

Pols 205

Dr. Randolph C. Horn

Spring 2005

RCHORN@Samford.edu

Class Meetings: DBH 207, MWF 10:30-11:35

Intro to American Politics

Phone: 726-2179

Office: DBH 108

Office Hours: T 3-4:00, W 1-2:00

& by appointment

Required Readings:

Theodore Lowi and Benjamin Ginsberg 2002 *American Government: Freedom and Power, Brief 7e.*

Michael Corbett and Barbara Norrander 2002 *American Government: Using Explorit, 8e.*

The New York Times, daily <<http://www.nytimes.com/>>

Course Description:

This course addresses the structure and processes of the American political system. The course is divided into four sections: 1) The Foundations; 2) Institutions; 3) Linkages: People and Representation; and 4) Public Policy. Each section highlights a different aspect of our political system. We study the founding era and the evolution of government to understand how our current system developed. We study institutions to understand how government functions. We study linkages, the connections between people and the government, to understand how and how much we can influence government. We study public policy to understand what government does. In addition to these objectives, the course promotes critical thinking and introduces the methods and practices of the social sciences. The course format includes lectures, exercises, and discussion.

Course Requirements:

1) Students must complete readings before attempting other course requirements, i.e. quizzes and class meetings. Online requirements may be found in the classes WebCT area:

<http://webct.samford.edu:8900/webct/public/home.pl>

2) Course requirements must be completed on time on the day of assignment. Missed quizzes or late exercises may be excused with verifiable documentation of accident, illness, or legal obligation.

Otherwise, missed assignments will result in a score of zero.

3) Cheating is giving or receiving unauthorized information on graded work. Discussing specific quiz or exercise answers before submission by either party is cheating. Plagiarism is the presentation of another's ideas or language as your own. Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action through the honor court.

4) Students performance will be evaluated in these areas:

Class/Group Participation 15%	Grades: (ascending order)
Quizzes 10	greater than 60%= D-
Labs 10	greater than 63.3%= D
Exercises 20	greater than 66.6%= D+
Exams (3) 30	greater than 70%= C-
Final exam <u>15</u>	greater than 73.3%= C
100%	greater than 76.6%= C+
	greater than 80%= B-
	greater than 83.3%= B
	greater than 86.6%= B+
	greater than 90%= A-
	greater than 93.3%= A

Class participation: Class participation is required. In addition to participation during class meetings, students may respond to or volunteer contributions to the class's threaded message board on WebCT. Your original contributions and responses in the discussion area will be evaluated in terms of frequency, quality, content, grammar and style. Seven absences will result in an FA.

Quizzes: Each unit will begin with a multiple-choice quiz covering the assigned Lowi reading. Quizzes may be attempted twice, but are to be completed on WebCT at least one hour prior to the beginning of class. **Very helpful** sample quizzes and other study aids are available at <http://www.wwnorton.com/lowi7brief>

Exercises: Exercises are drawn primarily from the Corbett book. Complete the homework assignment offline and then enter your answers in the Quizzes and Homework area on WebCT. The online entry fields have just enough information for you to identify the question and copy the answer from the book. Generally, exercises are due one hour prior to the start of the second class of each unit.

Labs: Six class meetings will be held in computer labs for students to participate in exercises culminating in a redistricting simulation. The simulation will involve both group and individual work, some of which may be done outside of class meeting times. The class will meet in the Davis Library Computer Classroom (Davis 040) April 1, 6, 13, 20, 27, and May 4.

Exams: At the end of each section, a test will cover material presented in the lectures, readings, discussion, and homework.

Final exam: The final exam is cumulative and is worth 15% of the semester grade.

Class Schedule

Unit /Session Topic	Unit reading assignments and exercises <i>Note: some units have more readings/exercises than others.</i>
1/26-28 Introduction	Online assignment, in-class exercises
Unit 1 01/31 First Principles	Lowi 1, Corbett 1, Declaration of Independence & Constitution (in Lowi Appendix),
Section 1: The Foundation of the American Republic	
Unit 2 02/07 The Founding	Lowi 2, Corbett 2, Federalist 10 & 51 (in Lowi Appendix)
Unit 3 02/14 Federalism	Lowi 3, Corbett 3
Unit 4 02/21 Civil Rights & Liberties	Lowi 4, Corbett 4 & 5
02/25	Exam I, includes Unit 01

Section II: Institutions	
Unit 5 02/28 The Congress	Lowi 5, Corbett 12
Unit 6 03/07 The Executive	Lowi 6, Corbett 13 & 14
Unit 7 03/14 The Judiciary	Lowi 8, Corbett 15,
03/18	Exam II
03/21	Spring Break
Section III: Linkages	
Unit 8 3/30 Public Opinion	Lowi 9, Corbett 6 & 7 04/01 meet in Davis 040
Unit 9 04/04 Elections	Lowi 10, Corbett 8 & 10 04/06 meet in Davis 040
Unit 9 04/11 Elections	Readings: TBA 04/13 meet in Davis 040
Unit 10 04/18 Parties	Lowi 11, Corbett 9 04/20 meet in Davis 040
Unit 11 04/25 Interest Groups	Lowi 12, Corbett 11 04/27 meet in Davis 040
05/02	Exam III
Section IV: Public Policy	
Unit 12 05/04 Domestic Policy	Lowi 13, Lowi Epilogue, Classes End 05/11 05/04 meet in Davis 040
Final Exam 05/13	Final Exam Friday May 13, 2005 10:30 AM

Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting Disability Support Services, located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall (telephone number: 726-4078 or 726-2105). A faculty member will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

Student Instructions for Entering Corbett exercises in WebCT

A few guidelines on how to enter answers are necessary to ensure you receive full and proper credit for your answers. Since there are countless ways to enter some information, below you will find guidelines for how to enter certain types of numbers, currency values and names. Using these guidelines will help to ensure the application recognizes your answer as correct.

When asked to enter **statistical results**, such as Pearson's r (presented on the Compare Mapping and Scatterplots screens):

- do not enter the 0 before the decimal
- include all asterisks – if any
- include negative sign – if any
- do not round the number to less than three digits

Example: Pearson's r = or

When asked to enter **State or Country names**:

- Enter the name in full: Carolina or NC
Note: there is a space between North and Carolina.
- When a string of names is needed, separate with commas only:

Note: a space follows each comma.

When asked to enter **Currency values**:

- Enter the number with the decimal and two digits after but no \$ sign
 or

When asked to enter **Rankings**:

- Enter rankings as simple numbers.
 NOT 7th
- Be careful when there are ties because the ranking and the number of cases will not match.
e.g. if two cases are tied for third place: (1,2,3,3,5)

When asked to enter **Percentages**:

- Enter the percentage as a number with the percentage sign, NOT as proportions.
 NOT .980

When asked to enter **the description** of a variable:

- Enter the exact language use in Microcase's description of the variable.
- Click on the "Variable Info." icon, a button that looks like a V, or note the variable description in the variable selection dialog box.