

# Drew Seib, PhD

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Course Website: [blackboard.murraystate.edu](https://blackboard.murraystate.edu)

Office Hours: M 1:00-3:00, T 2:00-4:30, W 9:00-11:30,

TH 8:30-9:30, and by appointment

DEPARTMENT: Government, Law, and International Affairs

COURSE PREFIX: POL

COURSE NUMBER: 140

CREDIT HOURS: 3

## I. TITLE: American National Government

- II. **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITE(S):** The American political system, its constitution, institutions, and process. An approved social science University Studies elective.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

## III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The student will be able to

- A. Understand major concepts surrounding the American national government.
- B. Understand the fundamental characteristics of the American national government.
- C. Understand the basic relationship between the government and its citizens.
- D. Understand political can be expressed in terms of individual and groups.
- E. Understand how information flows between citizens and government.
- F. Understand how the foundations of our country continue to affect us today.
- G. Think critically and analytically about political matters.
- H. Engage in the major political debates in society.
- I. Be a more productive citizen.

## IV. CONTENT OUTLINE:

Below is a tentative outline for this course. It includes assigned readings and other classroom preparation exercises. These are to be completed *prior* to arriving to class. We will try to keep to this schedule. Should there be a need to alter this schedule, you will be notified in class and on Blackboard. In addition, an updated syllabus will be posted to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to attend class and check Blackboard regularly. Being absent or not checking Blackboard is not an excuse for being unaware of changes to the schedule.

### Week 1

8/21: Hand out syllabus and Introduction

8/23: Political Culture and Foundations

Patterson Chapter 1 (p. 1-22)

What Does It Mean to Be an American (Blackboard)

### Week 2

8/28: Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation

Patterson Chapter 2 (p. 26-37)

Selections from Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* (Blackboard)

Declaration of Independence (p. 629-632)-Yes, I actually want to you read it. As you read it, keep in mind Locke's thoughts on man in the state of nature, the role of government, and abuses of government.

8/30: The Constitution

Patterson (p. 37-60)

Federalist No. 10 (p. 651-655 in Patterson)

Federalist No. 51 (p. 656-658 in Patterson)

**Week 3**

9/4: Federalism

Patterson Chapter 3 (p. 66-92)

9/6: Federalism Today

Patterson Chapter 3 (p. 2692 -99)

Supreme Court Arizona Immigration Ruling (Blackboard)

Federalism-High Court Health Care Ruling Shifts Action to States (Blackboard)

**Week 4**

9/11: First Amendment

Patterson Chapter 4 (p. 105-124)

9/13: Remaining Amendments

Patterson Chapter 4 (p. 124-143)

CISPA Shot Down (Blackboard)

**Week 5**

9/18: Constitution Day Discussion and Movie

9/20: Civil Rights

Patterson Chapter 5 (p. 149-184)

Alabama's Immigration Law (Blackboard)

**Week 6**

9/25: First Unit Exam

9/27: Socialization

Patterson Chapter 6 (p. 189-205)

Social Networking Sites and Politics (Blackboard)

How Family Communication Can Influence Our Political Identities (Blackboard)

**Week 7**

10/2: Public Opinion

Patterson Chapter 6 (p. 205-217)

Public Opinion Polls (Blackboard)

Implicit Attitudes (Blackboard)

10/4: No Class (Fall Break)

**Week 8**

10/9: Political Participation

Patterson Chapter 7 (p. 223-246)

Pennsylvania Voter Fraud (Blackboard)

Occupy Wall Street (Blackboard)

10/11: Political Parties

Patterson Chapter 8 (p. 250-271)

Tea Party Backers (Blackboard)

**Week 9**

10/16: Campaigns and Elections

Patterson Chapter 8 (p. 271-287)

Citizens United (Blackboard)

10/18: Interest Groups

Patterson Chapter 9 (p. 293-323)

**Week 10**

10/23: Media Background  
Patterson Chapter 10 (p. 329-354)  
Framing of a KKK Rally (Blackboard)

10/25: Media and Politics  
Patterson Chapter 10 (p. 355-59)  
Infotainment (Blackboard)  
Is Jon Stewart Helping or Hurting? (Blackboard)

**Week 11**

10/30: Second Unit Exam

11/1: Congress  
Patterson Chapter 11 (p. 367-389)  
Stock Act (Blackboard)  
Insider Trading- video (Blackboard)

**Week 12**

11/6: No Class (Election Day)

11/8: Election Discussion and Congress  
Patterson Chapter 11 (p. 389-405)

**Week 13**

11/13: President  
Patterson Chapter 12 (p. 411-432)

11/15: President  
Patterson Chapter 12 (p. 433-447)  
How Much Does the President Really Matter?- audio (Blackboard)

**Week 14**

11/20: Supreme Court  
Patterson Chapter 14 (p. 488-519)  
Inside the Supreme Court (Blackboard)

11/22: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

**Week 15**

11/27: Bureaucracy  
Patterson Chapter 13 (p. 453-482)

11/29: Economic and Environmental Policy  
Patterson Chapter 15 (p. 525-557)

**Week 16**

12/4: Social Policy and Education Policy  
Patterson Chapter 16 (p. 563-591)

12/6: Wrap-Up Day

**Final Exam: Wednesday, December 12, 2012, at 8:00 AM**

## V. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Instructional activities will include lecture, discussion, exams, quizzes, papers, video, audio, group work, in-class writing assignments, and simulations.

## VI. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES:

none

## VII. TEXT(S) AND RESOURCES:

Patterson, Thomas. *We the People*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: McGraw-Hill. (ISBN: 978-0-07-337906-7)

Various articles, audio clips, videos, and learning modules available on Blackboard

Current Events: You should regularly read a news website (ideally more than one), such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *CNN*, or *Politico*. You can also find print copies of many major newspapers on the second floor of the library. Current events will be discussed regularly in the course and may appear on exams or quizzes. You should focus on major events in the news (most sports and entertainment news fall outside of our interest in this class).

## VIII. EVALUATION AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

General Policies and Procedures: Your grade in this course will consist of 3 exams, three papers, quizzes, participation and preparation. All assignments will be handed back as soon as possible. Grades for all assignments will be posted to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check that your grade was recorded correctly on Blackboard. You should keep all assignments until the end of the semester. If there is a discrepancy between the grade you received on the assignment and the grade on Blackboard, you should bring the graded assignment to the professor so that he can correct the grade on Blackboard. Should you feel you were graded unfairly on any assignment, you should wait three days from the day it was handed back. Once the three days has elapsed, you should submit a letter to the professor explaining why you think you were graded unfairly, along with the original, graded assignment. The professor will consider your letter and *may* regrade your assignment. Please keep in mind that when regrading an assignment, your grade may go up or down.

Chapter Quizzes: One of the themes of this course is repetition. The more you are exposed to something, the more likely you are to learn it. As such, you will be taking chapter quizzes *after* the content has been covered in lecture. Each quiz is worth 10 points and the professor will drop your lowest quiz grade. While 10 points is not much, consistently performing poorly on quizzes will add up. This is also an opportunity to see how prepared you are for the unit exams and may serve as an early warning to both you and the professor that you need help or are falling behind. Please note that just because these quizzes are taken after the material is covered in class does not mean that you can show up to class unprepared (see the section below on Preparation and Participation). Quizzes will count for 150 points total.

Unit Exams: There will be two unit exams in this course. The first unit exam will cover everything in chapters 1-5 of the Patterson text, lectures, and other course materials and discussion up to this point. The second unit exam will cover everything in chapters 6-10 of the Patterson text and corresponding lecture and discussion materials. Both exams will consist of multiple-choice questions, and a short answer (a healthy paragraph). Your notes and the book are your study guide, so I encourage you to take good notes and attend class regularly. Should you miss a class, you should get notes from another student. Should you need to miss the one of the unit exams, there is a make-up exam available to you. If you make arrangements with the professor in advance, you *may* be permitted to take the regular exam if it is an approved absence (see attendance policy below or the MSU Bulletin about what constitutes an approved absence). Students who miss the exam or fail to make arrangements with the professor in advance will have a written take-home exam (no multiple-choice). The make-up exam will consist of a ten-page paper (minimum) for which the professor will provide you with a prompt and you will have two weeks to write. If you miss a unit exam and wish to take the make-up exam, you should contact the professor. If you arrive to an exam late, you may take it in the time remaining. Each exam is worth 150 points.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of two parts: 1) Content from chapters 11-16 of the Patterson text and corresponding lecture and discussion, and 2) content from earlier in the course. Research has consistently shown that students take more away from a course when the exam is comprehensive. This is in part from repetition, a theme of this course. As you may note, you have repeatedly been exposed to ideas and concepts through the reading assignments, course lectures, chapter quizzes, other classroom activities (ex. quizzes, discussion, and simulations), papers and exams. This is the final step in the repetition process. The final exam is worth 200 points.

Papers: There are three papers in this course. Paper prompts will be posted to Blackboard in the folder titled "Papers." For each paper, there will be a cover sheet that contains a checklist. You must initial each item on the checklist, indicating that you completed that item as instructed. Do NOT initial and item that you did not complete. The cover sheet must be stapled to the paper when handed in. Papers without the coversheet will not be accepted. A hard copy of the paper with the coversheet is due at the beginning of class, prior to attendance. Papers are considered late after attendance is taken. For each day a paper is late, it will receive a one-letter grade deduction. You should plan ahead. Printing problems and flash drive problems are not excuses to submit a paper late. In addition, you should submit your paper via Blackboard to the corresponding paper assignment. This will help the professor check for plagiarism. Your paper will not be graded until you have submitted it to Blackboard. Each paper is worth 75 points.

Preparation and Participation: Preparation and participation are vital to this course. Participation via discussion and other activities is vital to developing critical thinking skills. While you are not graded solely based on attendance, it is hard to participate and demonstrate that you are prepared if you are not here. Regular participation is required in this course if you expect to do well. However, I expect your participation to be informed, which will require you taking the time to prepare for class. There will be a variety of ways to participate in class and demonstrate that you are prepared, including discussion, simulations, quizzes, and in-class writing assignments. Your grade is based on my subjective evaluation of your preparedness and contribution to this course. Preparation and participation account for 150 points.

Grades

2 Unit Exams	150 points each
Final Exam	200 points
3 Papers	75 points each
16 Chapter Quizzes (15 count)	10 points each
<u>Preparation and Participation</u>	<u>150 points</u>
Total	1025 points

Grading Scale

- A = 90% - 100%
- B = 80% - 89%
- C = 70% - 79%
- D = 60% - 69%
- E = below 60%

**IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

*Students are expected to adhere to the MSU Attendance Policy outlined in the current MSU Bulletins.*

Attendance will be taken regularly at the professor's discretion. Even though attendance is not a specific part of your grade, it is taken into account in determining your preparation and participation grade. As such, students are expected to attend every class. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you will be marked absent for that day. If you must miss a class, you should contact the professor in advance so that he can make a note of it. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, personal illness, a death in the immediate family, or a University sanctioned activity. The professor reserves the right to request documentation of the absence.

**X. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:**

Murray State University takes seriously its moral and educational obligation to maintain high standards of academic honesty and ethical behavior. Instructors are expected to evaluate students' academic achievements accurately, as well as ascertain that work submitted by students is authentic and the result of their own efforts, and consistent with established academic standards. Students are obligated to respect and abide by the basic standards of personal and professional integrity.

**Violations of Academic Honesty include:**

**Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized information such as books, notes, study aids, or other electronic, online, or digital devices in any academic exercise; as well as unauthorized communication of information by any means to or from others during any academic exercise.

**Fabrication and Falsification** - Intentional alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves changing information whereas fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information.

**Multiple Submission** - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work, including oral reports, for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor.

**Plagiarism** - Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, creative work, or data of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise, without due and proper acknowledgement.

Instructors should outline their expectations that may go beyond the scope of this policy at the beginning of each course and identify such expectations and restrictions in the course syllabus. When an instructor receives evidence, either directly or indirectly, of academic dishonesty, he or she should investigate the instance. The faculty member should then take appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Requiring the student(s) to repeat the exercise or do additional related exercise(s).
- 2) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) on the particular exercise(s) involved.
- 3) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) in the course.

**If the disciplinary action results in the awarding of a grade of E in the course, the student(s) may not drop the course.**

Faculty reserve the right to invalidate any exercise or other evaluative measures if substantial evidence exists that the integrity of the exercise has been compromised. Faculty also reserve the right to document in the course syllabi further academic honesty policy elements related to the individual disciplines.

A student may appeal the decision of the faculty member with the department chair in writing within five working days. Note: If, at any point in this process, the student alleges that actions have taken place that may be in violation of the Murray State University Non-Discrimination Statement, this process must be suspended and the matter be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity. Any appeal will be forwarded to the appropriate university committee as determined by the Provost.

#### **XI. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT:**

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, or disability in employment, admissions, or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities. For more information, contact the Director of Equal Opportunity, 103 Wells Hall. 270-809-3155 (voice), 270-809-3361 (TDD).

#### **XII. [Other required departmental or collegiate committee information]**