

Pols 205

Dr. Randolph C. Horn

Spring 2005, updated 1-24-2006

RCHORN@Samford.edu

Class Meetings: DBH208, MW 1:00-2:50

Intro to American Politics

Phone: 726-2179

Office: DBH 108

Office Hours: MWR 3-4

& by appointment

Required Readings:

Theodore Lowi and Benjamin Ginsberg 2002 *American Government: Freedom and Power, Brief 7e.*

Barbara Norrander and Michael Corbett 2005 *American Government: Using Explorit, 9e.*

The New York Times, daily <<http://www.nytimes.com/>>

Course Description:

This course addresses the structure and processes of the American political system. The course is divided into four sections: 1) The Foundations; 2) Institutions; 3) Linkages: People and Representation; and 4) Public Policy. Each section highlights a different aspect of our political system. We study the founding era and the evolution of government to understand how our current system developed. We study institutions to understand how government functions. We study linkages, the connections between people and the government, to understand how and how much we can influence government. We study public policy to understand what government does. In addition to these objectives, the course promotes critical thinking and introduces the methods and practices of the social sciences. The course format includes lectures, exercises, and discussion.

Course Requirements:

1) Students must complete readings before attempting other course requirements, i.e. quizzes and class meetings. Online requirements may be found in the classes WebCT area:

<http://webct.samford.edu/>

2) Course requirements must be completed on time on the day of assignment. Missed quizzes or late exercises may be excused with verifiable documentation of accident, illness, or legal obligation.

Otherwise, missed assignments will result in a score of zero.

3) Cheating is giving or receiving unauthorized information on graded work. Discussing specific quiz or exercise answers before submission by either party is cheating. Plagiarism is the presentation of another's ideas or language as your own. Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action through the honor court.

4) Students performance will be evaluated in these areas:

Class/Group Participation 15%
Quizzes 10
Labs 10
Exercises 20
Exams (2) 20
Final exam <u>25</u>
100%

Grades: (ascending order)

greater than 60%= D-

greater than 63.3%= D

greater than 66.6%= D+

greater than 70%= C-

greater than 73.3%= C

greater than 76.6%= C+

greater than 80%= B-

greater than 83.3%= B

greater than 86.6%= B+

greater than 90%= A-

greater than 93.3%= A

Class participation: Class participation is required. In addition to participation during class meetings, students may respond to or volunteer contributions to the class's threaded message board on WebCT. Your original contributions and responses in the discussion area will be evaluated in terms of frequency, creativity, quality, content, grammar and style. Five absences will result in an FA. Lecture handouts are available on WebCT. Handouts include slides presented in the lectures and space for notes.

Quizzes: Each unit will begin with a multiple-choice quiz covering the assigned Lowi reading. Quizzes may be attempted twice, and must be completed on WebCT by **9:00 AM** on the day they are due. **Very helpful** sample quizzes and other study aids are available at <http://www.wwnorton.com/lowi7brief>

Exercises: Exercises are drawn primarily from the Norrander book. Complete the homework assignment offline and then enter your answers in the Quizzes and Homework area on WebCT. Generally, exercises are due at **9:00 AM** on the day of the second class meeting of each unit.

Labs: Several class meetings will be held in computer labs for students to participate in exercises culminating in a redistricting simulation. The simulation will involve both group and individual work, some of which may be done outside of class meeting times. The class will meet in the Davis Library Computer Classroom (Davis 040) as noted in the schedule below.

Exams: At the end of each first two sections, a test will cover material presented in the lectures, readings, discussion, and homework. The exams will be held in campus computer labs.

Final exam: The final exam is cumulative and is worth 25% of the semester grade. The final will be administered **Friday, May 12, 2005 1:00 PM in Composition Lab. Make sure you can locate this lab before that date.**

Class Schedule

Unit /Session Topic	Unit reading assignments and exercises <i>Note: some units have more readings/exercises than others.</i>
01/25 Introduction	<i>New York Times</i> (daily), online assignment, in-class exercises.
Unit 1 01/30 First Principles	Lowi 1, Norrander 1, Declaration of Independence & Constitution (in Lowi Appendix),
Section 1: The Foundation of the American Republic	
Unit 2 02/06 The Founding	Lowi 2, Norrander 2, Federalist 10 & 51 (in Lowi Appendix)
Unit 3 02/13 Federalism	Lowi 3, Norrander 3
Unit 4 02/20 Civil Rights & Liberties	Lowi 4, Norrander 4 & 5
02/27	Exam I, includes Unit 01 in Davis 040, 1:00-2:05

Section II: Institutions	
Unit 5 03/06 The Congress	Lowi 5, Norrander 12
Unit 6 03/13 The Executive	Lowi 6, Norrander 13 & 14
3/20-3/25	Spring Break - No Class
Unit 7 03/27 The Judiciary	Lowi 8, Norrander 15, 03/29-meet Davis 040
03/29	Exam II - 03/29-in Davis 040
Section III: Linkages	
Unit 8 04/03 Public Opinion	Lowi 9, Norrander 6 & 7 04/05-meet in Davis 040
Unit 9 04/10 Elections	Lowi 10, Norrander 8 & 10 04/12-meet in Davis 040
04/17	Easter Monday - No Class
Unit 9 04/19 Elections	Readings TBA 04/19-meet in Davis 040
Unit 10 04/24 Parties	Lowi 11, Norrander 9 Attend Larry Diamond Lecture 04/24, approx. 7:30 04/26-meet in Davis 040
Unit 11 05/01 Interest Groups	Lowi 12, Norrander 11 05/03-meet Davis 040
Section IV: Public Policy	
Unit 05 05/08 Domestic Policy	Lowi 13, Lowi Epilogue, Classes End 05/10
Final Exam 05/12	Final Exam: Friday, May 12, 2005 1:00 PM in Composition Lab

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting Disability Support Services, located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall (telephone number: 726-4078 or 726-2105). A faculty member will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

Student Instructions for Entering Norrander exercises in WebCT

A few guidelines on how to enter answers are necessary to ensure you receive full and proper credit for your answers. Since there are countless ways to enter some information, below you will find guidelines for how to enter certain types of numbers, currency values and names. Using these guidelines will help to ensure the application recognizes your answer as correct.

When asked to enter **statistical results**, such as the Pearson r (presented on the Compare Mapping and Scatterplots screens):

- include all asterisks - if any
- include negative sign - if any
- do not round** the number to less than three digits

Example: Pearson r = or

When asked to enter **State or Country names**:

- Enter the name in full: NOT N Carolina or NC

Note: there is a space between North and Carolina.

- When a string of names is needed, separate with commas only:

Note: a space follows each comma.

When asked to enter **Currency values**:

- Enter the number with the decimal and two digits after but no \$ sign

or

When asked to enter **Rankings**:

- Enter rankings as simple numbers.

NOT 7th

- Be careful when there are ties because the ranking and the number of cases will not match.
e.g. if two cases are tied for third place: (1,2,3,3,5)

When asked to enter **Percentages**:

- Enter the percentage as a number with the percentage sign, NOT as proportions.

NOT .980

When asked to enter **the description** of a variable:

- Enter the exact language use in the Microcase description of the variable.
- Click on the Variable Info. icon, a button that looks like a V, or note the variable description in the variable selection dialog box.