Course Content: Though its path has been rocky, in the period since July 4, 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed, the U.S. has emerged as one of the most vibrant and arguably most important democratic republics in human history. In this course we will explore the historical evolution of the institutions and the incentives of the political actors that have come to define U.S. politics.

The course will provide a solid, if necessarily brief, overview of the U.S. political system. Students will receive a basic introduction to the two major substantive research areas in the field—i.e., the analysis of U.S. political institutions, and U.S. political behavior. The course is designed to lay a foundation upon which students can build more expertise in advanced U.S. politics courses.

Grading: The final grade will be based on the following allocation of points.

- Section grade: 25%
- Participation: 15%
- Bi-weekly quizzes: 40% (four total, worth 10% each)
- Final exam: 20%

Your section score will be worth 20% of your final grade. Your GTF will give you precise details regarding how your section grade will be computed. Another 10% of your grade will be based on participation projects distributed throughout the term. These points will be independent of any participation component of your section grade.

Quizzes will be given before lecture on the following dates: April 13; April 25; May 9; May 23. You will have 55 minutes to complete each quiz. The final exam will be given on June 10, 10:15am.

The final exam will have the same format as the quizzes but it will be worth twice as much and it will be cumulative. I will discuss the quiz/exam format in greater detail prior
to the first quiz. As I will explain, a large part of your course grade will depend on the clarity and quality of your writing.

**Expectations:** My expectation is that you attend every lecture and discussion section and make a serious effort to engage the material. There will be approximately 45-55 pages of reading per class. If you are reading correctly, the assigned readings will not take more than 5 hours per week. This is a very reasonable amount of reading for a college student and I expect everyone to read the assigned readings *before* attending lecture.

We want this course to be as an instructive and painless as possible! Should you have any difficulties during the term, it is critical that you contact us as soon as you realize you have a problem so that we can help you find a solution before the difficulties become unmanageable.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Do not engage in this behavior!

**Textbook:** The following required text is available in the campus bookstore.

**Course Outline:** Most of the readings in the outline below are in the textbook—*Logic of American Politics (L.A.P.)*. There will also be supplemental readings assigned periodically throughout the term and posted on Blackboard. Articles found on Blackboard are denoted with a “*”.

The dates next to each section give a rough idea of when we will discuss the topics in lecture and what the corresponding reading will be. Note that the dates and readings listed below are only approximate and are subject to revision. We may move ahead or fall behind for unforeseen reasons, in which case it may necessary to modify the outline below. After each lecture I will make a definitive statement about the reading that should be done before the next lecture.

**I. Introduction: The Logic of American Politics and the Logistics of PS201**
1. Course Logistics Mar 28

**II. The Nationalization of U.S. Politics**
1. The Constitution Apr 4, *L.A.P.* chapter 2
2. Federalism Apr 6, *L.A.P.* chapter 3
3. Civil Rights Apr 11, *L.A.P.* chapter 4
4. Civil Liberties Apr 13, *L.A.P.* chapter 5
   *Quiz 1* Apr 13
III. The Institutions of Government in the U.S.

1. Congress       Apr 18,  L.A.P. chapter 6
2. The Presidency  Apr 20,  L.A.P. chapter 7
3. The Bureaucracy Apr 25,  L.A.P. chapter 8
   Quiz 2        Apr 25

IV. The U.S. Public’s Influence on National Policy

1. Public Opinion  May 2,  L.A.P. chapter 10
   Quiz 3        May 4
3. Political Parties May 9,  L.A.P. chapter 12
4. Interest Groups  May 11,  L.A.P. chapter 13
5. The News Media  May 16,  L.A.P. chapter 14
   Quiz 4        May 16

V. Conclusion and Review

1. U.S. Politics in a Comparative Perspective  May 18,  To Be Determined
2. The Prospects for Institutional Reform  May 23,  L.A.P. chapter 15
   Writing assignment  due May 25
   Final Exam  June 10, 10:15am