**POL 101.2: Introduction to American Government and Politics**

**Spring 2025**

**MWF, 9:00 – 9:50 am**

**Lamar 129**

**Dr. Marvin King**

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 1030am – 12:30pm and by appointment on Zoom.

A note about emails and titles: While I am not overly concerned about titles, many faculty do insist upon being addressed by their rank, so it is worth the time and trouble to use a person’s correct name and title – Dr. King, Professor, or Professor King – are all fine, rather than just “Hey.” The subject line should indicate the class you are in as well as I teach several classes each semester.

I typically respond to all necessary and appropriate emails directly related to course matters within one working day during the workweek. I will likely not respond to unsolicited student emails after 5pm or on the weekends.

**KEY DATES - ADMINISTRATIVE**

January 20 – Last day to officially cancel registration & avoid responsibility for payment of tuition/fees

January 21 – Classes begin

February 3 – Refund period ends

February 10 – Mandatory drop date for non-attendance

March 7 – Deadline for withdrawal (no refunds)

**KEY DATES - GRADES**

Test 1 - Monday, February 10

Test 2 - Friday, March 7

Test 3 – Friday, April 4

**Test 4 – Wednesday, May 7, 8:00am**

**PURPOSE**

This course, divided into four units, is an introduction to American Government. First, in Unit 1, the focus is on the founding principles of American government: classical liberalism, liberty, republicanism, and federalism. Learning this will leave you with a basic understanding of the framework within which American government and politics operate.

In Unit 2, you will learn about government efforts in protecting and sometimes encroaching on the civil rights and civil liberties of Americans. We also study the institutions of American government, focusing on the executive and legislative branches.

Unit 3 continues the focus on American institutions, specifically the American legal system and the courts. We also review the effects of political culture on participation and opinion in the mass public and take a detailed examination of how major actors in the American political system such as political parties and interest groups affect the governmental process.

Unit 4 focuses on voting, campaigns, elections, and the effects of political media on your understanding of political matters. We conclude the semester by studying contemporary social, environmental, economic, and foreign policy.

Throughout the semester, we connect the historic with the contemporary. Although most students in this class do not major or minor in Political Science, the political process affects all and we should all be aware of its consequences. By the end of this course, I expect you to become more informed about the political process, and hopefully more interested and involved.

We have a busy semester in front of us. With each of you contributing your best, I hope and expect you will take much from this class. I recognize that many of you enter this class with preconceived notions of American politics. Please recognize that changing minds or your beliefs is not my goal. However, what I expect is that you finish this course with a broader and more factually correct notion of American politics.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Imbue in students a lifelong interest in the process and outcomes of America’s political system.
2. Encourage in students an ability to actively engage in political conversation.
3. Develop critical and analytical thinking abilities
4. Develop your own personal perspective on American government and political issues
5. Understand, identify, and discuss how America’s political institutions operate within the context of modern politics
6. Understand, identify, and discuss the civil rights and civil liberties granted in the U.S. Constitution
7. Understand, identify, and discuss the role of non-governmental entities on America’s political institutions and how they affect political outcomes.

**SCHEDULE**

See page 6 for the daily schedule.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

We the People: Fourteenth Essentials Edition

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This class is both lecture and discussion. Discussions are an important ingredient to any political science class from which both students and teachers can learn. I ask that you respect the diverse views of your fellow students and utilize common courtesies during class. Please, while in class, refrain from eating, and reading the newspaper. Make sure your cell phones are off, etc. If you bring a laptop into class, please avoid social media or any activity distracting students from classroom lecture and discussion.

I especially encourage students to ask questions, particularly if you need an item clarified or reviewed. The best way to reach me is via email. Do not delay until late in the semester to seek help. By then it will be too late. Students attending class participate in discussion more and tend to finish with higher scores.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. If a student is attending UM with a scholarship that requires occasional course absences or is otherwise representing the University (e.g., ASB, athletics, band, moot court), the following exception applies - students will not be penalized for required absences alone as long as you present to me by the end of the course an official letter from the scholarship-issuing program declaring the required absences for the entire semester.



0-4 absences: no penalty

5-6 absences: final course grade lowered by one letter grade (+/- grading scale)

7-8 absences: final course grade lowered by two letter grades

9-10 absences: final course grade lowered by three letter grades

11+ absences: failure

Students who plan to miss 20% or more of the course should consider enrolling in the course during another semester.

UM requires all students to have a verified attendance at least once during the first two weeks of the semester for each course.  If attendance is not verified, then a student will be dropped from the course and any financial aid will be adjusted accordingly.  Please see http://olemiss.edu/gotoclass for more information. This requirement is independent from the attendance policy stated previously in this syllabus.

**Scanners**

* This class utilizes an electronic scanner for attendance.
* You must bring your UM identification card to each class and scan your ID to be considered present. If you do not bring your student ID, you will not be counted as present.
* Do not ask me to manually enter your attendance.

**Notes**

* Do not ask me for the notes because you missed a class unless it is University-approved.

**Approved Absences**

* COVID quarantine
* Representing the university at an officially sanctioned event.

**DO NOT**

* Send me a doctor’s note – I do not need to know why you visit the doctor’s office. If you send me a doctor’s note, I will likely not respond to the email.
* Bring someone else’s ID or ask someone to scan your ID as this constitutes a violation of academic ethics with a range of punishments for this behavior.

**MAKE-UP POLICY**

I allow make-up work only if you obtain a UM approved excuse. In lieu of a UM approved excuse, any student failing to turn in their assignment, or take their quiz or test, will receive a zero on that exam. For instance, if you do not feel well and you visit the Student Health Center, it is insufficient to send me a note stating you visited the doctor or a copy of your prescription. I require a note from a health professional stating your illness prevented you from completing your assignment (however, I do not need to know the exact nature of your illness).

Do not ask for an exception to this policy unless you bring a UM approved excuse. Missing class or an assignment because you are sick or not feeling well does not constitute a UM approved excuse. A UM approved excuse needs to be a written notice from another professor, department (i.e., Athletics, Band, Mock Trial, etc..) or from [UMatter](https://umatter.olemiss.edu/). If you miss class for any reason other than one for which you can obtain a UM-approved excuse do not ask me for the class notes. For instance, if you are not feeling well and you visit the Student Health Center, it is not sufficient to bring me a note stating you visited the doctor or a copy of your prescription.

**GRADING SCALE**

A: 93-100 A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79 C: 73-76 C-70-72

D: <70

F: < 60

Please do not ask me to calculate your grade for you. The Political Science Department maintains a "C" policy. Students must make at least a grade of C or better for the course to count towards the major. If you think an error has occurred in the calculation of your grade, it is your responsibility to provide me copies of your work. To that end, it is prudent to save all your coursework until you receive your final grade report. All graded assignments will be graded within ten days of submission.

**ASSESSMENTS**

Tests cover material from lectures, the textbook, and any assigned supplemental readings. You need to bring a “Purple” scantron and a pencil. Students cannot keep copies of the exams. There are four exams: May 10 (chapters 1-4), March 7 (chapters 5-9), April 4 (chapters 10-13), and May 7 @8am (chapters 14-18). Each exam is 20.5% of your final grade. The last test is not cumulative.

**QUIZZES**

Chapter Quizzes 1 - 4 February 7 @ 5pm

Chapter Quizzes 5 - 8 March 5 @ 5pm

Chapter Quizzes 9 - 11 April 2 @ 5pm

Chapter Quizzes 12 - 15 May 2 @ 5pm

For each chapter, you will go to Blackboard to take the quiz. You will have two attempts to take each quiz and we will take your highest score. Each chapter quiz constitutes 1% of your final grade. Cumulatively, quizzes equal 18% of your final grade.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you have a documented disability, as recognized by Student Disability Services, please contact Student Disability Services at 234 Martindale Center, 662-915-7128. Course requirements will not be waived but reasonable accommodations may be provided as appropriate. Please consult <https://sds.olemiss.edu/> for more information on student disability services.

**ACADEMIC ETHICS**

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, just ask. If you think something might be wrong, it probably is. No matter, just ask for clarification. Please reference the [UM M Book](https://communications.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/10/MBook.pdf) for all policies regarding academic honesty, ethics, and plagiarism. Punishment for violations of academic ethics will range from loss of a letter grade on the assignment to failure in the class. The decision will be made by the faculty member in consultation with the department chair. Appeals can be made to the UM Academic Discipline Committee.

**STUDENT PRIVACY POLICY**

The University of Mississippi protects the privacy of all students, including online and distance learning students, through adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) through compliance with other institutional policies and procedures governing the management and security of protected information of faculty, staff, and students, and by outlining the expectations of privacy for the university community as regards to electronic information. [Student Privacy Policy](https://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidPara=11873531)

# **MISCELLANEOUS**

# Email is the best way to reach me. Emails sent after 5pm may not be returned until the next workday. All work must be submitted through Blackboard, unless specifically required.

# This syllabus is a guide for the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, but I will do my best to adhere to this syllabus.

# Use your olemiss.edu email address and please be accessible via Blackboard.

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**SCHEDULE**

Wednesday, January 22 - Class Introduction/ Chapter 1: Americans and Their Political Values

Friday, January 24 – Chapter 1: Americans and Their Political Values

Monday, January 27 – Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution

Wednesday, January 29 - Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution

Friday, January 31 – Chapter 3: Federalism

Monday, February 3 – Chapter 3: Federalism

Wednesday, February 5 - Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Friday, February 7 - Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

**Chapter Quizzes 1 - 4, due by 5pm, Friday, February 7**

**Monday, February 10 - Test 1**

Wednesday, February 12 - Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Friday, February 14 - Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Monday, February 17 – Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Wednesday, February 19 - Chapter 6: Public Opinion

Friday, February 21 – Chapter 6: Public Opinion

Monday, February 24 - Chapter 7: The Media & Political Information

Wednesday, February 26 – Chapter 7: The Media & Political Information

Friday, February 28 - Chapter 8: Political Parties & Interest Groups

Monday, March 3 – Chapter 8: Political Parties & Interest Groups

Wednesday, March 5 - Chapter 8: Political Parties & Interest Groups

**Chapter Quizzes 5 - 8, due by 5pm, Wednesday, March 5**

**Friday, March 7 - Test 2**

Monday, March 10 – Spring Break

Wednesday, March 12 – Spring Break

Friday, March 14 – Spring Break

Monday, March 17 - Chapter 9: Participation, Campaigns & Elections

Wednesday, March 19 – Chapter 9: Participation, Campaigns & Elections

Friday, March 21 - Chapter 10: Congress

Monday, March 24 – Chapter 10: Congress

Wednesday, March 26 - Chapter 10: Congress

Friday, March 28 - Chapter 11: The Presidency

Monday, March 31 – Chapter 11: The Presidency

Wednesday, April 2 - Chapter 11: The Presidency

**Chapter Quizzes 9 - 11, due by 5pm, Wednesday, April 2**

**Friday, April 4 - Test 3**

Monday, April 7 – Chapter 12: The Bureaucracy

Wednesday, April 9 - Chapter 12: The Bureaucracy

Friday, April 11 – Chapter 13: Federal Courts

Monday, April 14 - Chapter 13: Federal Courts

Wednesday, April 16 – Chapter 14: Domestic Policy

Friday, April 18 – Good Friday

Monday, April 21 - Chapter 14: Domestic Policy

Wednesday, April 23 - Chapter 14: Domestic Policy

Friday, April 25 – No Class

Monday, April 28 – Chapter 15: Foreign Policy

Wednesday, April 30 - Chapter 15: Foreign Policy

Friday, May 2 – Chapter 15: Foreign Policy

**Chapter Quizzes 12 - 15, due by 5pm, Friday May 2**

**Wednesday, May 7 - Test 4 at 8:00am, Lamar 129, Chapters 12-15**