

Political Science 101  
American Government  
Fall, 2006  
R. H. Bruhl  
1114c BSB, (312) 413-3775

Syllabus

The object of this course is to attempt to understand the structure and functions of the government of the United States of America. Institutions, however, emerge from societies, and reflect the character and circumstances of those societies, so to understand the institutions, one needs to understand the societies from which those institutions have emerged. Consequently, in this course we will study not only the structure and function of the American government, but the character and circumstances of the society from which the American government emerged.

Grading for the class will be based on a combination of quizzes, examinations, attendance, and projects. The plan for these will be distributed separately.

The textbooks for the course include: *American Government*, by O'Connor and Sabato; *A Brief History of Western Civilization*, by Kishlansky et al.; and *1776*, by McCullough.

The lecture topics will fall into the following divisions:

1. a. "From Europeans to Americans": who settled America, why did they come here, how did they get here, and what was the result?  
b. "From a People to a Government": how and why did the people of the American colonies form the government they did?
2. "The Structure of the American Government and the Functions served by that structure": what does the government do and how are these actions related to the American citizenry?
3. "Policy Formation and Execution": how do the actions of the government affect the daily lives of the citizen and how are these actions chosen?

Any student with special instructional needs is requested to discuss those needs with me at the student's earliest convenience.

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Schedule of Graded Assignments, Projects, and Examinations

Topic	Assignment	Date	Grade Percentage
Pre-Revolutionary War history of the United States and the development of the US Constitution	Open notes essay examination	October 4, 2006	20%
Understanding of legislative decision-making	Written report on observations of local town council meetings	November 17, 2006	15%
Structure and function of the US Government	Short-answer and multiple-choice question examination	November 17, 2006	20%
Policy and government	Individual/small group presentations on specific areas of US policy	November 27— December 6, 2006	30%
Discussion session activities	Quizzes and assignments announced as appropriate	Ongoing	15%

Instructions for each assignment, project, and examination will be provided separately.