 9 a.m.** This date is set by the College and cannot be changed by the instructor. Thus, to avoid heartache for all concerned, please do NOT make any plans that conflict with this commitment.

Students choosing to take the class under the Credit/D/F option should be aware that I will grant a Credit grade only if all work for the class has been completed (exams, papers, etc.)

Some Miscellaneous Notes:

A Note on Academic Integrity: I expect all students to abide by the Bowdoin Academic Honor Code. It goes without saying – and yet I will say it – that you are responsible for full and correct quotation and citation in your written work. *Plagiarism is grounds not only for a failing grade on a given assignment, but for the course – and, potentially, for dismissal from the College.*

A Note on Citation Format: In this course we will normally use the Chicago Manual of Style format: for a useful primer see http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). If you have any questions or concerns about how to go about doing this, please consult me and/or a reference librarian.

A Note on, well, Notetaking: a good deal of recent pedagogic research holds that the use of computers as notetaking devices is counterproductive: the physical act of writing enables far more recall than does typing, and provides far fewer potential distractions to yourself and others. Further, my Powerpoint slides are made available to the class at regular intervals during the semester. Thus I ask you not to use electronic devices of any kind during class. Obviously, there may be reasons for exceptions to this rule (for instance, see the next Note) and you should feel free to approach me if you feel one is warranted.

A Note on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students requiring accommodations based on disabilities need to be in contact with Dean Lesley Levy (llevy@bowdoin.edu, x4187). You are encouraged to address any such special needs or accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of them. See the student handbook for additional information.

A Note on the Center for Learning and Teaching (102 Kanbar Hall): You will want to acquaint yourself with the range of useful resources offered through the Center for Learning and Teaching. For instance, beginning on September 13, Writing Assistants are available in the Writing Workshop to assist you at any phase of your writing process. You can reserve a 45-minute writing conference by going to the Writing Project website <http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-project> and following the navigation links to the reservation calendar.

COURSE SCHEDULE: *subject to change, with notice*

(*) indicates on-line reading: go to the course's Blackboard site for the relevant file or link

PART I: "We the People"

Note that there will be no class on August 31 because of the American Political Science Association annual meetings. The first day of class will be Tuesday, September 5.

September 5, 7: Introduction: The American Political Tradition

Lewis, *Freedom for the Thought That We Hate*, Introduction (pp. ix-xv)

(*) Pres. George W. Bush, First Inaugural Address, January 20, 2001

(*) Donald J. Trump, campaign speech on immigration reform, August 31, 2016

(*) Jack Citrin and Matthew Wright, "The Politics of Immigration in a Nation of Immigrants," in LaRaja, ed., *New Directions in American Politics*

September 12, 14, 19: A New Government: "Separate Institutions Sharing Power"

National Institutions

Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, & Ansolabehere, *American Government* [hereafter "LGSA"], Ch. 2 and pp. 77-80

Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution, in LGSA, appendices
Federalist Papers #15, 51

(*) *Marbury v. Madison* (1803)

(*) John Roche, "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action," *American Political Science Review* 55 (December 1961): 799-816.

(*) Sanford Levinson, "Our Imbecilic Constitution," *New York Times* (May 29, 2012)

The Role of Federalism

Federalist #39, 46

(*) *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)

LGSA, Ch. 3

(*) James McPherson, "Southern Comfort," *New York Review of Books* (April 12, 2001)

(*) *U.S. v. Lopez* (1995)

(*) *NFIB v. Sebelius* ["Obamacare I"] (2012)

PART II. Connecting Public and Government

September 21: Public Opinion

LGSA, Ch. 9 (pp. 276-95, 309-12)

(*) Jill Lepore, "Politics and the New Machine," *The New Yorker* (November 16, 2015)

September 26: The Media

LGSA, Ch. 9 (pp. 295-309)

(*) William Powers, "The Massless Media," *Atlantic Monthly* (January/February 2005)

Lewis, *Freedom for the Thought That We Hate*, Ch. 6 & 9

September 28: no regular class meeting, in lieu of attendance at on-campus speaking event(s)

October 3, 5: Participation: Voting, Interest Groups, and Parties

LGSA, Ch. 11-12

Federalist #10

(*) Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, excerpt

(*) Jonathan Rausch, "Demosclerosis," *National Journal* (September 5, 1992)

October 12, 17: Elections

LGSA, Ch. 10

Federalist #53, 57, 68

(*) Marc Hetherington, "The Allure of the Outsider," in Nelson, ed., *The Elections of 2016*

(*) Larry Bartels, "2016 Was an Ordinary Election...", *Washington Post* (November 10, 2016)

October 19: Midterm Exam

PART III. Institutions of Government

October 24: Congress

LGSA, Ch. 5

(*) Robert Draper, "Trump vs. Congress: Now What?" *New York Times Magazine* (March 26, 2017)

(*) Sen. John McCain, "On the Need for Bipartisanship," Senate floor statement (July 25, 2017)

October 26: The Presidency

LGSA, Ch. 6

Federalist #69, 70

(*) Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, excerpt

(*) Pres. Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address, January 20, 1981

(*) Josh Dawsey et al., "The Education of Donald Trump," *Politico* (April 27, 2017)

October 31: Bureaucracy

LGSA, Ch. 7

(*) Nathaniel Hawthorne '25, "The Custom House," excerpts

(*) Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration"

(*) *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007)

(*) Andrew Rudalevige, "The Late-Term Obama Administrative Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (December 2016)

November 2: The Judiciary

LGSA, Ch. 8

Federalist #78

(*) Adam Liptak, "A Cautious Supreme Court Sets a Modern Record for Consensus," *New York Times* (June 27, 2017)

PART IV. Outputs: Public Policy in the United States

November 7, 9, 14, 16, 21: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

LGSA, Ch. 4

Lewis, *Freedom for the Thought That We Hate*, Ch. 1-4, 7-8, 10-11

(*) Pres. Barack Obama, "Remarks Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Marches for Voting Rights," March 7, 2015

U.S. Supreme Court opinions (excerpted):

(*) *Lochner v. New York* (1905)

(*) *Roe v. Wade* (1973)

(*) *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992)

(*) *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986)

(*) *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)

(*) *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

(*) *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974)

(*) *Bakke v. University of California* (1978)

(*) *Fisher v. University of Texas* ["Fisher II"] (2016)

November 23: Happy Thanksgiving!

November 28, 30: Domestic and Economic Policy

LGSA, 13

(*) Steve Teles, "Kludgeocracy in America," *National Affairs* (Fall 2013)

(*) Adam Davidson, "Making it in America," *The Atlantic* (January 2012)

Wessel, *Red Tape* (all)

December 5: Foreign Policy

LGSA, Ch. 14

(*) *Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952)

(*) Authorization for the Use of Military Force (P.L. 107-40, September 2001)

(*) *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* (2004)

(*) Pres. Donald Trump, "Remarks to the People of Poland," July 6, 2017

December 7: Concluding Thoughts

review the U.S. Constitution and *Federalist Papers* (especially #10, 51)

TBD: final exam review session

Sunday, December 17, 9 a.m. – Final Exam.