This course serves as an introduction to our political system. We will explore several distinct yet interrelated domains of American political life, including the philosophic underpinnings of our political system, our primary political institutions, the ways in which citizens organize and communicate about political life, and a few salient topics in contemporary politics. While centering on these four areas, readings and lectures will often diverge in unpredictable ways, providing a variety of political and philosophic issues for us to address and discuss. This course has a broad scope, seeking to introduce you to a variety of problems and ways of thinking about politics rather than immersing you in a few areas only.

Naturally, an introductory course must appeal both to those who are considering future politics classes as well as those who would sooner swim in the Mississippi. The reading load in this class will vary from light to heavy, depending on the week in question. However, even lighter selections should be read carefully and actively—you will gain little from a single reading of a particular article if you do not revisit it later or take some sort of notes. While such practices will undoubtedly help your course grade, they also aid in the more important goal of learning to think critically about the moral and political world around you.

I will frequently ask questions and initiate discussion in order to provide a more active learning environment. While speaking in front of your peers can be intimidating, voicing and offering your thoughts for potential criticism is a powerful learning tool.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability at x3994 as soon as possible.

Course Requirements:
Students will complete the following requirements for this course:

- One 3-5 page paper 10%
- One midterm 25%
- One 6-8 page paper 25%
- One final 30%

Astute students will notice that 10% of your grade remains unassigned. You are strongly encouraged to become an active citizen of our Republic by reading a good daily paper or browsing one online. I will supplement this encouragement with a weekly quiz (one relatively easy question) on current events, beginning Friday September 3rd. The quiz question will be drawn from major stories of the preceding week (Monday through Thursday) found in all of the following papers: The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, or the Washington Post. The question will not be difficult, unless, of course, you haven’t been paying attention to the world around you. You will receive a 10, 7 or 0, depending on your answer (or lack thereof). By my count, there are eleven Fridays that do not contain an exam or holiday; your best seven of these eleven will count towards your grade.

Note: Though online newspapers are normally free, some may require you to register and provide some nominal personal information. Should you be opposed to such a course of action, you will have to secure paper copies of one of these papers.

At the end of all written work, you must affirm the principles of the schools’ honor code. A handout on plagiarism will be distributed along with this syllabus. I will not accept late papers without a
fantastic reason (and you’ll know it if it happens to you). Failure to complete the assigned work above will result in a failing grade.

**Required Texts:**


*Faultlines: Debating the Issues in American Politics*, David Canon, John Coleman, and Ken Mayer Eds. *(Faultlines)*

I strongly encourage “active” reading; that is, taking notes and summarizing information in a way that suits you. Simply running your eyes over the material ensures that you will forget most of it, lowering your exam grade and making the class less of a worthwhile experience. You will also note that there are several web-based readings (WB) on the syllabus. You can launch these articles from Web CT or the emailed copy of the syllabus you will receive. You may read and print these articles as you see fit, but you are responsible for reading them. If for any reason you encounter a broken link, please notify me immediately. Do not fall into the trap of just scanning web-based readings; you should still take notes in whatever fashion best suits you.

**Note:** the interactive prisoner’s dilemma should not be printed out. Most links go directly to print-ready copies of the articles, but some may require you to click on a “printer-ready” link.

**Assignments and Lecture Schedule**

**August 25**

**Introduction**

**I. Fundamentals**

**August 27, 30**

Virtue, Religion, and Liberalism in American Democracy  
Ben Franklin, *The Way to Wealth*, 1753 (WB)  
*Faultlines*, pp. 1-10

**September 1, 3**  
*Quiz 1 9.3*  
Freedom and Power in Early America  
Chapter Three (LGS)  
James Madison, *Federalist #51* (WB)  
*Faultlines*, pp. 21-29

**September 6**  
No class: Labor Day Weekend

**September 8, 10**  
*Quiz 2 9.10*  
Civil Rights and Civil Liberties  
Chapter Four (LGS)  
The Bill of Rights, pp. A25-A26 (LGS)  
*Faultlines*, pp. 39-57

**September 12**  
Short paper assignment distributed  
Capitalism and Democracy  
Milton Friedman, *Excerpts from Capitalism and Freedom* (WB)  
FDR, “Commonwealth Club Address” (WB)

**September 15**  
Rational Choice and Government  
The Prisoner’s Dilemma (WB)  
Interactive Prisoner’s Dilemma (WB)  
Garret Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” 1968
## II. Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 17, 20, 22</td>
<td>Quiz 3 9.17</td>
<td>Congress Chapter Five (LGS)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>James Madison, <a href="#">Federalist # 57</a></td>
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<td>James Madison, <a href="#">Federalist # 62</a></td>
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<td>September 24, 27</td>
<td>Presidency Chapter Six (LGS)</td>
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<td>Alexander Hamilton, <a href="#">Federalist #70</a></td>
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<td>September 29, October 1, 4</td>
<td>Courts Chapter Eight (LGS)</td>
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<td>Quiz 5 10.1</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton, <a href="#">Federalist #78</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Chapter Seven (LGS)</td>
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<td><a href="#">Faultlines</a>, pp. 86-99</td>
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<td>October 8</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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## III. Organization, Communication, and Participation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 11, 13</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Chapter Eleven (LGS)</td>
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<td><a href="#">Faultlines</a>, pp. 144-160</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>October 18</td>
<td>No class: Fall Break Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20, 22</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>Chapter Twelve (LGS)</td>
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<td>James Madison, <a href="#">Federalist #10</a></td>
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<td>September 25, 27</td>
<td>Political Socialization and Public Opinion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quiz 6 10.22</td>
<td>Chapter Nine (LGS)</td>
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<td>Studyworks, “Understanding Polls,” (all links in table of contents, WB)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="#">ABC News Poll Methodology</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29, November 1, November 3</td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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# Notes

[1] [Faultlines](#) pp. 58-73

[2] [Faultlines](#) pp. 74-85

[3] [Faultlines](#) pp. 100-113

[4] [Faultlines](#) pp. 161-173


[6] [ABC News Poll Methodology](#) (WB)
Quiz 7 10.29
Long paper topics distributed 11.3

Chapter Ten (LGS)
Faultlines, pp. 114-143
Follow the election returns!

November 5, 8
Quiz 8 11.5

Media
Chapter Thirteen (LGS)
Faultlines, pp. 174-184

IV. Topics in Politics

November 10, 12, 15
Quiz 9 11.12

Democracy and Terror in the Information Age
Faultlines, pp. 30-38
Marci Hamilton, “The Supreme Court’s Terrorism Cases: What They Held, and Why They are Important,” FindLaw Commentary, July 1, 2004 (WB)
Sheldon Pacotti, “Are We Doomed Yet?” Salon, March 31, 2003 (WB)

November 17, 19
Quiz 10 11.19

American Foreign Policy, Past and Future
Faultlines, pp. 203-216
“The Debate Over Washington’s Neutrality Proclamation” (WB)

November 22
Long Paper due

No class

November 24, 26
No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 29, December 1
Economic and Social Policy: The Future of Entitlements
Faultlines, pp. 185-202

December 3
Quiz 11 12.3

The Battle Over Gay Marriage
James Q. Wilson, “Against Homosexual Marriage,” (WB)

December 5
The Future of the Death Penalty
John Stuart Mill, “Speech in Favor of Capital Punishment”
“5 Reasons to Oppose the Death Penalty” (WB)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 8</td>
<td>Final Question Distributed</td>
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<td>Conclusion: Warnings From the Past</td>
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<td>No readings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 15, 8:30 am</td>
<td>Final Exam (Location TBA)</td>
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