

Lakehead University
Political Science 2335
September 5, 2017 – December 4, 2017

Politics, Government and Society in the United States

Professor Richard Togman
Lecture: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:30pm
Office: RB 2050

Email: rt.togman@gmail.com
Classroom: RB 2044
Office hours: Mondays 2:30-3

"We should not look back unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dearly bought experience."

- George Washington

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

- Barack Obama

Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to understanding American politics. The focus of this course is on grounding students in the fundamental structures of American political life so that students are able to analyze, comprehend and articulate present and future behaviours of the United States government. Accordingly, this course will be divided into roughly two major components. The first component will be an examination of the institutions and structures which shape the realities of political life.

Understanding the origins and workings of Congress, the Presidency and the Judiciary as well as the contextual compromises that were undertaken by the 'founding fathers' is essential to a full appreciation of why American politics is the way it is today. The second component will explore the history of the evolution of the American state itself - originating as a collection of 13 diverse colonies on the eastern seaboard which evolved into a global superpower. Investigating pivotal moments in the process of continental expansion, understanding America's leap into world power status and uncovering the motivations for US power politics in our contemporary environment will be done in the second half of the course.

By giving students a foundational base with which they can build their understanding of US politics, this course will equip students with the ability to come to their own conclusions about the many divisive and sensitive topics which are being hotly debated in the arena of American politics. Consequently, a third component of the course will be student led teaching. Students, working in groups, will become subject matter experts on one area or topic in American domestic politics and give a short lesson to the class in their area of specialty. Doing so will not only enrich the class as they will be exposed to a wide variety of domestic political issues but students will gain the confidence and experience to inform and educate others on ongoing important topics occurring in the United States.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the major structures of US government and understand how these structures shape the landscape of American politics
- Comprehend the motivations and compromises of the Founding Fathers and why it has led to the institutional complexity that exists today
- Articulate how the United States grew from a small group of colonies into a continental and ultimately world power
- Appreciate the cleavages in US politics and understand their connection to America's history
- Become a subject matter expert in one area of US domestic politics and be able to teach others about your topic

Course Website

<https://rttogman.wixsite.com/courses>

The course website is where you will find all the course materials such as the syllabus and powerpoint slides. The website will be regularly updated and will be your main point of contact outside of the classroom for accessing important information.

All readings not from the textbooks will be posted on the course website.

Books, Materials and Readings

Textbook:

1) The textbook we will be using for the 1st half of the course is 'We the People' by Ginsberg, Lowi, Wier, Tolbert and Spitzer. We will be using the 11th edition. This text gives a great foundation in the nuts and bolts of American politics and importantly has a unique tool: InQuizitive. InQuizitive is an online resource that comes with the text. You can purchase a hardcopy of the text from the bookstore or purchase an electronic version of the book (<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad.aspx?id=4294993781>)

You must sign up for InQuizitive. <https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople11ess>

If you need help, please watch this video: <http://bit.ly/nortonregistration>

Your registration code for InQuizitive comes with your textbook.

The student set number for this course is 35691. (see the last page of the syllabus for further details)

2) The second half of the course we'll be using 'America: A Narrative History, 10E' by Shi and Tindall.

You can purchase an ebook version and must sign up for InQuizitive.

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad.aspx?id=4294990590>

If you need help, please watch this video: <http://bit.ly/nortonregistration>

Your registration code for InQuizitive comes with your textbook.

The student set number for this course is 41907.

Crash Course videos – in addition to readings, this video series is a great learning tool. They are fun and easy to understand videos which go over the key ideas for the relevant topics. Watching these videos is as important as the readings.

****All the material in the readings and videos will be tested. Even if we do not cover it specifically in class, all the content assigned for reading/viewing may be on the exams.**

Peer Learning Groups

At the beginning of the term, you will be formed into peer learning groups. These groups will consist of approximately five students who will serve as the backbone of the interactive and group based learning platforms. Numerous academic studies have shown that when students have positive peer support structures in place and can work in teams to supplement individual learning that they consistently perform better on evaluations as well as have more enjoyable classroom experiences and improved mental health outcomes over the course of their university career. These findings support my approach to learning as a social process.

Accordingly, the peer learning groups will be utilized on a regular basis in class as well as outside the classroom. In class discussions, group exercises, case studies, role playing activities and the other interactive and participatory learning tools which will be used in class will be based around your peer groups. In addition, your peer groups are expected to serve as ready-made study groups and peer reviewers. Writing assignments can and likely should be reviewed by your peers prior to submission to get a second set of eyes on your writing and to get feedback previous to being graded. Before exams, groups should test each other and explain concepts and ideas out loud to each other as the verbalization of answers often provides the best check on whether one really knows the answer. Being able to teach concepts to your peers and collaboratively improve answers to achieve the best result will greatly improve your performance on formal evaluations.

Thus, it is worth it to get to know your group members well and hold each other accountable to high levels of performance. This will largely work informally however there will also be a formal group evaluation component in which each member will rate the contributions of their group members. This will account for a portion of the participation grade. Any problems with individual groups or members who consistently free ride should be reported to me directly and will be dealt with accordingly. Active and prepared participation in group activities is a mandatory part of the course and failure to contribute positively to group work will result in a failure of the course. Note, this does not mean that one will just lose marks on participation grades. If one has been determined to be truly neglectful of their peers, disrespectful in any way, disruptive or impeding the successful completion of group activities then they will fail the entire course as a key component of the course is the ability to work effectively in a team based environment to achieve mutually supporting goals.

Organization of Assignments

Presentation – 30%

Midterm – 25%

Participation – 10%

Quizzes – 5%

Final Exam – 30%

Optional Extra Paper – 15%

Assignment Details and Expectations

Presentation (30%)

Working in groups, students will construct and deliver a 15 minute presentation to the class on a contemporary conflict or issue of their choosing related to domestic US politics.

Topics can range broadly but all topics must be pre-approved by the professor. You must submit your topic and have an in-person consultation with the professor by **November 13**. For example, one could choose to examine the history of race-relations from 1800-1950, the legalization of marijuana, the immigration system, the rise of the modern Tea Party movement or abortion. These are just a few examples and the only initial limitations are that no two groups can present on the same topic and that one must cover an area related to US domestic politics (thus one may not analyze the war in Iraq, America's role at the UN or other international political topics).

Students will be graded based on the quality and depth of their content, the structure of the presentation, the ways in which they engage the class and their ability to provide an integrated analysis that is focused on the role of the structures and institutions of US government. For example, if one were covering race relations, it is not enough to merely describe the history of racism and bigotry that has marked African American history. One should go deeper and explain the economic rationale for slavery and how it differed across the country, the political power of Southern states, relevant Supreme Court rulings and how different political parties responded to the issues. Thus, for example, one should be able to answer why African-American relations are different in the United States as opposed to other countries. What is unique about the United States that led to the outcomes as they are? This is a major research project and students must consult with a wide variety of academic sources such as books and journal articles. The quality of one's research will be a major component which will be evaluated. A grading rubric will be provided to provide further guidance.

As well, as part of the presentation grade, students will be required to construct a mini-exam which tests the class on the knowledge which they were supposed to have gained from the presentation. Copies will be distributed to the class as well as the instructor. The mini-exam is not meant to be answered in class but rather to be used as a study tool for students as the material presented by

students will be on the final exam and a number of final exam questions will be drawn from the mini-exam questions created by students. Mini-exams should include a range of question types such as multiple choice, short answer and essay style and draw on both theory learned in class and the concrete knowledge delivered as part of the presentation.

Groups will report a detailed itinerary to the professor as to who was responsible for each component of the presentation. As well, group members will evaluate each other online via the website and assign each member of the group a grade according to their contribution to the presentation. These peer grades will represent a significant portion of the final grade given on the presentation.

Midterm (25%)

The midterm will focus on the structures of American politics and the founding of the United States government. The midterm will be conducted in class on **October 23**. It will be composed of multiple choice, short answers questions and essay style questions. Further details will be provided closer to the date.

Participation: (10%)

A key component of both the class and political life in general is discussion. The ability to communicate one's ideas, thoughts, opinions and beliefs to others lies at the core of politics. This is especially true when one holds views that are outside of the mainstream or dominant positions. Thus, a critical component to this class will be participation in group discussions, debates, role playing exercises and other kinds of interactive activities. It is essential for the productivity and quality of the class that students come prepared and organized. Good questions are just as important as good answers thus it is not as important that one understands all the key concepts perfectly before coming to class but rather that one has done the readings and is prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion, which includes clarifying and explaining material through pointed and well thought through questions. Attendance counts towards your participation grade as even if you don't feel comfortable with the material prior to class, the process of being physically present and listening to the discussions and debates holds academic merit and can provide for a productive learning experience.

In addition to classroom discussion an important part of your participation will be in contributing to the development of the course itself. Each week members of one or two peer groups will be required to submit feedback relating to the delivery of content, the format of discussions, the pacing of the class or any other factor they think relevant which could improve the learning environment. Students responsible for feedback will be rotated such that every person will have the opportunity to give feedback at least once or twice over the course of the term. Your feedback will be anonymous and confidential and will only be used for the purpose of making sure that the learning environment is as inclusive and student centered as possible.

As well, peer reviews will be conducted monthly so that each group member has the chance to evaluate the other members of the group. These peer evaluations will build in as part of the participation grade.

Group members who are evaluated by their group as being unprepared, neglectful and generally burdens to their group will be penalized severely as risk failing the course entirely.

Peer evaluations and student feedback on each class will be done online via the course website.

In class interactions are worth 5% and online feedback is worth 5%.

Quizzes (5%)

There will be two types of quizzes. Homework quizzes and in-class quizzes. Homework quizzes will use the Inquizitive online tool that accompanies the textbook. Please learn how to best use the Inquizitive tool and review the tutorial it provides. For each chapter reading assigned, you will be expected to complete the Inquizitive questions for that chapter (i.e. if chapter 7 is assigned to read you are also expected to complete the Inquizitive questions for that chapter). The Inquizitive tool will track your answers and give you a grade based on how well you complete them. You are expected to complete the Inquizitive questions individually (group work is not allowed here), although you are allowed to use your textbook while answering questions. Consider these open-book quizzes. This is a great learning tool that allows you to test your knowledge in a low stakes environment before the exams. Your cumulative grade on the Inquizitive questions will be counted towards your quiz mark for the course.

In addition, there will be multiple in-class quizzes every single class. However, these will not be graded. These are meant as a learning tool which will test whether you have done the readings and come prepared for class as well as your comprehension during class. It is meant as an interactive exercise designed to help the student gauge whether they are understanding the material and for the instructor to get feedback from the class as to whether the material was delivered in an effective manner that facilitated learning.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will be cumulative and test knowledge of core content derived from the entire term. Details of the final exam will be discussed in class towards the end of the term. The final exam will be conducted in a '2 stage' fashion. For a 3 hour final exam, the first 2.25 hours will be done individually, as typical of exam periods. After completing and submitting the first section of the final exam, the second section will be done in groups. The weighting of the sections shall be 90% of your final exam grade comes from section one with 10% coming from section two. This will be explained further and in more detail in class. This style of exam is designed to test your individual competency of the material as well as your ability to work collaboratively in a group setting to maximize group knowledge.

Optional Extra Paper (15%)

The optional paper will be a final paper due on the last day of class. The topic will be chosen in consultation with the professor. Therefore, before choosing to do the final paper, you must have a meeting with the professor, in person, to inform of your intent to complete the paper and to have your proposed topic approved. The topic can be on any aspect of domestic US politics with the exception that you cannot write your paper on the same topic you did your presentation on.

The 15% that the paper represents will be substituted for 15% worth of your midterm grade. Thus, if you choose to write the final paper, then your midterm will be worth 10% and the paper will be worth 15% of your final grade. Once you have submitted your final paper, the grade that you receive stands. Regardless if it is higher or lower than your midterm grade, the final paper mark will assume a 15% value towards your final grade. There will be no appeals or revisions of final paper grades.

The final paper will be 15 pages in length, double spaced.

Grading Guidelines

Participation Grade Guidelines

Participation will be graded based on the quality and quantity of your contributions. A portion of the participation grade will be allocated purely based on attendance. Attendance is crucial to the success of the class as a whole and of the group activities and discussions. There is much to be learned from quiet listening even if one does not feel confident in the material and a portion of your grade will be earned simply from showing up. Moreover, often we know much more than we think we do and even if one is relatively unprepared for a particular class, insight from your prior knowledge or readings will pop into your head during discussions. Thus, coming to class consistently will yield positive benefits as linkages will be drawn and knowledge will accumulate from week to week. In addition, if you do not come to class you will be letting down your peer learning group members as they will rely on you to contribute to discussion and to participate actively. Not showing up hurts others as well as yourself.

The remaining grade will be assigned based on your contributions to furthering the learning of your peers through the sharing of your thoughts and knowledge. Quality is more important than quantity and being prepared for class and having readings done becomes apparent quickly when one must verbalize and communicate ideas. Consistent, high quality participation in discussions, debates, group work and activities will yield a high grade as it is very possible to score 100% in one's participation grade. Participating in small groups counts as much as participating in large groups and all will be given numerous opportunities to contribute to the maintenance of a high quality of classroom conduct. I encourage everyone to speak their mind as in doing so you will not only be awarded marks for every contribution but you will quickly find the class more enjoyable and fun and you will learn better through the social process of learning. Students will be observed during group activities and actively contributing members will receive higher participation marks than those who stay silent or free ride. Peer evaluations will also count towards participation grades as this will help ensure a common standard upheld collectively by all concerned.

As well, a portion of your participation grade will be for completing feedback for the course. This will take the form of a short online survey. The content is anonymous but the survey does record who answered the survey. Completing the survey will result in full marks for this component.

Presentation Grade Guidelines

The presentation will be graded on the quality of the content as well as the style of delivery. Presentations must go into depth on the relevant background of the issue, the facts on the ground, the strategies of the principal actors and the manner in which the various structures of government interact on the issue.

The depth and breadth of the information will be evaluated and, importantly, how well that information was communicated to the class. A key aspect of the presentation will be the effectiveness of one's chosen presentation and communication strategy. For example, reading off of PowerPoint slides will result in a failure to engage one's audience but also in a failure to properly demonstrate expertise in a subject. Students must engage their audience and use a variety of methods of presentation that ensure students learn the material (as they will be tested on it in the final exam) as well as to ensure that they are active participants in their own learning. I encourage you to do some research on methods of active and participatory learning and to think creatively of ways to engage your audience.

Demonstrated expertise in subject	/ 40
Clear, consistent and logical flow of presentation	/ 10
Audience Engagement	/ 10
Mini-exam	/ 10
Analysis of role played by institutions/structures of government	/ 30

Course Schedule

Sept 6 – Introduction

Foundations

Sept 11 – Topic: Theories of Government

Reading: none

Participatory Activity: Draw up social contract for this class

Sept 13 – Topic: Philosophical Influences on the American Revolution

Reading: John Stuart Mill, 'Considerations on Representative Government' chapter 3

John Locke, 'Two Treatise on Government' chapter 4

James Otis, 'The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved'

Participatory Activity: Identify philosophical influences in Otis

Sept 18– Topic: Colonial History

Reading: Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Crash Course World

History #26 and #28

Participatory Activity: highlight passages in declaration that directly relate either to
philosophy we covered or reaction to British law

- Online Feedback for Groups 1+2

Setting the Rules of the Game

Sept 20 – Topic: Constitutional Structures Part 1

Reading: *We The People* chapter 2, - do Inquizitive Quiz

Participatory Activity: highlight passages in constitution that grant powers to each
branch of government

- Online Feedback for Groups 1+2

Sept 25 – Topic: Constitutional Structures Part 2

Reading: *We The People* chapters 9 and 10 – do Inquizitive Quiz

Participatory Activity: Debate – Should the Presidential election system be changed?

- Online Feedback for Groups 3+4

Sept 27 – Topic: The Bill of Rights – 1st Amendment

Reading: *We The People* chapter 4 and 12 – do Inquizitive Quiz

Participatory Activity: Debate – Freedom of Speech and Campaign Finance

- Online Feedback for Groups 3+4

Oct 2 – Topic: Growth of the Federal Government and the Bill of Rights – 2nd Amendment

Reading: *We The People* chapter 3 – do Inquizitive Quiz

Participatory Activity: Discussion – what are the proper limits of government?

- Online Feedback for Groups 5+6

Oct 4– Topic: Political Parties part 1

Reading: *We The People* chapter 7, George Washington’s Farewell Address – Do Inquizitive Quiz

Participatory Activity: Role Play – political strategist – How can the Democrats win the next election in 2018?

- Online Feedback for Groups 5+6

Oct 9+11 - Holidays

Oct 16 – Topic: Political Parties part 2

Reading: *We The People* chapter 8, - do Inquizitive Quiz

Crash Course Government and Politics #40

Participatory Activity: Role Play Scenario – interest group – write strategy for how to get your chosen piece of legislation into law

- Online Feedback for Groups 7+8

Oct 18 – trivia for midterm review

Oct 23 – midterm

From Colony to Empire

Oct 25 – Topic: Louisiana Purchase, War of 1812

Reading: *America: A Narrative History* Chapter 7 – do Inquizitive Quiz

Crash Course US History #10, #11, Crash Course World History #30

Participatory Activity: Discussion – Should countries be allowed to buy and sell land? Is it better than war?

- Online Feedback for Groups 7+8

Oct 30 – Topic: Mexican-American War, U.S. Civil War, War on the ‘Indians’

Reading: *America: A Narrative History* Chapter 13 and 14 – do Inquizitive quiz

Crash Course US History #17-#24, Constitution of the Confederate States of America

Participatory Activity: Do states/provinces have the right to secede? What’s your reading of the Constitution on this issue?

- Online Feedback for Groups 9+10

Nov 1- Spanish-American War, World War One, World War Two

Reading: *America: A Narrative History* Chapter 20 and 22 – do Inquizitive Quiz

Crash Course US History #30-#36

Participatory Activity: Was it just to drop atomic bombs on Japan? If you were President, would you authorize their use?

- Online Feedback for Groups 9+10

Nov 6 – Cold War – USA vs Soviet Union – foreign affairs

Reading: *America: A Narrative History* Chapter 28 – do Inquizitive quiz

Crash Course US History #30-#36,

Extra Video: <https://youtu.be/Pbd5CTQCXto>

Participatory Activity: How would you reform the UN Security Council/ Should the USA encourage reform?

- Online Feedback for Groups 11 + 1

Nov 8 – Cold War – domestic affairs

Reading: *America: A Narrative History* Chapter 29 – do Inquizitve Quiz

Crash Course US History #30-#36

Extra Article: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/us-students-get-different-lessons-on-civil-war-depending-on-where-they-live/article36053470/>

- Online Feedback for Groups 11 + 1

Nov 13 – TBD

Nov 15 – TBD

Nov 20 – TBD

Nov 22 - presentations

Nov 27 - presentations

Nov.29 – exam review

December - Exams

Academic Integrity and Responsibility

As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on presentations, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings which appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Academic communities also depend on their members' living up to the commitments they make. By enrolling in this course, you make commitments to an academic community: you are responsible for meeting deadlines, and attending class and engaging in class activities.

If you find that you cannot meet a deadline or cannot participate in a course activity, discuss your situation with your instructor before the deadline or before your absence.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor's prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

Illness and Absence

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Academic Advising. Instructors cannot grant academic concession after

assignment due dates. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Policy on Marking

Once a grade is given, there is a chance to appeal. However, an appeal will not be taken lightly. Firstly, I will not discuss grades until 24 hours after you have received your marked assignment. This allows for time to read and digest the feedback and comments and to reflect on the grade given. Secondly, if an appeal is requested, the student must submit a written statement describing why he/she thinks that the grade is unfair based on the merits of the paper. Afterwards, I will meet with the student to discuss the paper, their appeal and my rationale for either accepting or rejecting the appeal. As part of the review process, I reserve the right to raise or lower the grade given. I do revise grades upwards, as mistakes do happen, but I will not appreciate frivolous or fishing appeals that do not have substantial merit. That being said, I am always happy to discuss with students how they can improve their work in the future and progress towards higher standards to achievement.

We the People

Eleventh Essentials Edition

Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, and Spitzer

Digital Product Registration and Purchase

1. Visit your book's digital landing page:
<https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople11ess>
2. Click the green button in the center of the page.
3. Select "No, I need to register, purchase, or sign up for trial access."
4. Enter your name, school email, and create a password.
5. As you complete registration, you'll have the following access options:
 1. **If you already have a registration code**, enter your registration code and click "Register my Code."
 2. **If you want to purchase digital product access online**, select the "I want to purchase access" option.
 3. **If you want to try digital products before purchasing**, select the "I want to sign up for free trial access" option.
6. The first time you access an activity from the landing page, you'll be asked to enter a Student Set ID number.

Our Student Set ID is: 35691

Need help? Contact Norton Customer Support at <http://support.wwnorton.com>.

Our representatives will help you via live chat once you submit a request form. Be sure to provide us with the following:

Your school
Your instructor's name
Your section name
Your Student Set ID number, if you have one

Or view our Help Notes at <http://wwnorton.com/helpnotes>.

America

A NARRATIVE HISTORY

Tenth Edition

Tindall and Shi

Digital Product Registration and Purchase

1. Visit your book's digital landing page: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/america10>
2. Click the green button in the center of the page.
3. Select "No, I need to register, purchase, or sign up for trial access."
4. Enter your name, school email, and create a password.
5. As you complete registration, you'll have the following access options:
 1. **If you already have a registration code**, enter your registration code and click "Register my Code."
 2. **If you want to purchase digital product access online**, select the "I want to purchase access" option.
 3. **If you want to try digital products before purchasing**, select the "I want to sign up for free trial access" option.
6. The first time you access an activity from the landing page, you'll be asked to enter a Student Set ID number.

Our Student Set ID is: 41907

Need help? Contact Norton Customer Support at <http://support.wwnorton.com>.

Our representatives will help you via live chat once you submit a request form. Be sure to provide us with the following:

Your school
Your instructor's name
Your section name
Your Student Set ID number, if you have one

Or view our Help Notes at <http://wwnorton.com/helpnotes>.