This class will examine the structures and processes of the American governmental and political systems. We will study the Constitution and the philosophical basis of the American republic; the institutions of American government; institutions outside government such as political parties, interest groups and the media; the election process; and the public policy process, which involves all of these ideas and institutions. The objective is for you to learn more than you already know about how the government and political systems of the United States work, and why you should care about it, both of which are necessary for the development of informed, responsible, politically empowered and effective members of society. You will be exposed to a wide variety of issues and political viewpoints – from the readings, from the lectures, and from your peers in class discussions. I ask that you consider them with an open mind and respond to them respectfully even when you disagree. Whatever your political beliefs are, or whatever they may become, the successful completion of this class will give you a better understanding of how governmental decisions affect you, and will make you a more knowledgeable and better informed citizen, and a more articulate advocate for your viewpoint.

Political Science 201 satisfies Winthrop University’s Constitution requirement and General Education requirement in Social Sciences. As part of Winthrop’s Global Learning Initiative, we will examine and compare the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. This class also contributes to student achievement of Winthrop University Level Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live; and Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.

Reading materials:
Susan Welch, John Gruhl, Susan M. Rigdon, and Sue Thomas, *Understanding American Government* [/] *The Essentials*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 13th edition (2012, the version without policy chapters); this is available for your choice of purchase or rental in print or as an e-book through the Winthrop University Bookstore, or online.

The Articles of Confederation: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp)

Jennifer E. Manning, “Membership of the 114th Congress: A Profile,” Congressional Research Service, web address TBA.


Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and posted on the class Webpage.

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

**Grading:**
The course will use Winthrop University’s +/- grading system. Final grades will be assigned as follows:
93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-
59 or below = F.

**Grading factors:**
20%: Writing assignment, due to turnitin.com before the beginning of class on Feb. 3.
20%: Midterm exam, in class on Mar. 10.
30%: Research paper, due to turnitin.com before the beginning of class on Apr. 21.
30%: Final exam, 6:30 PM on Friday, May 1.

The exams will include a combination of multiple choice questions, short answers/definitions, and essay questions. A review guide for each exam will be handed out approximately one week in advance, and the last class before each exam will include time for review. Makeup exams will not be given without documentation of extenuating circumstances. The final exam is not cumulative, but assumes knowledge of concepts covered earlier in the semester.

**Administrative announcements:**
Class cancellations, changes in schedule, guest speakers, etc., will be announced via the class listserv, to which you will be automatically subscribed through your winthrop.edu e-mail address if you register for the class before the beginning of the semester. If you register after classes have begun, you will need to manually subscribe to the listserv using the instructions at [http://www.winthrop.edu/technology/default.aspx?id=7081](http://www.winthrop.edu/technology/default.aspx?id=7081). The class is plsc201004. Check your WU e-mail frequently. You may use the listserv for discussion or to share information with classmates, review for exams, or ask questions about course material. *Note that anything you post to the listserv will be seen by everyone in the class.*

**Attendance:**
Attendance will be taken by means of a sign-in sheet circulated at the beginning of each class meeting. In accordance with Winthrop’s attendance policies, if you are absent without excuse from four out of the 14 class meetings, you will receive an N or an F, as appropriate. In this class, signing in an absent classmate is considered an act of academic dishonesty. I do not require documentation for absences except if you miss the final exam or want to submit a paper late without penalty.

**Technology:**
You are welcome to use a computer to take notes in class. However, this class follows the College of Arts and Sciences policy on use of technology in the classroom. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic communication devices during class meetings. If you need to leave your phone on during a particular class for emergency reasons, please let me know in advance. *The use of any kind of electronic device, including a phone, iPod or Internet access, during an exam constitutes academic dishonesty.*


**Academic Honesty and Integrity:**
Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the class. This class follows the policies of Winthrop University and the Department of Political Science, which are linked below, on academic misconduct and plagiarism. Please be aware of these policies and abide by them. In addition to the failing grade imposed by the instructor, academic misconduct of any kind will result in referral to the Dean of Students for possible additional sanctions.

Political Science Department policy statement:
http://www.winthrop.edu/cas/politicalscience/default.aspx?id=19401

Office of Academic Affairs policy statement:

**Students with Disabilities:** Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact the Program Director, Services for Students with Disabilities, at (803) 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from Services for Students with Disabilities, please inform me as early as possible in the semester.

**Additional Winthrop University Resources:**
*Winthrop’s Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA)* identifies and assists highly motivated and talented students to apply for nationally and internationally competitive awards, scholarships, fellowships, and unique opportunities both at home and abroad. ONCA gathers and disseminates award information and deadlines across the campus community, and serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff throughout the nationally competitive award nomination and application process. ONCA is located in Dinkins 222A. Please fill out an online information form at the bottom of the ONCA webpage www.winthrop.edu/onca and email onca@winthrop.edu for more information.
**Winthrop’s Academic Success Center (ASC)** is a free resource for all undergraduate students seeking to perform their best academically. The ASC offers a variety of personalized and structured resources that help students achieve academic excellence, such as tutoring, academic skill development (test taking strategies, time management counseling, and study techniques), group and individual study spaces, and academic coaching. The ASC is located on the first floor of Dinkins, Suite 106. Please contact the ASC at 803-323-3929 or success@winthrop.edu or www.winthrop.edu/success.

**Winthrop’s Office of Victims Assistance (OVA)** provides services to survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking as well as educational programming to prevent these crimes from occurring. The staff assists all survivors, regardless of when they were victimized, in obtaining counseling, medical care, housing options, legal prosecution, and more. In addition, the OVA helps students access support services for academic problems resulting from victimization. The OVA is located in 204 Crawford and can be reached at (803) 323-2206. In the case of an after-hours emergency, please call Campus Police at (803)323-3333, or the local rape crisis center, Safe Passage, at their 24-hour hot-line, (803)329-2800. For more information please visit: http://www.winthrop.edu/victimsassistance/

**Writing Assignment, due Feb. 3:** Compare and contrast the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. What similarities and differences do you observe in the two? What rights does each document consider to be fundamental? What does each document consider to be the proper role of government in preserving, protecting, or providing these rights?

**Final paper, due Apr. 21**: Using the Program for Public Consultation’s “US Federal Budget Exercise,” bring the budget into balance through some combination of the tax increase and spending cut options which are offered on the site. Write a research paper justifying your major decisions and explaining their policy consequences. (There are no “right” and “wrong” answers. The objective is to make a strong, well-researched and documented argument for whatever decisions you choose to make.)

---

**Schedule of Topics and Assignments**  
*(All class meetings are on Tuesday night except the final exam.)*

Jan. 13: Introduction to the Course

Jan. 20: American Political Thought (Welch, Introduction and Ch. 1)  
Declaration of Independence (Welch, pp. 501-502)  
Articles of Confederation (online)

Jan. 27: The Constitution (Welch, Ch. 2 and pp. 503-512)  
*Federalist Papers #10 and #51 (Welch, pp. 513-518)*  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (online)

Feb. 3: Congress (Welch, Ch. 10; Manning, online); *First Writing Assignment Due.*
Feb. 10: The Presidency; The Bureaucracy (Welch, Chs. 11-12)

Feb. 17: The Judiciary; begin Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (Welch, Chs. 13-14)

Feb. 24: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (Welch, Ch. 15).

Mar. 3: Political Parties, Campaigns, Elections and Voting (Welch, Chs. 7-9)
Review for Midterm Exam.

Mar. 10: Midterm Exam.

Mar. 17: No Class – Spring Break.

Mar. 24: The Media; Public Opinion; Interest Groups (Welch, Chs. 4-6)

Mar. 31: State and Local Government (Welch, Ch. 3); Economic and Environmental Policy (readings TBA)

Apr. 7: Social Security and Welfare Policy (readings TBA)

Apr. 14: Health Care Policy (readings TBA)

Apr. 21: Foreign Policy (readings TBA)
Last Class. Papers Due. Review for Final Exam.

Fri., May 1: Final Exam, 6:30-9:00 PM.