

**POSC 103.101: American National Government
Towson University, Fall 2015¹**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00-12:00 and 4:15-4:45. I am also happy to schedule meetings by appointment.

Class meets 5:00-6:15PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays in LA 3214.

Course Description from the Course Catalog:

POSC 103 AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT (3) Structure and functions of the government of the United States and the problems involved in the extension of the scope of democratic government in our contemporary life.

GenEd II.C.2. OR Core Curriculum: Perspectives: The United States as a Nation.

Course Description (Expanded):

This course introduces students to the institutions and processes of American government. We will cover the “nuts and bolts” of American government, explore important debates in the study of American politics, and analyze a number of current political issues. Beyond acquisition of a basic understanding of the structure and purpose of American government, students in this course will gain analytic skills that will carry forward to more advanced coursework in political science or other major fields of study. Political science is a field that borrows many of its theories from other social science disciplines. As a result, students will be exposed to a number of ideas from the fields of economics, sociology, psychology, and history, among others.

In studying American government and politics, we will learn about the difficulties facing all endeavors that require collective action on the part of human beings. We will examine the intentions of the framers of the Constitution and how they are reflected in contemporary American society. We will learn about core concepts in American government, such as federalism and the separation of three co-equal branches. We will discuss the roles of those three branches (the legislative, executive, and judicial branches) and how they interact with one another to govern the United States. We will also assess the degree to which the voice of “the people” (however defined) is represented through elections and public opinion. Institutions outside of the three branches of government also exert considerable influence on American politics, such as political parties, interest groups, and the media. We will examine the complex interplay between these entities, average Americans, and elected officials to produce public policy.

The above course description could be included in the syllabus of just about any introductory course on American government, but by now, you probably know that this is no ordinary course on American government. Indeed, this course is an exciting new program in which you are all pioneers. Never before has Towson University offered a course in American government in

¹ I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus during the course of the term should I deem it necessary. You are responsible for being aware of all announcements, e-mails, and other correspondence that would alert you to such changes.

which students all live together on the same floor of residence life. Because this is a brand new method of learning, we all have a unique opportunity to begin something truly special that will carry into the future. I am counting on you to be conscientious students in this course, but I am also looking forward to working with you as partners who will help to forge a new model of learning about engaged citizenship in the twenty-first century.

To that end, the plan for this course is to have a substantive mix of standard, textbook American government coursework coupled with independent research and experiential learning assignments designed to get you out there in the world *doing things*, and not merely reading about how other people act in the world of politics. Your work with our textbook will expose you to the basic structure and process of American government. Your independent research will require you to apply your knowledge of that structure to a case study of a particular social group so that you can see a practical application of the theory of American government. In so doing, you will all teach and learn from each other as we share our individual insights and produce a collective understanding of the American political system.

This is not the kind of course in which you can sit back and passively acquire knowledge by watching other people act and listening to other people speak. You should instead come away from this course having developed personal efficacy and personal agency. You have the power to educate yourself and make a positive impact on your world, but that can only happen by putting yourself out there and engaging your world. The most powerful resource a citizen can gain is knowledge. My job is to facilitate that process and guide you on that journey. Your job is to challenge yourself and take full advantage of opportunities to contribute as social and political actors here at Towson University and beyond.

Course Outcomes

The goal of the Department of Political Science is to provide students with an understanding of politics that will prepare them for further study in graduate or professional education or that will prepare them to enter the world of domestic or international public service or business. Upon completing this course students will:

1. Demonstrate **substantive knowledge** and understanding of the structure and nature of politics and government.
2. Demonstrate the ability **to analyze critically** the historical, cultural, and socio-economic assumptions that underlie politics.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the **affective meanings of politics** in local, national, and international affairs.
4. **Acquire skills for learning and life**; be able to present articulate and persuasive arguments about politics in written and oral communications.

This section of POSC 103 addresses these learning outcomes through a critical survey of American government and politics and experiential learning activities designed to stimulate curiosity about the power of engaged citizenship. By the end of this course, students who attend class regularly, do all of the assigned readings, study diligently, complete every assignment with care, and engage enthusiastically in the subject matter should be able to do the following:

1. Be able to describe and understand how our system of government is structured and the theory behind that structure.
2. Be able to describe and understand methods of popular participation.
3. Be able to describe and understand the functions and politics of the three branches of government.
4. Be able to describe and understand how policy is produced.

5. Be able to describe and understand the importance of, and limits to, civil liberties in American society.
6. Be able to think and write critically about political issues, leaders and policies, and the system that produces them.

Required Book for Purchase:

Barbour, Christine and Gerald C. Wright. 2015. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics*, 6th **Brief** Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
ISBN: 978-1-4833-5289-3

***Please note that we are using the **BRIEF** edition of this textbook. There is another edition that does not contain the word **“Brief”** in the title. That edition is... well, it’s longer. And it’s more expensive! Please be sure to purchase the **brief** edition.

***Please note that additional required readings will be made available to you on the course Blackboard site.

Library Liaison:

I encourage you to take advantage of the vast resources at your disposal in Cook Library. In particular, the political science department enjoys the assistance of Ms. Sara Arnold-Garza, who is available to help you navigate Cook Library.

Sara Arnold-Garza
sarnoldgarza@towson.edu
410-704-3963

Civic Engagement Fellow:

I encourage you to take advantage of the assistance of Alyssa Smith, who is a senior here at Towson University and has been hired by the Office of Civic Engagement and Leadership to help facilitate the mission of the Political Engagement Learning Community.

Aly Smith
Asmith113@students.towson.edu
443-858-4845

An introductory note from Aly:

Hi everyone! My official title is "Civic Engagement Fellow". A more relatable title is "The student who is working closely alongside Dr. McTague to provide you a valuable resource for researching your semester projects, understanding class material, and getting politically engaged on campus." I'm a student just like you; the only difference being a few more years experience under my belt. Any questions you have, you can send them my way. I look forward to this semester with you all!

Grading Scale:²

<u>Score</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Grade</u>
97 and up	A+	67-69	D+
93-96	A	63-66	D
90-92	A-	60-62	D-
87-89	B+	Under 60	F
83-86	B		
80-82	B-		
77-79	C+		
73-76	C		
70-72	C-		

Grading Standards for Papers:

90-100 (A): Great paper, with a well structured and defended argument, original insights, and generally flawless execution. An “A” paper has no significant problems of any sort and makes an original, interesting argument in a persuasive, logical way, backed up with real evidence. Thus, if you rely on unreliable sources (read: Wikipedia), you CANNOT get an A. The evidence must be excellent, and you must use it properly.

80-89 (B): Solid paper that does what it is supposed to do. A “B” paper is well written in the grammatical, stylistic sense, addresses the core requirements of the assignment, and has no flaws. It will be a less-than-“A”-paper for one of the following three reasons. First, it makes a pedestrian argument that is fine and acceptable but that doesn’t require any noteworthy critical thinking. Second, it makes an interesting argument that is simply implausible or not well supported. An “A” argument is both original and well-defended; a “B” argument falls short. Third, the paper succeeds in making a worthy argument, but it is not well written in the stylistic / grammatical sense. A “B” is a good grade, and if you get one, then you’ve written a good paper.

70-79 (C): Rough, unimpressive, and not a paper you should turn in at the college level. If you write a draft of your paper and fix its grammatical errors and revise your argument in the light of more considered judgment, and if you are making an intelligent and intelligible argument, then you won’t get a “C.” If your paper reads like a rush-job, with sloppiness, misspellings, flawed logic, or poor research, then you’ll get a “C” or worse. A “B” means you did the assignment without any major problems; a “C” means there were some problems that easily could have been fixed.

60-69 (D): Hopefully you won’t get a “D,” and if you do get one, hopefully you won’t be surprised. A “D” paper is one that falls short in almost every way—often literally. If you turn in a 4-page paper for a 9-page assignment, for example, you won’t get higher than a “D,” and changing fonts and margins to try to fool me will hurt your grade even more. A “D” paper has obvious problems—either little to no quality research, a string of baseless assertions rather than an argument, unacceptably poor grammar, or some combination of the above.

>60 (F): Most “F”s are the result of plagiarism—and you WILL get an “F” for plagiarism if you don’t take citation rules seriously (see below). Otherwise, an “F” is just like a “D,” but worse. Just because you turn in a few pieces of paper with words on them doesn’t mean you’ll get a passing grade. If you take the assignment at all seriously, though, it is much harder to get an “F” than an “A.”

² This grading scale is for your own reference if I mark your assignments with a letter grade. The university does not officially have a grade of C- for the purpose of assigning a final course grade. Instead, grades of C- are recorded as C for your final course grade.

Important Policies:

- Your reading and writing assignments are due on the date listed in the class schedule below. You are urged to stay a class or two ahead of the due dates. Really.
- If you e-mail me with a question, I guarantee that I will respond within 2 *business days*. Business days begin at 9AM and end at 5PM, and run from Monday through Friday. This means that if you e-mail me at 5:30 PM on a Thursday, you are not guaranteed a response until the close of business on Monday. I generally respond much more promptly than 2 business days, but it is important to remember (both for your collegiate career and especially for your post-collegiate career) that not everyone you work with keeps the same kind of hours that you do. There are days when I am busy with other work, other students' e-mails, or heaven forbid, my personal life (Professors are people, too!). It is a good habit to form to adhere to the norms of business days and business hours.
- Students are not permitted to leave the room during an exam until their exam is complete.
- I forbid the use of electronic devices in my classroom, including laptops, cell phones, ipods, ipads, itouch, *i-whatever*. If you have something with an "on/off" button and you bring it in to my classroom, please **turn it off and put it away** before class begins. Failure to observe this policy may result in my requesting that you leave the room, automatic loss of attendance credit for that day, and/or loss of participation points.
- If English is not your first language, special arrangements can be made to accommodate the special challenges that you thereby face.
- This course is in compliance with Towson University's policies for students with disabilities. Accommodations can be made on exams and assignments for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Disability Support Services (DSS), 7720 York Road, Suite 232, 410-704-2638 (Voice or TDD). Students who expect that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact DSS for advice on how to obtain appropriate evaluation. A memo from DSS authorizing your accommodation is needed before any accommodation can be made.
- **Drop date:** If you want to either drop the course or change your grading category to AU or P/NP, you must do so by **September 3**. The last date to drop the course with a "W" on your transcript is **November 10**.
- **Repeating The Class:** Here is Towson's policy for repeating classes:
When courses are repeated, students will receive credit for the course only once. Only the higher of the two grades will be calculated in the GPA. The lower grade will remain on the record with the letter R preceding (e.g., RF, RX, RD, etc.) to indicate the course has been repeated. Effective fall 2003, the lower grade will remain on the record with a *repeat included or excluded* message, whichever is appropriate. Students may **not** make a third attempt of a course except with **prior** approval. Students must complete a Petition for a Third Attempt Form and submit it to the Registrar's Customer Service Center, Enrollment Services, room 223, **before registering for the course**. Grades of W are administrative and are *not* considered as part of the repeated course procedure. Courses that have been accepted previously for transfer credit by TU or have been attempted or completed for units at TU may **not** be repeated at other institutions. Courses in which low or failing grades were earned at Towson **MUST** be repeated at Towson in order for the record to be adjusted and the GPA to be recalculated.

Late Assignments & Excused Absences

- **Paper/Draft Due Dates:** All deadlines in this class are firm. Failure to turn in assignments when they are due will result in a grade of zero. The only valid exceptions are noted immediately below. You are required to e-mail a copy of your paper before the start of class to verify that you completed it on time if you are absent on a due date.

- *Exceptions:* Except in DOCUMENTED AND VERIFIABLE emergencies, I will not give individual extensions under **any circumstances**. Obviously, this policy only applies to real emergencies (i.e., medical emergency, a death in the family), which will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- *Excused absences:* As per Towson's attendance policy, observance of religious holidays, personal illness, exceptional events beyond your control, and participation in sanctioned University events will excuse a student from *attending class*. Both religious holidays and sporting events are known in advance, however, and if any deadline happens to conflict with either, then send your assignment to me as an email attachment **by the start of class**. **You will not be given an extension on the deadline**. Please let me know in advance (and the sooner, the better) whether you will need to miss class for one of these excused reasons. The other two reasons (illness and emergency) are not, by nature, knowable in advance, and they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Paper Format

Please follow these formatting settings and basic principles:

- For your font, use Times New Roman 12.
- Set your margins at 1 inch and left-align your margins. Don't adjust your margins to make your paper seem longer than it really is.
- Number your pages; your word processor will have a function for this.
- **Proofread your work.** Grammatical and spelling errors are unacceptable. I will lower your grade if your grammar, punctuation, or spelling (including typos) is unsatisfactory.
- Save your work frequently and print out hard copies to avoid computer disaster.
- Double-space all assignments.
- **Don't plagiarize.**
- Use the American Political Science Association (APSA) style citing format (see class Blackboard page for the APSA style guide).

Assignment Submissions

Almost all of your assignments will be submitted via Blackboard. For each assignment that is due, please use the appropriate Blackboard module to upload your assignment for submission. Should you have any technical difficulties using Blackboard, please e-mail the assignment to me as an attachment with your name clearly identified in the name of the file (e.g., "Smith_Assignment1_POSC103.101.docx").

Plagiarism

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH TOWSON'S PLAGIARISM POLICIES AND THE PROPER METHOD FOR USING SOURCES. IGNORANCE OF THE RULES WILL NOT EXCUSE YOU FROM THE PENALTIES, WHICH ARE SEVERE.

Copied here is an excerpt from a relevant portion of the Towson University policy:

The following definitions and examples are not meant to be exhaustive. The university reserves the right to determine, in a given instance, what action constitutes a violation of academic integrity.

PLAGIARISM

Presenting the work, products, ideas, words, or data of another as one's own is plagiarism. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product. This includes all information gleaned from any source, including the Internet.
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words.
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials.

Because expectations about academic assignments vary among disciplines and instructors, students should consult with their instructors about any special requirements related to citation.

Typical examples: Submitting as one's own the work of a “ghost writer” or commercial writing service; knowingly buying or otherwise acquiring and submitting, as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment; submitting as one's own, work in which portions were produced by someone acting as tutor or editor; collaborating with others on papers or projects without authorization of the instructor.

In addition to oral or written work, plagiarism may also involve using, without permission and or acknowledgement , computer programs or files, research designs, ideas and images, charts and graphs, photographs, creative works, and other types of information that belong to another.

Verbatim statements must be enclosed by quotation marks, or set off from regular text as indented extracts, with full citation.

Please note that this excerpt by no means exhausts the types of academic behaviors (especially in paper-writing) that constitute academic dishonesty. Basically, as a general rule, in your papers you must cite everything.

The penalty for plagiarism will depend on the severity of your actions and intentions. I follow a two-track penalty scheme. For instances of plagiarism that are clearly unintentional (track-one), you will fail the assignment with a grade of Zero. This penalty will be applied on those occasions when a few pieces of information or analysis have obviously been derived from other sources without proper attribution. If you have a single undocumented fact or idea, you risk track-one penalties. **Cite everything.**

For track-two plagiarism, you clearly intended to cheat. In that case, you will fail the course and I will report you for an honor violation. If you write a paper that depends on a grasp of the material that greatly exceeds anything that you had previously demonstrated, I must assume that you did not write the paper. (You will be given an opportunity to prove to me that your understanding of that material is equivalent to that shown in the paper before the penalties are applied.) Having someone else write a paper, whether a friend or a company is thus one kind of track-two violation, as is excerpting significant portions of others' work without attribution. To some extent, there is a judgment call involved in distinguishing track-one from track-two violations, but usually the *intent to deceive* is so obvious—or the level of citation negligence is so abominable—that it's a pretty easy call. Don't plagiarize.

A Track-Two violation will result in a zero for the assignment and probable failure for the course. Towson's full plagiarism policy can be found here:

<http://towson.edu/provost/resources/studentacademic.asp>

Cases of Track-Two plagiarism and cheating will be handled according to that policy. Under that policy, I will inform Student Affairs of your infraction; two infractions on your record may be grounds for suspension from the university.

Grade

Your grade is determined according to following formula, with each component described in greater detail below.

1. Semester-length research project: 50%
2. Civic & Political Engagement with Reflection: 20%
3. Reading Quizzes: 20%
4. Attendance and Class Participation: 10%

Semester-length Research Project (50%)

Each student must select a topic that they will research over the course of the semester, culminating in a minimum 12-page final paper due on December 11th. There are six separate assignments—explained below—that are due throughout the semester and total to 50% of your final course grade. The selection of a topic is up to your discretion, but there are some parameters within which you should consider your options.

Every student's paper topic must be rooted in the article assigned for class on Thursday, 9/10, authored by Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram. That article, "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy," puts forth a theory that connects particular public policies to particular groups in American society whom those policies are intended to "target." For example, the Social Security Act of 1935 established a program that provides income to elderly and disabled Americans who do not participate the labor force. In this case, the policy in question is a social welfare program and the intended "target" populations are the elderly and the disabled.

Your assignment this semester is to first select a target population and a policy, and then analyze how that population fits in with the broader political system. Finally, you will propose an analysis for how policies involving your target population may change in the future. We will devote quite a bit of class time to fleshing out both the substantive concepts and the assignment requirements identified here, but the outline below gives an introductory sense for how we will proceed. For each of these assignments, we will go over more detailed instructions regarding substance and formatting as the due dates approach.

Assignment 1 (5% of grade): Select a policy and a target population: Due on 9/22, each student must submit a 1-2 page paper identifying the target population and policy they wish to analyze for their semester research. This assignment will serve as a rough draft of the final paper's introduction.

Assignment 2 (5% of grade): Analyze target population's social construction: Due on 10/15, each student must submit a 3-4 page paper analyzing the "social construction" of their target population. What are the popular images associated with your target population? Are there negative stereotypes (i.e., negative "social constructions") or positive stereotypes associated with

your chosen target population? This assignment, coupled with the first assignment, will serve as a rough draft of approximately the final paper's first 5 pages.

Assignment 3 (5% of grade): Benefits, burdens, and interactions with government: Due on 11/3, each student must submit a 3-4 page paper analyzing how their target group interacts with the government. Does the government assign benefits to your target population? Burdens? What incentives are there for elected officials to treat your target population in the manner that they do? This assignment, coupled with Assignments 1-2, will serve as the rough draft of approximately the final paper's first 8 pages.

Assignment 4 (5% of grade): Analyze the target population's political participation: Due on 11/17, each student must submit a 2-3 page paper analyzing their target population's level of political participation. Do they vote at high levels? Do they contribute large amounts of money to political campaigns? Do they perceive themselves as a group to whom government is responsive? This assignment, coupled with Assignments 1-3, will serve as the rough draft of approximately the final paper's first 10 pages.

Assignment 5 (5% of grade): Presentation: Each student will give an approximately 10-minute presentation of their semester research to the class at the end of the semester. Presentations will be held at our 12/1, 12/3, 12/8, and 12/10 class meetings. **Please note:** Even if you are not presenting on a particular date, you are required to attend all presentations. If you do not have an excused absence (medical or similar type of emergency) and you are absent on one of these presentation dates, your own presentation grade will be reduced to an automatic F.

Assignment 6 (25% of grade) Final Paper: For the final paper, each student will revise their first four paper assignments and add a conclusion of 2-3 pages that proposes a way forward for their target population. What would it take for your group to change its relationship with the political system? What policy reforms might be necessary? What does the future hold? The final paper must also incorporate content from students' interactions with their target population (more on this in the "Political Engagement and Reflection Assignment 2" below). This assignment is due on 12/11 and should be a polished, revised, edited, high-quality piece of scholarship.

A note on finding scholarly sources:

In your Towson Seminar courses, you will learn the difference between scholarly sources and non-scholarly sources. Though you are just starting out as college students, you will nonetheless be expected to find appropriate scholarly sources in the course of conducting your research in this course. I will help guide you to good sources, and as you submit each assignment, I may give you feedback identifying which of your sources are perhaps better than others. The short video in this link is a good starting point for learning the distinction between scholarly and non-scholarly citations:

<http://cooklibrary.towson.edu/helpguides/index.cfm?id=5>

Political Engagement and Reflection Assignments (20%)

Political Engagement and Reflection Assignment 1 (worth 10% of final grade): Due on a rolling basis by 10/29, you are tasked with attending an event on campus that is somehow related to being politically engaged and composing a 3-5 page reflection that connects the event to concepts discussed in class. I am open-minded about what counts as "somehow related to being politically engaged," but probably the best way to find a suitable political engagement activity is to stay informed about the programming of the Office of Civic Engagement & Leadership and to

attend one of their events. For example, the Office of Civic Engagement & Leadership organizes a regular series of *New York Times* Talks, in which a member of TU's faculty or staff facilitates on conversation about a current event. There are also activities focused on voter registration drives, and during the month of September, there will be a series of "Constitution Week" activities. Aside from these examples, you might attend a session of Towson's Student Government Association, or participate in a protest. There are numerous ways to be politically engaged on campus, and if you are unsure how to begin this assignment, just consult with me in advance.

The due date for this assignment is rolling, which means that you are permitted to turn the assignment in *prior* to 10/29 if you prefer. More specific instructions for how you should write your reflection paper will be distributed soon after the start of the semester.

Political Engagement and Reflection Assignment 2 (worth 10% of final grade): Due on 11/24, you are tasked with having an experiential interaction with the "target population" you have chosen to research for the semester and compose a 3-5 page reflection that connects your experience to the theory from the Schneider and Ingram article that is your assigned reading on 9/10. Because you are required to incorporate this material into your final research paper (see "Assignment 6" above), this assignment allows you to draft some writing that you can revise and repurpose to use in your final paper.

The content of your interaction with your "target population" is something we can negotiate on an individual basis. Though I am open-minded about how you satisfy this requirement, here are a couple of examples for how you might approach this assignment. Let's say your target population is the elderly. One way to interact with the elderly would be to find a local retirement home and spend a couple of hours volunteering. Another way to interact with the elderly might be to arrange an interview with a local representative of the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons). Or, perhaps your target population is the homeless. You might find a local homeless shelter and spend a couple of hours volunteering to help with their operations. For a final example, maybe your target population is military veterans. Perhaps you can find a local VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and see if a member of the group will sit for an interview with you about their experiences as a veteran.

Once you have had your experience interacting with representatives from your target population, your job will be to assess how your experience fits in with the argument you are making in your research paper about how that population interacts with the political system. More specific instructions for how you should write your reflection paper will be distributed soon after the start of the semester.

Reading Quizzes (20%)

There will be a number of "reading quizzes" throughout the semester designed to ensure that you are both doing the required assigned reading, and doing it on time. The format of these quizzes will consist of some combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answers. The quizzes will be held in the beginning of class and the content will be based on that day's reading assignment. For example, the assigned reading for 9/1 is *Keeping the Republic* (KTR) Ch. 1. It is possible that you will have a reading quiz on KTR Ch. 1 on 9/1, but I would not put any questions from KTR Chs. 2-3 on the quiz because they are not assigned until 9/8. Likewise, if I give a quiz on KTR Chs. 2-3 on 9/8, I will only ask questions about Chs. 2-3 on that day's quiz. I would not put any questions about Ch. 1 on the 9/8 quiz because we would have already moved past that material. The simple way to do well on these quizzes is to keep up with the reading schedule. The

questions on these quizzes will be straightforward tests of whether you read—nothing more, nothing less, and no tricks.

I am not going to tell you when you are going to have a quiz, nor am I going to tell you how many quizzes there will be throughout the term. In some respects, then, these are “pop” quizzes. On the other hand, I’m telling you that they’re going to occur, so they’re not *really* “pop” quizzes. At the end of the semester, I will take an average of your quiz grades and that average will count for 20% of your final course grade, excluding your lowest two scores. For example, if we take 7 quizzes, then your 5 best scores will each represent 4% of your final grade. If we take 12 quizzes, then your 10 best scores will each represent 2% of your final grade.

If you are absent on the day of a quiz without having a documented medical emergency or another type of excused absence (e.g., representing the university in some official capacity), then you have to take a zero for that quiz. **There are no make-up quizzes.** This same policy applies to those who show up late to class. Quizzes will be administered right at the beginning of class and will take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. If you show up 20 minutes late and miss the quiz, then you missed the quiz and you have to take a zero. Attend and be on time for every class and this will not be a problem for you.

Class Participation and Attendance (10%)

Perfect attendance will give you a baseline participation grade of 70. To get higher than a 70, you must contribute to the actual flow of the seminar. You must also complete all of the incremental assignments when they are due. Warm bodies who never speak up get a grade of **70**; folks who have active mouths attached to active brains that share insights about information gleaned from the assigned readings will do better.

Attendance is necessary in order to achieve a good participation grade. Including the final exam period, this class meets 30 times throughout the semester. Therefore, a student who misses 4 classes has missed more than 10% of class time. When you think of it that way, that’s quite a bit, and I am unwilling to tolerate absences exceeding that amount without penalty. So, **four absences is the maximum** number that a student can accrue without suffering deductions from the participation grade. A student’s participation grade will decrease by 10%, or one full letter grade, upon the **fifth** absence (5/30 is almost 17%, so this is a bargain). Each additional absence will reduce the student’s participation grade by 3 percentage points (1/30 is about 3%).

There are also several days on the syllabus that are especially important not to miss. If you do miss these sessions, your participation grade is subject to additional deductions. **First**, we are watching a documentary as a supplement to our course reading on 11/3 and 11/5. You are potentially responsible for the material in this documentary on reading quizzes. If you miss a day during which we are viewing the documentary, you need to get the notes from a classmate and find a way to watch what you missed. **Second**, the final three regular class periods and the final exam period will consist of student presentations. See the note in the description of Assignment 5 regarding the attendance policy on these dates. **Finally**, with few exceptions, there are no make-up quizzes. If you are absent on a quiz day, you have to take a zero.

Other infractions that will result in the loss of participation points are **1)** Use of smart phones/texting during class; **2)** Personal talking and chit-chatting while the seminar is in progress. Be forewarned that even if I don’t call you out for such behavior, I will notice it and I will hold it against you when the time comes to give you a participation grade. **3)** Chronic lateness.

Schedule of Course Readings and Assignments

Session 1, 8/27: Course Introduction

Session 2, 9/1: Citizenship – *Keeping the Republic (KTR)* Ch. 1

Session 3, 9/3: The Structure of the System

James Madison, *The Federalist Papers* #10 & #51 – **Reading can be found on Blackboard.**
KTR Chs. 2-3

Session 4, 9/8: The Structure of the System, continued

James Madison, *The Federalist Papers* #10 & #51
KTR Chs. 2-3

Session 5, 9/10: Pluralism, Participation, and Public Policy

Schneider, Anne and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87 (No. 2): pp. 334-347. – **Reading can be found on Blackboard.**

Session 6, 9/15: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties – *KTR* Chs. 4-5

A presidential debate featuring the Republican candidates will air on CNN on 9/16. You will be asked to watch this debate and we will discuss your reactions during our 9/17 meeting.

Session 7, 9/17: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, continued – *KTR* Chs. 4-5

Discussion of Republican presidential debate from the night before.

Session 8, 9/22: **Research Assignment 1 Due**

Be prepared to discuss your research assignment in class. Please bring a paper copy of your assignment to class on this date.

Session 9, 9/24: Case Study: Race, the Criminal Justice System, and #BlackLivesMatter

Ghandnoosh, Nazgol. 2015. "Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial Inequity in the Criminal Justice System." *The Sentencing Project*.

http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/rd_Black_Lives_Matter.pdf

--**Reading can be found on Blackboard**

Guyann, Jessica. "Meet the Woman who Started #BlackLivesMatter." *USA Today*. March 4, 2015.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/03/04/alicia-garza-black-lives-matter/24341593/>

--**Reading can be found on Blackboard**

Luibrand, Shannon. "How a Death in Ferguson Sparked a Movement in America." *CBS News*.

August 7, 2015. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-the-black-lives-matter-movement-changed-america-one-year-later/>

--**Reading can be found on Blackboard**

Session 10, 9/29: Case Study: Race, the Criminal Justice System, and #BlackLivesMatter

No new assigned reading.

***This class meeting will feature Towson University student activists as guest speakers.

Session 11, 10/1: Public Opinion – KTR Ch. 10

Session 12, 10/6: Parties and Interest Groups – KTR Ch. 11

Session 13, 10/8: Dr. McTague will be out of town to attend a professional conference. Stay tuned for further instructions about what is expected of you on this date.

Session 14, 10/13: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections – KTR Ch. 12

A presidential debate featuring the Democratic candidates will air on CNN on 10/13. You will be asked to watch this debate and we will discuss your reactions during our 10/15 meeting.

Session 15, 10/15: **Research Assignment 2 Due**

Be prepared to discuss your research assignment in class. Please bring a paper copy of your assignment to class on this date.

You should also be prepared to discuss the Democratic presidential debate from 10/13.

Session 16, 10/20: Congress – KTR Ch. 6

*****Please note:** This is the date of our group FYE advising meeting. Please plan to stay later than 6:15 to attend this meeting.***

Session 17, 10/22: Case Study: The Americans with Disabilities Act

Bergdorf, Robert L. Jr. "Why I Wrote the Americans with Disabilities Act." *The Washington Post*. July 24, 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/07/24/why-the-americans-with-disabilities-act-mattered/> --**Reading can be found on Blackboard**

Jeon, Yongjoo and Donald P. Haider-Markel. 2001. "Tracing Issue Definition Policy Change: An Analysis of Disability Issue Images and Policy Response." *Policy Studies Journal* Vol. 29 (May) No. 2: 215-231. --**Reading can be found on Blackboard**

Session 18, 10/27: The Presidency – KTR Ch. 7

Session 19, 10/29: The Bureaucracy – KTR Ch. 8

Political Engagement Reflection 1 Due

Session 20, 11/3: **Research Assignment 3 Due**

Be prepared to discuss your research assignment in class. Please bring a paper copy of your assignment to class on this date.

Session 21, 11/5: Case Study: The Gay Community and the AIDS Crisis

Documentary to be shown in class:

How to Survive a Plague. 2012. Directed by David France.

Session 22, 11/10: Case Study: The Gay Community and the AIDS Crisis, continued

Documentary to be shown in class:

How to Survive a Plague

Session 23, 11/12: The Court System – KTR Ch. 9 Courts

Session 24, 11/17: Research Assignment 4 Due

Be prepared to discuss your research assignment in class. Please bring a paper copy of your assignment to class on this date.

Session 25, 11/19: Making Public Policy – KTR Ch. 14 (pgs. 469-502)

Session 26, 11/24: Political Engagement Reflection 2 Due

Be prepared to discuss your reflection assignment in class on this date.

Thanksgiving Break

Session 27, 12/1: Student Presentations of Final Projects

Session 28, 12/3: Student Presentations of Final Projects

Session 29, 12/8: Student Presentations of Final Projects

Session 30, Final Exam Period: Thursday, 12/10, 5:15-7:15PM

Student Presentations of Final Projects and Concluding Thoughts

Final Paper is due by 12:00 Noon on Friday, 12/11.