

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (GOVT 1000)

Spring 2025, Millsaps College

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Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course offers a broad overview of the governmental process in the United States. First, we will cover the *architecture* of the U.S. political system, codified in the U.S. Constitution: separation of powers between the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court, checks and balances in the exercise of power, and federalism (the division of power between the national and state governments). Second, we'll discuss how the U.S. political system (on paper) protects its citizens' interests, distinguishing between civil *liberties* that protect people from government abuse, and civil *rights* that protect groups from discrimination (whether by government, individuals, or businesses). Next, we will compare and contrast the four "linkage institutions" that connect the public to their elected representatives: the media, political parties, interest groups, and elections. To conclude, we'll take a deep dive into the three branches of the federal government: the legislative branch (Congress), the executive branch (the presidency and federal bureaucracy), and the judiciary (the Supreme Court and lower federal courts). Along the way, GOVT 1000 will challenge you to be critical, creative democratic participants; we will discuss the importance of civil discourse during a time of profound political divisions. After taking this class, you will have glimpsed the tools that political scientists use to make sense of complicated events – tools that locate the *structure* beneath an otherwise chaotic political marketplace. **Upon successful completion of GOVT 1000, you will be able to:**

- **Describe** the structure of government in the United States, including the importance of both separation of powers and checks and balances in the exercise of power
- **Differentiate** between civil liberties and civil rights, and identify their source(s) in the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and/or acts of Congress
- **Explain** how the news media decides what to report and how to report it; **apply critical-thinking skills** to the consumption of political news
- **Compare and contrast** the different "linkage institutions" – media, political parties, interest groups, and elections – that connect U.S. citizens to their elected representatives
- **Dialogue across political difference** at a time of profound political polarization; **understand and articulate** the importance of civil discourse to the U.S. political system
- **Evaluate** the different ways that members of Congress represent their constituents
- **Describe** how the three branches of the federal government operate in the contemporary United States – and, last but not least...
- **TEACH** what you've learned to your fellow classmates

To evaluate whether you can do these things, I will use a variety of different assessments. There will be two non-cumulative exams, consisting of short ID questions and essays. You will write two short papers (\approx 2-3 pages), both challenging you to think critically about your responsibilities as democratic citizens. Perhaps most importantly, **50 percent of your grade will be based on weekly “Students as Teachers” workshops and check-ins throughout the semester.** On “Students as Teachers” days, I expect you to come prepared to *teach* your classmates about the core concepts listed on the syllabus for that week; you will work in groups to brainstorm the best ways to communicate this material. More information on these requirements is found below.

Course Connect

You should familiarize yourself with [the Course Connect page](#) for GOVT 1000. eBook versions of the textbook chapters for each week are available on Course Connect, along with e-Learning resources (like the Inquizitive platform from W.W. Norton) that can help you learn the material and prepare for the exams and workshops. You’ll use Course Connect to submit your two short papers. And you can always use Course Connect to view your current grade.

Emails

Throughout the semester, I will use email to communicate with the class. **Please check your Millsaps email at least once per day**, even if you usually use a different email account. Emails will often contain important announcements, updates, or clarifications about the course material.

Textbook

Bianco, William T. and David T. Canon. *American Politics Today*, **full eighth edition**. (Note that the authors update the textbook every two years, so all previous editions will be out of date; you must use the **full eighth edition (red cover)** of the textbook.)

Enrolled students will be able to access the textbook chapters in eBook version on the Course Connect page for GOVT 1000; I will show you how to do this on the first day of class. Students also have access to the eLearning resources that come with the textbook; I strongly encourage you to make use of the Inquizitive platform to review each chapter and prepare for the exams. **In the Course Schedule below, I provide direct links to each of the chapters and the Inquizitive modules for each chapter.**

If you do not use the eBook provided on Course Connect (and do not acquire the book through the Millsaps Bookstore), make sure to obtain the correct edition using the ISBN numbers listed below. (Most online book vendors allow you to enter the ISBN number instead of the book title.)

Paperback: 978-1-324-03996-9

E-book: 978-1-324-04006-4

In addition, **I have put a physical copy of the textbook on Course Reserve at the Millsaps-Wilson Library.** You won’t be able to take the textbook home with you, but you can borrow it to read in the library. Just stop by the circulation desk and request the textbook for GOVT 1000.

Attendance Policy

Irregular attendance under normal circumstances indicates that a student may be having difficulties adjusting to the course or to the College. Email your professors with any questions/concerns about engaging in courses when you miss classes due to illness.

In-person attendance for all class/lab meetings is the expectation for all students. Students should notify their instructor of the need to miss a class, laboratory, or studio session prior to the meeting time and provide a valid reason why they will be absent. Faculty will be regularly reporting attendance to the College, regardless of whether or not that attendance is a factor in a student's grade.

Students will be excused from class in cases of documented illness, family emergency, religious observance, or participation in a co-curricular activity. If you visit the Health Center and receive a note excusing you from class due to illness, there's no need to deliver it in person; just take a photograph and email it to me.

If you accumulate three (3) unexcused absences, I will ask that Dr. Lewton-Yates (Assistant Dean of Student Success) issue you a yellow card. After six (6) unexcused absences, I will request that the Office of Records drop you from the class roster with an F. If you accumulate six (6) absences before the March 26 late-withdrawal deadline, I will recommend that you withdraw to avoid failing the course. Please remember that attendance and active engagement in the course are critical for meeting the learning objectives outlined above.

Deadlines and Policy on Make-Up Assignments

Written assignments will lose points for late submissions. This includes both of the short papers. For these assignments, **you will lose ten (10) percentage points (one letter grade) for each day that the paper was overdue.** Papers will be considered "one day late" if they were submitted the day the paper was due but after the 7:30pm deadline.

Students must take the exams as scheduled. **If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will receive zero (0) percent on the exam, and will not have the opportunity to complete a make-up exam.** If you have an *excused* absence the day of the exam, we will schedule a make-up exam at the earliest possible opportunity.

Similarly, students must attend the "Students as Teachers" workshops and scheduled check-ins with Dr. Schmidt. **If you miss a workshop, group check-in, or individual check-in without a valid excuse, you will receive zero (0) points for that workshop or check-in, and will not have the opportunity to complete an alternate assignment.** However, if you are *excused* from a workshop or check-in (due to documented illness, religious observance, family emergency, or participation in a co-curricular activity), there's no need to make-up the points; that particular workshop or check-in will simply not factor into your grade.

Religious Observance

For a majority of the world's citizens, religion is an important dimension of human life. In a religiously diverse country like the United States, it is more important than ever to honor and respect our colleagues' diverse religious traditions.

Students will not be penalized for missing class due to religious observance, including Ash Wednesday services on Wednesday, March 5. Please let Dr. Schmidt know ahead of time if you cannot attend class due to religious observance. More generally, please let me know if I can do anything to accommodate your religious practice.

In addition, please note that the Holy Month of Ramadan runs from Friday, February 28 through Saturday, March 29. For practicing Muslims, Ramadan is a time for prayer and fasting; Muslims refrain from eating or drinking (including water) from sun-up to sun-down. **During the Holy Month of Ramadan, please be respectful of classmates that might be fasting.** To show respect to classmates that might be fasting, I encourage you to refrain from eating and drinking in class during this time.

Office Hours

Regardless of your performance in this class, I encourage you to stop by my Office Hours. During this time, I will certainly help students that might be struggling in GOVT 1000 – or who need clarification about the course material. However, I am also interested in your professional and intellectual development. Please see me as a resource and ally as you progress through your academic careers.

My Office Hours are **Mondays and Wednesdays (9:30-11:00am) and Fridays (3:00-4:00pm)**, in the GOVT offices (first floor, Sullivan-Harrell). To make an appointment to see me, visit <https://calendly.com/ericobertschmidt>. However, you can drop by my office even if you haven't made an appointment. If I'm not in a meeting or otherwise occupied, I'll be happy to speak with you.

Emergency Remote Instruction Plan

In the event GOVT 1000 shifted to remote instruction (either for a shorter period of time or for the remainder of the semester), we would hold class over Zoom. I would continue to communicate with the class by email; the Zoom link to attend class would be available on Course Connect. Insofar as possible, I would still expect students to participate in class discussion with their cameras on. All remaining exams would be converted to a timed online format. The deadlines for the short papers would remain unchanged. The "Students as Teachers" workshops would be conducted virtually with students assigned to break-out rooms that correspond with their workshop group. Group and individual check-ins with Dr. Schmidt would take place over Zoom. If students were unable to participate due to Internet connectivity issues, I would address those situations on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, the attendance policy would still apply.

Course Structure, Assignments, and Grading

Course Structure

Each class session will meet for 90 minutes. Please keep the following format and guidelines in mind.

- **You are expected to show up for class on time.** If you arrive late, enter the classroom as quietly as possible. If you are late to class, this will be reported to the Registrar's Office when I submit my attendance for that day.
- **Class on Tuesday will have an "interactive lecture" format.** Students should **come to class already having read the assigned chapter**. I strongly encourage you to take notes and ask questions. There is no need to copy down everything on my slides; just focus on the big-picture points and ask about areas that are unclear. **I will post the slides to Course Connect before class to help you follow along, but this is *not* meant to be a substitute for completing the assigned reading.**
- **On Thursday, the entire class will be devoted to a "Students as Teachers" workshop** – where you'll work in pre-assigned groups to brainstorm the most effective ways to teach this material to yourselves and your classmates. You are required to attend these workshops and make a good-faith effort to participate.

"Students as Teachers" Workshops (50% of Grade)

Students do not learn course material simply by attending class and reading the textbook. Moreover, learning is far more complex than memorization of facts and concepts. Real learning – mastery of the course material – happens **when you have learned how to *teach* the material to someone else**. Each Thursday, we will hold a "Students as Teachers" workshop. Here's how this will work:

1. For each week that we cover one of the textbook chapters, you'll find **four *question sets*** associated with the chapter for that week – involving core concepts that you should be able to explain to your classmates.
2. As you complete the assigned readings for the week and attend class on Tuesday, think about both the answers to these questions and ***how you would teach this material to your classmates*** if you were called upon to do so. This step is important, because by thinking about how you would explain something to someone else, you are much more likely to learn it yourself. You'll also recognize more quickly the things you do not understand and need clarification about – making our class discussions much more productive.
3. At the beginning of the semester, **I will randomly assign students to four groups; these will be your groups for the entire semester**. Make an effort to get to know your group members! You're encouraged to prepare for the "Students as Teachers" days together – but remember that each student is responsible for learning the material well enough that you could explain it to someone not familiar with the concepts.
4. **On days when we have a "Students as Teachers" workshop, come to class prepared to teach your classmates about the material in all four question sets**. Will this require more work on your part? Absolutely. But I *promise* that you will learn more than you would by passively reading the textbook and attending class.

5. **At the beginning of each “Students as Teachers” session, I will randomly assign four students from each group to be their group’s student-teachers** – one student for each set of questions. We’ll then break into groups for **four 20-minute sessions**, devoted to each set of questions in turn.
6. **Each session will *start* with the assigned student-teacher making their best attempt to teach their fellow group members the material contained in that question set.** This should generally be about 3-5 minutes.
 - **Note:** teaching involves *explaining*. Note-taking is fine, and it’s fine to compose pre-written answers to the questions to help you learn the material. But when you’re called upon to explain the material to your classmates, **please don’t just read off a prepared response**. (A few jotted-down notes are fine.) Aim to know the material well-enough that you’re not dependent on something you wrote before class.
7. **Following the presentation by each group’s student-teacher, group members should *work together* to help the student-teacher polish their presentation and think about the most effective way to present this material.** Be as creative as possible. If you’re truly stumped about a concept, ask me for clarification. I will also (when needed!) intervene to nudge your conversations in a more productive direction. But if everyone comes to class prepared, you should all be able to compare notes about the most effective ways to do that.
8. **Five minutes before the end of each session, I will randomly select one group. The assigned student-teacher from that group will *re-teach* the material to the entire class** – ideally, incorporating everything from the group discussion. We will repeat this entire process for each of the question sets.

IMPORTANT NOTE: while student-teachers will be randomly assigned, each student probably won’t be a “student-teacher” *exactly* the same number of times during the semester. Some students will be put “on the spot” a few more times than others – but not by much. Try not to worry about this. **The “student-teacher” assignments are just a way to facilitate group-work; no matter your assigned role during the workshop, you will receive credit for *attending and participating*, not for how well you performed.** This means that you should *experiment* with different strategies for teaching and learning the material; if you try out a new strategy and it doesn’t work for you, you will *not* lose points. **This is intended as a low-pressure environment for you to think and reflect about the way you learn.** To that end, everyone should be stepping up to help themselves and their fellow group members learn the material. This isn’t a competition.

I have posted a rubric to Course Connect outlining what I consider to be high and low-quality participation in the workshops. **The rubric won’t be used to grade your participation, but it should give you an idea of what I’m looking for.** Please know that I am **NOT** looking for perfection. Rather, I want you to approach the workshops with a *process-oriented mindset*, aimed at working together to brainstorm different strategies for teaching and learning the material.

Your total grade for the workshop will be based on three things:

1. **Workshop attendance.** This is self-explanatory. If you miss a workshop without an excused absence, you can’t receive credit for participating.
2. **Group check-ins with Dr. Schmidt (Weeks 5, 10, and 13).** You will have **three group meetings** with me over the course of the semester, scheduled during a time that works for everyone in your group. We’ll discuss how your group believes the workshops are going, as well

as what strategies have worked and not worked for you. You will not be graded on how “well” you dialogue with me; I just want you to *show up*. Because you’ll receive full credit simply for attending, there’s no need to exaggerate your preparation and performance or worry about saying the right thing. Trust me that I will make the conversation worthwhile.

3. **Individual check-ins with Dr. Schmidt (Weeks 4, 8, and 12).** Similarly, you’ll have **three individual meetings** with me outside of class. In these meetings, we’ll focus on your unique approach to the workshops – the way *you* learn, and the things that make it more difficult for you to learn. Together, we’ll reflect on ways to improve your preparation and participation moving forward, not just for GOVT 1000, but for your other courses and co-curricular commitments too. Once again, you simply need to *show up* for these meetings. Trust that I will help you reflect constructively on your learning in GOVT 1000.

Each workshop is worth 10 points; each check-in is worth 30 points. Your total grade on the workshop component of the course is out of 290 points. To receive full credit for each workshop or check-in, you simply need to attend. (Good-faith participation is expected). **If you miss a workshop or check-in without a legitimate excuse, you will receive zero (0) points for that workshop or check-in, and will not have the opportunity to complete a make-up assignment.**

Exams (30% of Grade; 15% Each)

There will be two (2) in-class exams. Exam 1 will take place during our regularly scheduled class time; Exam 2 will take place (still in Christian Center 131) during the final exam period. Exam 2 will not be cumulative; it will cover everything since the previous exam.

Exam Number	Date	Time
Exam 1	Thursday, February 27	12:50-2:20pm
Exam 2	Saturday, May 3	2:00-4:00pm

Students can earn up to 100 points on each exam. Each exam will contain **fifteen (15) identification questions** asking you to define a term and explain its significance (60 points; 4 points each), and **two short essays** (40 points; 20 points each).

ID and essay questions will be graded on how completely and accurately you answered the questions. Responses will not be graded on your writing quality, grammar, spelling, or punctuation. However, remember that if your writing contains many grammatical or spelling errors, it might be more difficult to assess whether you understand the course material. **In addition, you must write legibly; if I cannot read your handwriting, it will be impossible to grade your exam.**

Make-up exams will not be allowed except for excused absences (i.e., family emergency, documented illness, religious observance, or participation in a co-curricular activity).

Short Papers (20% of Grade; 10% Each)

Twice during the semester, you must write a **short paper** (2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font), applying the class material to think critically about the challenges of democratic citizenship. No later than the second week of classes, I will post a rubric to Course Connect outlining my expectations for these papers; the prompts are as follows:

1. **Short Paper #1 (due Friday, March 21):** Imagine that you were speaking with a friend or family member that disagrees with some of your political positions or gets their political news from different sources than you. Based on what you learned during our unit on the media, **how would you encourage them to be a more unbiased, critical consumer of political news?** Along the same lines, what are you willing to change about the way you consume political news – and why is this important for the health of democracy in the United States?
2. **Short Paper #2 (due Monday, April 21):** At Millsaps College and many other institutions of higher education, students are reluctant to discuss their political perspectives with classmates or professors. Why do you think this is? **In your judgment, what are three (3) ways that professors at Millsaps could help promote civil discourse on campus? Similarly, what are you willing to do to create space to learn from classmates and professors that may not share your values or political beliefs?**

Grading

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

- **Exam #1**, 15 percent
- **Exam #2**, 15 percent
- **“Students as Teachers” Workshops and Check-Ins**: 50 percent
 - You will receive full credit on this component of the course if you attend all of the Thursday workshops, all three individual check-ins, and all three group check-ins (not counting excused absences).
- **Short Paper #1**, 10 percent
- **Short Paper #2**, 10 percent

Final grades will be assigned as follows, based on your final weighted percentage in the class:

Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
100-93	A	92-90	A-	89-87	B+
86-83	B	82-80	B-	79-77	C+
76-73	C	72-70	C-	69-67	D+
66-63	D	62-60	D-	59-0	F

Note: Before final grades are reported to the Registrar's Office, your weighted percentage will be rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, a student who finishes the class with 89.7% would earn an A- (90%); a student with an 89.1% would earn a B+ (89%). Grades on individual assignments will not be rounded.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Tuesday, January 14 - Thursday, January 16): Course Introduction; Metacognitive Skills for Student Success

- **Tuesday:** Syllabus overview and course requirements. (Remember that **syllabi are contracts** between the student and instructor; you are responsible for **carefully** reading this syllabus, reviewing the course requirements, and asking Dr. Schmidt to clarify anything that is unclear.)
- **Thursday:** **Bring to class whichever digital device you plan to use to complete your reading assignments (e.g., iPhone, laptop).** We will discuss strategies for reading on screens, as well as how to navigate the assigned readings more generally.

Week 2 (Tuesday, January 21 – Thursday, January 23): The Constitution and the Founding

- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/44!/4>
- Inquisitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217973>
- **Read (for Thursday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 2**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, what was the *main* disagreement between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists? How did this disagreement influence each group's position on the Bill of Rights? Which group wanted to add a Bill of Rights to the Constitution, and what did they want the Bill of Rights to do? What compromise did the Federalists and Anti-Federalists reach about the Bill of Rights?
 2. Explain what the "Great Compromise" was about. What did states with larger populations want? What did states with smaller populations want? What *was* the compromise and why was it significant?

3. Explain the compromise that resulted in the “Three-Fifths Clause.” What was the position of delegates from “slave states?” What was the position of delegates from states whose economies did not depend on slavery? What was ironic about the positions that both groups of delegates took?
 4. The U.S. Constitution set up a national government with **separation of powers** between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and **checks and balances** in the exercise of power. Explain why the Framers thought separation of powers and checks and balances were so important. What are some examples of the separation of powers? What are some examples of checks and balances?
- **Note:** due to the cancellation of classes on Tuesday, January 21, **there will be no “Students as Teachers” workshop on Chapter 2.** Instead, Thursday’s class will be a simple interactive lecture on the material in Chapter 2.

Week 3 (Tuesday, January 28 - Thursday, January 30): Federalism

- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/60!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217974>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 3**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday’s class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. What *is* federalism? Try to explain the concept to someone that has never heard about it before. If you were setting up a government, what are some reasons why you might want to adopt federalism? What are some reasons why you might *not* want to adopt federalism?
 2. Teach your classmates about the different kinds of federalism. You should cover **dual** federalism, **cooperative** federalism, **picket fence** federalism, and **coercive** federalism. If you wanted the national government to have much more power than the state governments, what kind(s) of federalism would you prefer – and why? If you were concerned that the national government has too much power relative to the states, what kind of federalism would you prefer – and why?
 3. Which parts of the Constitution make clear that the national government is more powerful than the state governments? On the other hand, which parts of the Constitution make clear that the state governments still have significant autonomy?
 4. Describe the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013). What was this decision about and what did the Court decide? Why was the decision seen as a victory for “states’ rights?” If Congress disagreed with the Court’s decision, what could they do? (**Note:** the material needed to answer this question won’t be in Chapter 3 of your textbook, but we will cover it in class.)
- **Thursday:** “Students as Teachers” workshop on Chapter 3

Week 4 (Tuesday, February 4 - Thursday, February 6): Civil Liberties

- **During Week 4, you must attend an INDIVIDUAL meeting with Dr. Schmidt, to discuss your workshop preparation and participation. I will pass around a sign-up sheet beforehand.**

- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/76!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217975>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 4**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. Explain the concept of civil liberties. What *are* civil liberties? How would you explain the importance of civil liberties to someone not familiar with the U.S. political system?
 2. Explain the concept of **due process**. What civil liberties related to due process are protected by the Bill of Rights? Discuss different ways that someone might interpret the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishment."
 3. While the Bill of Rights originally applied only to the national government, the Supreme Court has held that the state governments are bound by the Bill of Rights too. Describe how the process of **selective incorporation** changed the meaning of the Bill of Rights, and explain why the Fourteenth Amendment's "due process clause" was so important to this process.
 4. While the term "privacy" does not appear in the Bill of Rights, many constitutional scholars believe that the Bill of Rights protects citizens' right to privacy. What are some parts of the Bill of Rights that don't make sense unless the government must protect individuals' personal privacy? Explain how someone might make the argument that the Bill of Rights protects the right to privacy.
- **Thursday:** "Students as Teachers" workshop on Chapter 4

Week 5 (Tuesday, February 11 - Thursday, February 13): Civil Rights

- During Week 5, your workshop group must attend a **GROUP** meeting with Dr. Schmidt. I will circulate a Doodle poll to find a time that works for all group members.
- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/96!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217976>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 5**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. Explain the concept of civil rights. What *are* civil rights, and how do they differ from civil liberties? How would you explain the difference between civil rights and civil liberties to someone not familiar with the U.S. political system?
 2. What does the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment say? (Paraphrase; don't just quote verbatim.) Given that the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868, what are some reasons why states like Mississippi were able to ignore the plain meaning of the Equal Protection Clause for most of the next 100 years?
 3. Describe what was accomplished by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. What are some practical reasons why these pieces of legislation – while significant – have not completely eliminated all forms of discrimination in the United States?

4. Explain the difference between *de jure* discrimination and *de facto* discrimination. Why is it more difficult to prohibit *de facto* discrimination? If the United States or state governments wanted to do so, what are some ways that we could legislate to prevent *de facto* discrimination?

- **Wednesday: Research and Experiential Learning Day (College-wide)**
 - **Students can earn up to six (6) percentage points of extra credit on Exam #1, by attending up to three (3) events or panels throughout the day.** Each panel/event (three maximum) that you attend will be worth two (2) percentage points of extra credit on Exam #1. **To be sure that your attendance is recorded, check-in using the QR codes provided at each event.**
- **Thursday:** “Students as Teachers” workshop on Chapter 5

Week 6 (Tuesday, February 18 - Thursday, February 20): The Media

- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/124!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217978>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 7**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday’s class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. Describe the **business model** of journalism and the **watchdog model** of journalism. Which of these comes closest to describing how the media operate in the United States today? In other words, what is the *main* priority of news organizations? How might the media’s “business” and “watchdog” roles conflict?
 2. News organizations make lots of decisions about news coverage, including filtering and framing. What does **filtering** mean? What does **framing** mean? Give some examples of filtering and framing to help people unfamiliar with these terms understand them better. Then (perhaps with another example or two), explain how filtering and framing might make it *seem* like the media are motivated by political bias, even where no bias exists.
 3. What is the Federal Communications Commission? When was it created and **why** was it created? Beginning in the mid-1980s, why did the FCC begin to reduce the number of regulations on broadcast media? How has deregulation changed the way that Americans consume political news?
 4. The media and politicians have an *extremely* complicated relationship. Explain this complicated relationship to someone that might assume (incorrectly) that politicians and the media are always enemies. Why do politicians need the media? Why do the media need politicians?
- **Thursday:** “Students as Teachers” workshop on Chapter 7

EXAM #1 will take place in class on Thursday, February 27. Students must take the exam as scheduled; make-up exams will only be allowed in cases of documented illness, family emergency, religious observance, or participation in a co-curricular activity.

Week 7 (Tuesday, February 25 – Thursday, February 27): Exam #1

- **Tuesday:** No new reading; **exam review session.** Bring questions about the material and be ready for group-work designed to put you in the strongest-possible position to do well on the exam.
- **Thursday: Exam #1.** You will have the full class period to write your exam. It will include 15 short ID questions (define a term and explain its significance) and two short essay questions. Exam booklets will be provided. You are not allowed to refer to your notes or textbook while you write your exam.

Week 8 (Tuesday, March 4 - Thursday, March 6): Political Parties

- During Week 8, you must attend an **INDIVIDUAL** meeting with Dr. Schmidt, to discuss your workshop preparation and participation. I will pass around a sign-up sheet beforehand.
- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/138!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217979>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 8**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. What *are* political parties, generally speaking? How do political parties create a more meaningful connection between elected officials and the people they represent? Then, explain the differences between the *parties in government*, *party organizations*, and *parties in the electorate*. Why are these distinctions important for understanding the role of political parties in the United States?
 2. For the vast majority of U.S. history, there have been only *two* competitive political parties at any given time. Explain why the way that *elections* are conducted in the United States makes it difficult for more than two parties to compete. (The term you're looking for here is "Duverger's Law.")
 3. What is a *party system*? Describe the *current* party system in the United States (1968-present), as well as the *previous* party system (1932-1968). What must happen for a party system to *realign*? If someone did not know that the United States has had multiple party systems, what is something they might use to criticize *today's* Republican Party? What about *today's* Democratic Party? (**Note:** lots of people have heard the phrase "two-party system," meaning that the United States has only two major parties. The term "party system" refers to something different – it's a broader concept, somewhat more complicated.)
 4. The United States is the only country in the world that uses *primary elections* to select the nominees for almost every partisan office. Which of the three *types* of party – party organization, party in government, party in the electorate – has the most power in a primary election? If the U.S. didn't use primary elections, which of the three types of party would select the nominees? What are the best arguments for having primary elections? What are the best arguments for getting rid of them?
- **Thursday:** "Students as Teachers" workshop on Chapter 8

SPRING BREAK runs from March 8-16. We will not meet on Tuesday, March 11 or Thursday, March 13.

Week 10 (Tuesday, March 18 - Thursday, March 20): Interest Groups

- During Week 10, your workshop group must attend a **GROUP** meeting with Dr. Schmidt. I will circulate a Doodle poll to find a time that works for all group members.
- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/166!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217981>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 10**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. What *are* interest groups, and which part of the Constitution protects their right to organize? In theory, how do interest groups create a more meaningful connection between the government and the people? Why did the number of interest groups grow exponentially during the twentieth century?
 2. Interest groups face a **collective action problem**. Explain the general concept of a collective action problem; then, explain the specific collective action problem that interest groups face. What are three ways that interest groups seek to overcome this collective action problem? Which strategy tends to be the most successful – and why?
 3. In general terms, what is **lobbying**? What is the difference between **direct lobbying** and **grassroots lobbying**? Who do direct lobbyists tend to lobby – lawmakers that disagree with them, lawmakers that agree with them, or lawmakers that are not sure where they stand? Why is this? When might an interest group prefer to use grassroots lobbying rather than direct lobbying – and why?
 4. Alongside their lobbying activities, interest groups often engage in **electioneering**. In general terms, what is electioneering? Explain how the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) dramatically increased the amount of money spent on political campaigns. How did the Court justify its decision?
- **Thursday:** "Students as Teachers" workshop on Chapter 10
- **Friday: Short Paper #1 due at 7:30pm**; upload to Course Connect in .doc or .docx format.

SHORT PAPER #1 is due on Friday, March 21 at 7:30pm. Papers should be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font). Upload your paper to Course Connect in .doc or .docx format.

Week 11 (Tuesday, March 25 - Thursday, March 27): Elections

- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/152!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217980>

- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 9**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. In as much detail as possible, teach us about the **Electoral College** – the United States' unique way of selecting the president and vice president. How does the Electoral College relate to the "Great Compromise" at the Constitutional Convention?
 2. Explain the different kinds of *primary elections* that states might conduct. In particular, what are the differences between an *open*, *closed*, and *semi-closed* primary? What are some reasons why a political party might want to hold an open primary? What are some reasons why a political party might want to hold a closed primary? (**Note:** for this question set, you might need to draw on some of the material from Chapter 8 too.)
 3. Scholars have written about the *paradox of voting* – the fact that lots of people vote, even though their decision is extremely unlikely to affect the outcome. Even if people don't think their vote will matter, what are some other reasons that people might vote? What are some reasons why people might *not* vote?
 4. In recent years, the Republican Party has advocated stricter regulations on voting, purportedly to prevent fraud. In contrast, the Democratic Party has advocated making it easier to vote. **Explain how this debate reflects the composition of the party coalitions.** Why does the Republican Party benefit from laws that bar campaigns from collecting voters' absentee ballots? Why does the Democratic Party benefit from laws that provide more opportunities for early voting and absentee voting? (**Note:** Chapter 9 doesn't delve too deeply into this question, but we will address it in class.)
- **Thursday:** "Students as Teachers" workshop on Chapter 9

REMINDER: Your last day to drop GOVT 1000 is Wednesday, March 26. If you believe you must withdraw from GOVT 1000 (or that you are in danger of failing the course), I **strongly** encourage you to consult both myself and your academic advisor **in advance** of this deadline.

Week 12 (Tuesday, April 1 - Thursday, April 3): Congress

- During Week 12, you must attend an **INDIVIDUAL** meeting with Dr. Schmidt, to discuss your workshop preparation and participation. I will pass around a sign-up sheet beforehand.
- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/180!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217982>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 11**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. What does it mean for a member of Congress to act like a **trustee**? What does it mean for a member of Congress to act like a **delegate**? On which types of issues are members of Congress most likely to act like trustees? On which types of issues are they most likely to act like delegates? What is the **electoral connection**, and why does it encourage members to act like delegates rather than trustees?

2. Most **incumbents** are easily reelected, especially in the U.S. House. Why is this? What does it tell us about the way members of Congress approach their job responsibilities?
3. What is **legislative redistricting**, and why is it necessary in the first place? What is **gerrymandering**, and why is it such a big deal? What has the Supreme Court said about *partisan* gerrymandering? What has the Court said about *racial* gerrymandering? Why is it sometimes difficult to tell whether a district has been gerrymandered for partisan advantage or racial advantage?
4. Explain how the **filibuster** works in the United States Senate. What *used* to happen when somebody wanted to “filibuster” a bill? *Today*, what does it mean for the minority party to “filibuster” a bill? Why have filibusters become more common? And what would the Senate need to do to eliminate the filibuster?

- **Thursday:** “Students as Teachers” workshop on Chapter 11

Week 13 (Tuesday, April 8 - Thursday, April 10): The Presidency

- During Week 13, your workshop group must attend a **GROUP** meeting with Dr. Schmidt. I will circulate a Doodle poll to find a time that works for all group members.
- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/194!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217983>
- **Read (for Tuesday):** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 12**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday’s class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:

1. According to the **executive vesting clause** of the U.S. Constitution (Article II, Section I), “The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.” What does it mean for the president to be the **chief executive**? In addition to their authority as chief executive, what are some other forms of authority given to the president by the U.S. Constitution?
2. What is the president’s **statutory authority** and how does it differ from their **constitutional authority**? What does it mean for the president to issue an **executive order** and how does this relate to their statutory authority? If you wanted to sue the president’s administration to overturn an executive order, what (in general terms) would you need to argue?
3. What is **unitary executive theory**? According to unitary executive theory, what does the executive vesting clause mean? What are some things that a president might do if they subscribed to unitary executive theory? What are some things that we would *not* expect a president to do if they believed that unitary executive theory describes their Article II powers? In your judgment, do most presidents subscribe to unitary executive theory? Why or why not?
4. In as much detail as possible, explain the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Trump v. United States* (2024). How did the Court justify its decision? In what ways was the Court’s decision similar to their holding in *United States v. Nixon* (1974)? In what ways was it a departure?

- **Thursday:** “Students as Teachers” workshop on Chapter 12

Week 14 (Tuesday, April 15 - Thursday, April 17): The Bureaucracy

- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/208!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217984>
- Read (for Tuesday): Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 13**. As you read and take notes on the material during Tuesday's class, think about how you might teach the following material to your classmates:
 1. What is the **federal civil service**? What was Congress' rationale for creating the civil service and when did they do so? Why did the size of the federal civil service increase exponentially during the twentieth century? What is the difference between the federal civil service and the **Senior Executive Service**? Given the substantial job security enjoyed by federal civil servants, why would anyone give up their civil service protections to work in the Senior Executive Service?
 2. In *general* terms, what is a "**principal-agent game**?" How does the **problem of control** relate to the concept of a principal-agent game? How does the principal-agent game describe the relationship between Congress and the bureaucracy? In *this* context, who (Congress or the bureaucracy) are the principals? Who are the agents? In the relationship between Congress and the bureaucracy, how does the problem of control manifest?
 3. What is a **regulation**, and what makes it different from a *law*? Before a federal agency implements a new regulation or eliminates an existing regulation, what needs to happen? If you wanted to argue that the notice-and-comment procedure is *fair* and *democratic*, what arguments could you make? Similarly, if you wanted to argue that the notice-and-comment procedure is *unfair* and *undemocratic*, what could you say?
 4. What is **bureaucratic drift**? Provide an example or two to help your classmates understand the concept. What are some reasons why someone might assume that bureaucratic drift is relatively minor? What are some reasons why someone might assume that bureaucratic drift is a widespread, major problem? Why is it difficult for Congress to *know* the extent of bureaucratic drift in federal agencies?
- Thursday: "Students as Teachers" workshop on Chapter 13

SHORT PAPER #2 is due on Monday, April 21 at 7:30pm. Papers should be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font). Upload your paper to Course Connect in .doc or .docx format.

Week 15 (Tuesday, April 22 - Thursday, April 24): The Courts; Exam Review

- Monday: Short Paper #2 due at 7:30pm; upload to Course Connect
- eBook chapter: <https://nerd.wwnorton.com/nerd/229767/r/goto/cfi/224!/4>
- Inquizitive module (optional but recommended): <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/217985>
- Read (for Tuesday): Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, **Chapter 14**. While there is no "Students as Teachers" workshop on Chapter 14, the chapter is still **fair game for Exam #2**. I *strongly* encourage you to drill the following questions, to the point where you could teach them to someone not familiar with the material:

1. What does it mean for the U.S. Supreme Court to have the power of *judicial review*? In their decision in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), how did the Supreme Court *give itself* the power of judicial review?
 2. How do most cases reach the Supreme Court? What kinds of cases does the Court typically agree to hear? When the Court declines to hear a case, what happens?
 3. Describe the process by which Justices are appointed and confirmed to the Supreme Court. Why has this process become so polarized? Why did the U.S. Senate eliminate the filibuster for lower court (2013) and then Supreme Court (2017) nominees?
 4. What are some theories about the way that *individual* Supreme Court Justices vote on cases? Why is it so difficult to determine which of these theories are correct?
- **Thursday: exam review session.** Bring questions about the material and be ready for group-work designed to put you in the strongest-possible position to do well on the exam.

Week 16 (Tuesday, April 29 - Thursday, May 1): No regular class meetings of GOVT 1000. The College treats Tuesday, April 29 as a Friday; Thursday, May 1 is Reading Day.

FINALS PERIOD:

EXAM #2 will take place on Saturday, May 3 from 2:00-4:00pm. We'll meet in our usual classroom (Christian Center 132). The exam will cover all the material since Exam #1. The format will be the same as the previous exam: 15 short ID questions and two (2) essay questions.

Campus Resources and Information

Course Connect Support

Course Connect is Millsaps' learning management system. Your courses in Course Connect will provide access to syllabi and important course information. To access Course Connect, visit <https://courses.millsaps.edu> and login with your Millsaps username and password.

For questions about using Course Connect, visit the Course Connect LibGuide for Students: <https://libguides.millsaps.edu/courseconnectstudents>. If you experience issues with Course Connect, contact Rachel Long, Instructional Technology Librarian, at rachel.long@millsaps.edu or librarian@millsaps.edu.

Honor Code

Millsaps College is an academic community dedicated to the pursuit of scholarly inquiry and intellectual growth. The foundation of this community is a spirit of personal honesty and mutual trust. Through their Honor Code, **the students of Millsaps College affirm** their adherence to these

basic ethical principles.

An Honor Code is not simply a set of rules and procedures governing students' academic conduct. It is an opportunity to put personal responsibility and integrity into action. When students agree to abide by an Honor Code, they liberate themselves to pursue their academic goals in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect.

The success of the Honor Code depends on the support of each member of the community. Students and faculty alike commit themselves in their work to the principles of academic honesty. When they become aware of infractions, both students and faculty are obligated to report them to the Honor Council, which is responsible for enforcement. Important information pertaining to the Honor Code can be found in Major Facts. The pledge affirmed by all students upon entering the College is as follows:

As a Millsaps College student, I hereby affirm that I understand the Honor Code and am aware of its implications and of my responsibility to the Code. In the interest of expanding the atmosphere of respect and trust in the College, I promise to uphold the Honor Code and I will not tolerate dishonest behavior in myself or in others.

Each examination, quiz, or other assignment that is to be graded will carry the affirmed pledge: **"I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment. (Signature)"** The abbreviation "Pledged" followed by the student's signature has the same meaning and may be acceptable on assignments other than final examinations.

The following is a representative, but not exhaustive list of academic offenses and violations covered by the Millsaps Academic Honor Code:

- At Millsaps College, **plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:
 - using *words* or *ideas* that are not your own without citing the source
 - copying from a text word for word without both using quotation marks *and* citing the source
 - paraphrasing or summarizing a source without citing the source
 - using language or sentence structures that are *too close* to the original text even while the paraphrase has *mostly* your own language
 - using online paraphrasing tools and artificial intelligence (AI) generators to generate all or part of your assignment, unless you have specific and direct permission from an instructor to do so
 - copying pictures, charts, graphs, or other illustrations without citing the source
 - using your own work from a past class without citation or approval from the instructor
- Dishonesty on examinations and tests
 - Using any outside materials deemed not usable by the professor of the course
 - Giving or receiving answers while taking a test
 - Revealing the content of an exam before others have taken it

- Dishonesty on assignments
 - Receiving unauthorized help on an assignment
 - Submitting the same paper for two classes unless approved by the professors of both classes
 - Interfering with another student's course materials
- Lying about academic matters, including missed assignments or absences
- Unauthorized use of a computer file, program, username, or password
- Unauthorized use of, tampering with, or removing community materials from laboratories or the library

It is the responsibility of students and faculty to report offenses to the Honor Council in the form of a written report. This account must be signed, the accusation explained in as much detail as possible, and submitted to **AcademicAffairs@millsaps.edu**.

Honor Council Members Spring 2025:

Student Members

Caroline Eschete, Chair, senior
Elyse Warren, Vice-Chair, junior
Jack Gaar, Sergeant-At-Arms, junior
Natalie Burke, senior
Shagun Gautam, sophomore
Madeline Black, sophomore
Phillip Antis III, freshman

Faculty Members:

Dr. Krissy Rehm
Dr. Priscilla Fermon
Dr. Shalini Bhawal

Value of Diverse Perspectives, Backgrounds, and Identities

As your instructor, I am committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion at Millsaps. Ultimately, **inclusion is a quality-of-life issue**. Students are unlikely to succeed in (let alone enjoy) an educational environment where their contributions are neither valued nor noticed. More than ever, liberal arts education must celebrate students with under-represented racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations or gender identities, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic statuses. Students with physical or learning disabilities must be fully included in campus life. And instructors must proactively *and quickly* address discrimination in all its forms.

Just as importantly, if you feel under-valued and unnoticed in class, this is probably not your fault. Rather, it is your instructor's responsibility to promote an inclusive learning environment. During the semester, I will do my utmost to promote diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and identities in the classroom. But if I ever fall short, please let me know. Like everyone at Millsaps, I am still learning; like everyone, there are "blind spots" in my cultural sensitivity and awareness. For this reason, I

value *any* feedback that makes my classroom more inclusive – and would consider it a privilege to learn from you.

Pronouns and Identity

Because all people have the right to be addressed in accordance with their personal identity, the instructor will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please let him know how you would prefer to be addressed as soon as possible.

Millsaps-Wilson Library

Library resources can be found on the library's webpage: <https://www.millsaps.edu/library/>. Once on the webpage, you can find the library search engine Big Search, a list of scholarly databases, librarian-created research guides, the hours, and many other resources. Library hours are also available through this link: <https://www.millsaps.edu/library/hours-calendar/>.

Librarians are available to assist with research requests Monday-Friday. We encourage you to visit the library. You can email us at librarian@millsaps.edu to ask questions or to set up a meeting.

Help Desk

ITS HelpDesk is the resource for technical support for students. Services provided include: email, wireless, Office 365 software installation, ID card access, smart classroom - audio visual, faculty staff office computer and network printing and also the College telecom system. The HelpDesk is located in AC100 and can be reached by phone 601-974-1144 or by email at help@millsaps.edu.

The Centers for Writing and Academic Success

All students are strongly encouraged to visit the **Writing Center** and **CASE** (the Center for Academic Success and Excellence). Both centers are staffed by peers trained as academic consultants who support learning and writing across all disciplines of study. Both centers offer appointments in-person as well as limited virtual availability. The Writing Center and CASE share a common appointment scheduler at <https://millsaps.mywconline.com>. To select a consultant in a specific subject area, select that subject area from the "limit to" dropdown menu to view hours and availability in that subject area. Not all consultants offer all types of appointments.

- **The Millsaps Writing Center**

- The Writing Center is located in John Stone Hall, with satellite locations in the library and in CASE. Writing Consultants work with all writers, in all disciplines, at all skill levels, and in all stages of the writing process. We recommend visits **early in the writing process**, such as when you first receive your assignment or are just beginning your research or first-drafting work. Visit <https://millsaps.mywconline.com> for more information about hours, locations, and upcoming events.

- **CASE (Center for Academic Support and Excellence)**

- CASE is located in Academic Complex suite 109 and offers one-to-one consultations and small group study sessions for all students in a range of disciplines, such as math, economics, chemistry, biology, and languages. (Writing Consultants also serve at the CASE location.) Visit <https://millsaps.mywconline.com> for more information about hours, locations, and upcoming events.

Title IX

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility as a member of the faculty. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, if I am made aware of information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on campus, I am required to share it with the College. If students wish to speak with someone confidentially, they should contact Student Life at 601-974-1200.

ADA Accommodations

Under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504, reasonable accommodations may be available for students with disabilities or learning differences. If you have questions or require academic accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at ada@millsaps.edu.

Accommodations will not be granted until you meet with the Coordinator, your letters/documentation are processed, and you meet with your instructor.

CARE

If you find yourself struggling with managing your coursework, physical or mental health, finances, relationships on or off campus, or any other aspect of being a student, Millsaps has resources available to help you. Our team of campus professionals can help you get connected to these free resources. Likewise, if you're concerned about the well-being of a friend or classmate, you can report using this online form https://millsaps-advocate.symlicity.com/care_report and we can get them connected to the help they need. All emergency concerns should be reported to Campus Safety 601-974-1234.

College COVID-19 Information

If a student becomes ill or needs to be quarantined/isolated during the semester, they should consult appropriate medical professionals and follow instructions. It is the responsibility of the student to notify their faculty members that they will be absent from class due to illness. If a faculty member wishes to verify that a student is quarantining or isolating, they may request confirmation from StudentLife@millsaps.edu.