

**Bowie State University**  
**Department of History & Government**  
**GOVT 231 National Government**  
**Summer 2010**

**ON-LINE-CAUTION:** This is an online course, please make sure you have regular and dependable access to an up to date computer and internet access (preferably broadband/DSL). Computer or internet problems are not an excuse for not completing assignments, quizzes, or tests!

Instructor: Dr. D. Osei Robertson  
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**Course Overview**

This course is designed to give students a general overview of the structure of the American political system. It examines the origins, key institutions, and processes involved in the American system. Areas such as the founding of America, its structural composition, the role of elections and public policy, and interest groups will be examined throughout the semester. Students are expected to engage in discussions of the class readings, while also demonstrating a working knowledge of the subject matter through test and papers.

**Emerging Issue:** Political Science is a contemporary based discipline, therefore there are several cyclical themes that may emerge at any given point, such as: war, economic shocks, or environmental crises. Because of the recent raise in oil prices, energy issues are now part of the contemporary political discourse. During the course of the semester we will examine the relationship between politicians, lobbyist, and the search for renewable energy sources.

**\*\*\*\*\*Special Needs:** Students who have a disability and who would like accommodations should report immediately to Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Room 1328 in the Business and Graduate Studies Building or call Dr. Michael S. Hughes, DSS Coordinator at 301-860-4067.

**Requirements**

1. *Class Readings:* Students will be responsible for daily readings taken from the main textbook:

**Theodore Lowi et al., *American Government: Power and Purpose, Brief Edition* (New York: Norton, 2010).**

**Pedagogical Articulations**

*II: Student Learning Objectives*

- 1) Define the basic concepts and themes of national government, such as: federalism, legitimacy, , justice, freedom, civil liberties, and equality;
- 2) Understand how the primary institutions of American government operate, including: Congress, the Presidency, and the Supreme Court
- 4) Identify the key actors in American government, including: political parties, lobbyists, and interest groups
- 5) Use the requisite skills for research in political science;
- 6) Demonstrate this knowledge in the use of technology and library resources.

*III: Expected Outcomes:* Students will be required to complete the following:

- 1) Three Tests to evaluate their mastery of key concepts, themes, institutions, and actors (learning objectives 1-4). Tests will be composed of multiple choice, short answers, and essays.
- 2) Complete four diagnostic quizzes to evaluate mastery of key concepts, themes, institutions, and actors (learning objectives 1-4). Quizzes will be composed of multiple choice and short answers.

**2.)Tests and Papers:** Students will take four quizzes and three tests during the summer session. Each quiz represents ten percent of the student’s grade, with the lowest quiz grade being dropped at the end of the course. Each test will be worth twenty percent of the student’s grade.

**Grading Scale**

Quizzes (3) . . . . .	30%
Tests (3) . . . . .	60%
Online Discussion/Participation . .	10%

**4: Class Attendance/Participation:** Participation is a mandatory component of this course. Because this is an online course, participation is derived from the student’s online discussion. Students are required to respond to the discussion topic posted at the conclusion of every chapter. *University professors are not obligated to honor any excuse or explanation for an absence, regardless if the absence is due to illness, family issues, or athletic events. If any student misses an assignment, she or he must submit the appropriate documentation (outlining specific details) for the professor to determine if the absence can or will be excused. Students are solely responsible for any materials that are covered or assigned (for example, if a test or quiz date is altered) during their absence.*

**\*\*\*\*Communications:** The professor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule or course requirements. Any alterations to the course will be announced in advance via blackboard. All course announcements, updates, or changes will be made via blackboard! Announcements on Blackboard are sent to the student's BSU email address. Unless there is a technical problem with the system, students must communicate via their BSU email address.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1: Jun 1-4th

Topic 1: Key Concepts in National Government and Politics

Required Readings: Lowi et al. Ch. 1

Suggested Reading:

**1<sup>st</sup> Quiz** (June 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Topic 2: Founding A Republic: The Constitution

Require Readings: Lowi et al. Ch. 2,

Discussion Topic 1

### Week 2: June 7-11

Topic 1: Federalism

Required Readings: Lowi et al. Ch. 3

Suggested Video: Dr. Scott, Federalism

**1<sup>st</sup> Test**

Topic 2: Civil Liberties

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 4

Suggested Reading: Beer, "Federalism, Nationalism, and Democracy in America"

Outside Lecture: ACLU Link

Discussion Topic 2

Topic 3: Institutions: Congress

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 5, *Federalist Papers* #s 57, 62,

Suggested Reading:

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Quiz

### Week 3: June 14-18

#### Topic 1: American Institutions Cont.: The Presidency

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 6  
Outside Lecture: White House Ghosts  
Discussion Topic 3

#### Topic 2: American Institutions Cont.: Bureaucracy and the Executive Branch

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 7,  
Suggested Reading: Wilson, "The Rise of Bureaucratic State," Domhoff, "Upper Class Control of the Federal Government"

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Quiz

#### Topic 3: American Institutions Cont.: The Courts

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 8  
Suggested Reading: Walton and Smith Ch. 13; Riddick and Riddick, "Overview of United States Supreme Court Affirmative Action"

### Week 4: Jun. 21-25

## 2<sup>nd</sup> TEST

#### Topic 1: Political Parties

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 11  
Suggested Readings: Chambers, "The Genesis of Modern Parties," Barker and Jones, "Change Through Political Parties"  
Documentary: The Boogie Man

#### Topic 2: Interest Groups

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch. 12  
Suggested Reading  
Discussion Topic 4

#### Topic 3: Domestic Policy

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch 13

## 4<sup>th</sup> QUIZ

### Week 5: Jun. 28-July 2

#### *Foreign Policy*

Required Reading: Lowi et al. Ch.14

Suggested Reading: Leffler, "Bush's Foreign Policy,"

## FINAL EXAM