

**Instructor:** Kevin G. Lorentz II, Ph.D. (Department of Political Science)

**Lecture:** M/W, 12:30-1:45p

**Room:** 306 Murchie Science Building

**Office:** 220 French Hall

**Hours:** M, 2:00-4:00p; T, 3-5:00p; or by appointment

**Department Support Office:** 220 French Hall (open M-F, 8:00a-5:00p); (810) 762-3424

**Email:** [kglorentz@umich.edu](mailto:kglorentz@umich.edu)

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### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Theory and practice of democratic government in the United States and the institutions and processes of American government as manifestations of democratic values. Representative democracy, federalism, the Presidency, Congress, the Courts, political parties, interest groups and voting as expressions of, and at times contradictions to, democratic values.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Our course provides an introductory overview of American government and politics, with the focus on what it means to be an *engaged citizen*. We will discuss the features and functions of American political institutions, our nation's public policies, and avenues for citizen participation. The course is taught with an experiential pedagogy, one that blends conceptual knowledge with active exposure to American politics. Each course unit will seek to answer an overarching question related to American governance and citizenship.

### **LEARNER EXPECTATIONS**

The course will be delivered as an "active lecture." A typical class period is divided into four components: a 10-minute study hall, a period at the start of class that will feature announcements and warm-up activities; a 25-minute mini-lecture that clarifies and extends concepts from the day's assigned readings; a 30-minute active learning period, featuring independent and group work (e.g., simulations, naïve tasks, think pair-shares, debates, case studies, and/or experiential learning); and a 10-minute session at the end of class for reflection and Q&A. I expect you to be prepared for class (by reading the assigned material beforehand), be engaged (i.e. participate), and give constructive feedback to yourself and others. In return, I promise to always be prepared to address your questions and concerns, engage with you during class, and provide prompt and helpful feedback on your progress.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the main political institutions, processes, and policies of the United States;
2. Articulate what engaged and informed citizenship is and requires;
3. Make well-reasoned and informed political decisions and persuasive arguments using the knowledge, concepts, and critical thinking skills gained from the course; and
4. Appreciate and utilize the various ways that you might participate in politics beyond voting.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

[1] *AmGov: Long Story Short* by Christine Barbour. ISBN: 978-1-5443-2592-7

[2] *The Essential Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers* edited by David Wootton. ISBN: 978-0-87220-655-7

[3] Supplemental readings available on Blackboard

## BLACKBOARD

Class announcements, course materials, grades, and assignments will be posted to Blackboard. You are expected to maintain a regular and active presence on Blackboard.

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Cell phones, laptop computers, tablets, and similar devices are **PROHIBITED** during lecture. Longhand notetaking is empirically better for you than the digital alternative. Moreover, extracurricular electronic activities during lecture are not just detrimental to the learner herself; it also disrupts nearby learners.

NOTE: There are times I specifically will designate for using electronic devices.

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

Grades will be determined in the following manner:

### ***iCitizen Project***

**Due:** On assigned date (see schedule)

**Value:** 60% of course grade



Throughout the semester, you will complete a series of assignments that will, together, form an “iCitizen” portfolio. These assignments will explore various facets of citizenship, including a critical assessment of what it means to be an American citizen today. Further details for each assignment will be discussed in class. The portfolio is composed of the following:

- Part 1: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY ESSAY (25 points)
- Part 2: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCE (100 points)
- Part 3: AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP APPRAISAL (50 points)
- Part 4: DEAR CONGRESSPERSON LETTER (50 points)
- Part 5: CHAOS OF DEMOCRACY (50 points)
- Part 6: ESSAY ON AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP & POLITICS (100 points)

### ***Reading Comprehension Worksheets***

**Due:** Ongoing

**Value:** 20% of course grade (lowest 2 scores dropped)



You’ll be expected to complete several reading comprehension worksheets throughout the semester. Each will be worth 10 points and will serve not only as a motivator for completing the assigned reading but also ensuring that you’re getting the most out of your reading. I will drop the two (2) lowest scores, with the rest counting towards your final grade. Worksheets will be posted on Blackboard and must be turned in on the day the material is assigned.

## Participation

**Due:** Everyday

**Value:** 20% of course grade



This course emphasizes discussion, engagement, and application of course concepts, which means you must be physically present AND actively involved. Completion of the day's in-class activity will satisfy the participation requirement expected of you, and I will record completion (i.e. this is how I will record attendance). However, I do not expect "perfect" participation/attendance; therefore, I will grant three (3) "freebies" to accommodate illness, scheduling conflicts, acts of nature, mental health days, etc. A pattern of missing class, being unprepared, and/or being disruptive will negatively impact your participation grade.

Assignments will be assigned letter grades (A-E, including plus-minus) that correspond to the following numeric scores and percentages:

A	100 (93-100%)	A-	91 (90-92%)
B+	88 (87-89%)	B	85 (83-86%)
B-	81 (80-82%)	C+	78 (77-79%)
C	75 (73-76%)	C-	71 (70-72%)
D+	68 (67-69%)	D	65 (63-66%)
D-	61 (60-62%)	E	0 (0-59%)

## LATE WORK & EXTRA CREDIT

All iCitizen assignments are due on the date indicated on the course schedule, while reading comprehension worksheets are due the day the assigned material is presented. **I do NOT accept late work**, meaning assignments submitted past the due date will receive a failing grade. Extensions will be granted at my discretion and in extenuating circumstances. Extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester and will be announced in class and/or via Blackboard. You should take advantage of them as you can but bear in mind that extra credit is NOT a substitute for completing assigned work or class participation. Please be diligent and timely when completing your work.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGIARISM

Students are responsible for independent work, which means you must be honest and forthright in your academic studies. Academic misconduct essentially means that one deliberately or intentionally uses unauthorized materials, information, or assistance (i.e. cheating) in any academic exercise. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional act of using another's work (e.g. specific words, phrases, ideas/arguments, and/or data/evidence) without appropriate attribution. As college students, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of what qualifies as plagiarism AND to avoid it. A simple solution: when in doubt, CITE. Any instance of cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic misconduct will result in an "E" grade for the assignment or quiz and may lead to further disciplinary action with the University.

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Discussions concerning political issues oftentimes invoke controversial opinions and passionate feelings. In order to facilitate a conducive environment for such political discussions, I ask that all students exhibit a respectful disposition throughout the semester. Failure to respect differences of opinion, or otherwise displaying profanity, angry words, or demeaning language in either verbal or written medium, will result

in appropriate and immediate disciplinary action. Additionally, please refrain from disrupting class. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, utilizing an electronic device that disrupts the classroom environment; talking too loud during the delivery of instructional material; violation of the human dignity of a student, the instructor, or guest; and coming late to class or leaving early without prior approval. My goal is to engender a constructive dialogue that allows our differences to surface, providing an opportunity for common ground to be found, all within a conducive environment.

### **ACCOMODATIONS**

The University of Michigan-Flint strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible and fully comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The University provides individuals with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities, and services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should self-identify with Disability and Accessibility Support Services as early as possible at (810) 762-3456 or [dassflint@umich.edu](mailto:dassflint@umich.edu). The office is located in 264 UCEN, inside the CAPS Office. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined you will be issued an Accommodation Letter. Please present this letter to each faculty member in each class at the beginning of the term, or at least two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation (test, project, etc.).

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

The University offers several resources for student success:

- The Marian E. Wright Writing Center (located on the third floor of the Thompson Library) provides individual tutoring and consultations (free of charge) for students seeking guidance on composing writing assignments. Visit their website for more information and to schedule an appointment (they offer both in-person and remote sessions).
- The Thompson Library offers online access to various scholastic databases and resources, in addition to its physical book, document, and multimedia collections. Please note that you will need your unique name and UM-Flint password to access the library's online databases.
- The Student Success Center (located in 285 University Pavilion) offers students various amenities meant to bolster and encourage academic success, including tutoring, academic advising, and supplemental instruction. Visit their website to see how they can assist you.

### **EMAIL COMMUNICATION & ETIQUETTE**

Email is the best way to contact me outside of office hours and class time. I routinely check my email throughout the day and evening but please allow 24 hours for a reply before sending a follow-up email.

When contacting me, please observe the following guidelines:

- Use ONLY your UM-Flint email (i.e. @umich.edu).
- Include the course designator (i.e. POL 120) in your subject line.
- Identify yourself in the email along with your course. Example: "This is Jane Doe from your POL 120 M/W class..."
- Refrain from using informal language and/or slang. Do include a salutation and valediction and use proper grammar and syntax. In short, treat your email as a professional communicate between two adults, not as an informal conversation among friends.

### **LECTURE RECORDING PROHIBITED**

Recording of class lectures is strictly proscribed. Exception: Students with an accommodation from Disability and Accessibility Support Services will be allowed to record lectures if part of their

accommodation. Such recordings are subject to the personal use of the student ONLY. Wider posting of the recordings, such as on the internet, constitute a breach of this syllabus.

**CLASS CANCELEATION POLICY**

This class will meet regularly as noted on the syllabus unless (1) the instructor cancels class or (2) UM-Flint closes or otherwise suspends classes for the afternoon/day. When a cancelation is necessary, the instructor will announce the cancelation both via email and through a Blackboard announcement (as soon as possible, preferably before 11:30a). Note: Michigan weather is notoriously schizophrenic, with varying conditions just miles apart. I trust that each of you will use your best judgment when traveling to and from class. I take regional road and weather conditions into consideration when deciding to cancel class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a preliminary schedule for the class. The professor reserves the right to modify this schedule to meet course goals and needs, including augmenting the reading list. Readings are to be completed BEFORE class. Supplemental readings beyond the textbook are available on Blackboard under the “Course Material” tab (BB, as noted) in the relevant topic’s folder. Readings from the textbook are designated as either (Barbour) or (Wootton).

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Assigned/Due
Jan. 6	Course Introduction & Expectations		
<b>UNIT 1: POLITICS &amp; CITIZENSHIP</b> What are the founding principles of the American political system?			
Jan. 8	Political Culture & Ideology I	1-Evans, “One Choice Can Transform You” (BB)	
Jan. 13	Political Culture & Ideology II	1-Locke, Chapters 9 & 19 (BB) 2-Barbour, pp. 36-38	iCitizen 1 assigned
Jan. 15	The Founding	1-Barbour, pp. 38-40 2-Declaration of Independence (BB)	
Jan. 20	<b>NO CLASS – MLK DAY RECESS</b>		
Jan. 22	U.S. Constitution I	1-Barbour, pp. 40-54, 66-68	<b>iCitizen 1 DUE</b>
Jan. 27	U.S. Constitution II	1-Geltzer, “America’s Problem Isn’t Too Little Democracy. It’s Too Much.” (BB) 2-Wootton, Federalist 10	
Jan. 29	Federalism	1-Barbour, pp. 54-66 2-Wootton, Federalist 51 3-Wootton, Brutus 6	iCitizen 2 assigned
Feb. 3	Citizenship & Rights I	1-Applebaum, “Americans Aren’t Practicing Democracy Anymore” (BB) 2-Brown & Maloyed, “Service Guarantees Citizenship” (BB)	
Feb. 5	Citizenship & Rights II	1-Barbour, pp. 72-78, 104-108 2-Wootton, Federalist 84 3-Brutus I (BB) 4-Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (BB)	iCitizen 3 assigned
<b>UNIT 2: INSTITUTIONS &amp; GOVERNANCE</b> How is the political system organized? How is power used?			
Feb. 10	Congress I	1-Barbour, pp. 112-123 2-Wootton, Federalist 39 3-Wootton, Federalist 57	
Feb. 12	Congress II	1-Barbour, pp. 123-135 2-Mayhew, <i>The Electoral Connection</i> (BB) 3-Fenno, <i>Homestyle</i> (BB)	iCitizen 4 assigned

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Assigned/Due
Feb. 17	Presidency I	1-Barbour, pp. 150-165 2-Wootton, Federalist 70 3-Wootton, Cato 4	iCitizen 3 DUE
Feb. 19	Presidency II	1-Neustadt, <i>Presidential Power</i> (BB) 2-Schlesinger, <i>The Imperial Presidency</i> (BB)	
Feb. 24	Review Day & Simulation Prep		iCitizen 4 DUE
Feb. 26	Simulation Day: Lawmaking		iCitizen 5 assigned
Mar. 2	<b>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>		
Mar. 4	<b>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>		
Mar. 9	Judiciary I	1-Barbour, pp. 182-188, 196-204 2-Wootton, Federalist 78 3-Wootton, Brutus 15	iCitizen 5 DUE
Mar. 11	Judiciary II	1-Barbour, pp. 204-211	
<b>UNIT 3: POLITICAL BEHAVIOR &amp; PARTICIPATION</b> How can citizens participate in politics?			
Mar. 16	Public Opinion & Voter Turnout I	1-Barbour, pp. 248-262 2-“Make Debate Great Again” (BB)	
Mar. 18	Public Opinion & Voter Turnout II	1-Barbour, pp. 262-269 2-Gutting, “Should Everybody Vote?” (BB)	
Mar. 23	Political Parties & Interest Groups I	1-Barbour, pp. 214-233	
Mar. 25	Political Parties & Interest Groups II	1-Barbour, pp. 233-244	
Mar. 30	Campaigns & Elections I	1-Barbour, pp. 270-281 2-“Abolishing the Electoral College” (BB) 3-Wootton, Federalist 14	
Apr. 1	Campaigns & Elections II	1-Barbour, pp. 135-147 2-“Hating Gerrymandering Is Easy” (BB)	
Apr. 6	Politics & Media	1-Barbour, pp. 284-308 2-Mutz, <i>How the Mass Media Divide Us</i> (BB) 3-Sunstein, <i>Republic 2.0</i> (BB)	
Apr. 8	Politics & Media continued	(see above)	iCitizen 2 DUE
Apr. 13	Debate: Wither the Republic?		iCitizen 6 assigned
Apr. 15	Review Day/Catch Up		
Apr. 22	<b>NO CLASS</b>		<b>iCitizen 6 DUE @ 11:59p on Blackboard</b>