

# American National Government

790 : 201

SPRING 2022

(asynchronous online)

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**Instructor:** Dr. Morrison-Santana ([deborah.morrison@rutgers.edu](mailto:deborah.morrison@rutgers.edu))

**Office Hours:** virtual appointments available upon request (remote via Zoom, WebEx, or Skype)

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**Course Description:** This survey course will introduce students to how the American government functions, its different bodies and their purposes, and current issues. By breaking down each department, students will gain an understanding of the inner-workings of the White House, Congress, the Courts and other departments in the U.S. government. It will also explore the role of public opinion, the media, and international image. The aim of this course is to get students to critically think about how the U.S. government functions and what issues the U.S. currently faces.

## Readings:

\*\*\* All available on Canvas – No purchases required \*\*\*

Please make sure you have access to the course on Canvas as soon as possible so that you are able to get the materials needed to successfully complete the course.

## Grading:

Discussion Posts – 220 points total

Reading Journals - 455 points total (35 points each paper)

Media Paper - 125 points

Newspaper Article Essay – 100 points

Final Essay – 100 points

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100% - 1000 points total

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## Assignments (all due dates are on the course schedule at the bottom of this syllabus):

### Discussion Thread Contributions

Each week, I will post discussion questions or topics that you are expected to respond to based on the lectures, readings, links, and topics of the week. Your contributions must be more than just agreeing with someone else or simple reactions to what others say (“Wow,” “I didn’t know this,” etc.). In addition to your own response to the original post, you must respond to at least one other student’s posts each week for full credit.

**Reading journal** – The reading journal is your analysis and thoughts on the week’s material – NOT a summary of the readings or description of links). What I am looking for is a two-page, double spaced analysis of our week's course material (all of it) in paragraph form. I want you to incorporate readings, videos, lectures (when applicable) into this "journal" - include insights you gained, maybe questions you have, and comparisons to our current state of affairs, etc. It should not be a summary or description, but instead an analysis. You do not need to write a separate journal for each piece of course material -- it can and should all be incorporated into one paper. Double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, only your name at the top. Points will be taken off of grammatical/spelling errors, disorganization, and not following directions.

### **Newspaper Article Essay:**

Current events are directly linked to our course material, and as this is political science course, I expect you to regularly read and watch the news. This essay is a comparison paper between recent news stories and our course material. The full rubric for this assignment is on page 4 of this syllabus.

### **Media Paper: DUE SUNDAY, MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>**

In normal times, we would have presentations about different media sources so that you can see the different biases and portrayals of the same news stories. To address this, I am asking you to write a paper about 4 different media sources and how they tackle two different news stories. The required formatting (in terms of font size, margins, footnotes, etc.) is the same as the Newspaper Article Assignment (on page 4 of this syllabus), but the purpose of this paper is different.

You are to pick two major news stories from THIS WEEK and analyze how four different news sources cover each of them (you can pick four different news sources for each of the events). Discuss the similarities in how they are reported, differences, perceived biases, etc. The purpose of this week's readings, videos, and assignments is to demonstrate how the same exact news event can be portrayed so differently. Your paper should be at least 5-7 pages long, organized, and cited properly and include analyses of two different events – 4 sources each event.

The only acceptable news sources for this assignment are:

CNN  
Fox News  
MSNBC  
PBS News  
BBC  
C-SPAN  
Newsmax

**Final Paper:** Rubric will be given out during the last week of classes.

### **Weekly Expectations:**

The way I design this course is to make it as use friendly as possible. The course is broken down into 15 modules (for the 15 weeks of class that we have). When you click on our class in Canvas, click on Home on the left side, and you will see all of these modules, which include our readings, videos, discussions, and any assignments for that week. I labeled all of the modules by the dates. I also begin each module with a Pages link, where I outline the week's topics and give some general information about the week's materials. **YOU SHOULD READ THIS FIRST EVERY WEEK.**

If you have been simply clicking on Assignments or Discussions to see what is due, you are not seeing everything needed for the course or the week. Please make things easier for yourself and look at the weekly modules, which include all of the necessary work each week.

- Each week, the week's content will appear at 12:00am on Monday mornings (late Sunday nights) so that you can begin that week's assignments. To avoid confusion in course discussions and papers and to pace the course, I do not make the entire course's contents available at once.
  - Example: Week 1 – Monday 12:00am – Sunday 11:59pm
- Each week, the week's content will appear at 12:00am on Monday mornings (late Sunday nights) so that you can begin that week's assignments. To avoid confusion in course discussions and quizzes, I prefer not to make the entire course's contents available at once to avoid confusion.
  - Example: Week 1 – Monday 12:00am – Sunday 11:59pm

**\*\*\*ALL PAPERS, PROJECTS, AND DISCUSSION CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EACH WEEK ARE DUE BY SUNDAY AT 11:59pm AT THE END OF THAT WEEK on CANVAS\*\*\***

**\*\*\* I DO NOT ACCEPT ANY LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Assignments on Canvas will close for submission after the due date has passed.  
DO NOT EMAIL THEM TO ME\*\*\***

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

- 1. Academic Dishonesty:** Taking the words and ideas of another and presenting them as your own without proper use of citation constitutes plagiarism and it is considered grounds for receiving an “F” for the course and suspension/expulsion from the university. All students are required to uphold the honor code. Please see Rutgers’ Academic Integrity Policy. All students are required to sign the **Rutgers Honor Code Pledge**. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment”... Additionally, you cannot hand in any assignments that you have completed for a different course.
- 2.** Students should present official medical or legal documentation if they cannot fulfill any part of the course requirements. Exceptions will only be made under extraordinary circumstances such as serious illness and/or legal obligations.
- 3. Open Communication:** I am always available to help you succeed in this course. You may see me during my office hours or reach me through email (please don’t send messages through Canvas – I have found that they often get lost). Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns and allow me at least 24-48 hours to respond before you write again. Additionally, it is inappropriate for any parents to contact any professor about your grade, and there are laws that prohibit such communication.
- 4. Your grade is your responsibility and is non-negotiable.** If you need a specific grade for your GPA, financial aid, academic standing, personal reasons, etc., you need to earn that grade by following the guidelines presented in this syllabus. Please do not contact me after the semester asking/begging for a better grade – I will not respond.
- 5.** Please be **respectful** of everyone in the class, including me. If you are being disrespectful, you will be warned one time. Any subsequent disrespect will be reported to the university.
- 6.** As this is an asynchronous online course, it allows for ample time for you to complete your work each week. I will therefore not entertain any extensions on your coursework. I understand that this is a difficult time for many, which is why I designed the course the way that I did – to give you the flexibility to complete your assignments each week at your own pace.
- 7.** If you enroll in the course late, you are still responsible to complete the work from the week(s) you missed.

## Newspaper Article Assignment:

There are many critical international issues happening in the world today that are directly related to historical events or eras we've discussed in this class. For this assignment you must find a recent news article (from a credible source – email me if you are unsure of a source) about an UNRELATED current event (2021/2022) and write a paper about how the 2021/2022 relates to an event or era discussed in this class. This is not an informative paper, but rather you must use critical thinking to discuss how the current event is related to the government as we've discussed in class and how it differs. Compare and contrast the present with the course topic using course readings, lectures, and outside sources, if necessary, to supplement your paper. Any supplemental sources should not be the main focus of your paper; your analysis of the newspaper article topic and course material is. Additionally, do not use the same for both papers. You will not get credit for repeated topics.

\*\*\* Your answer must be at least 5 full pages (no less), typed, DOUBLE SPACED, and 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins. You will be graded on content, grammar, punctuation, and following directions. This paper should be a well thought-out response with a beginning, middle, and end. \*\*\*

### Newspaper Article Assignment is due Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>

- Find an article from a credible source – **avoid 24-hour news channels (Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, etc.)**... Also, do not use op-eds (opinion pieces), as they are not investigative journalism. Look at sources like the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *France24*, etc. (If you are unsure of a source, email me).

**ANY LATE PAPER WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED for any reason. No exception.**

#### **Formatting Guidelines for PAPERS:**

- Be specific. I want you to really think about your articles and your responses to them and how they fit into our course.
- Avoid replacing arguments with examples. Use examples to illustrate a general claim, not as a replacement for them. Examples by themselves tend toward selection bias and hasty generalizations.
- I am interested in content, not clever rhetorical flourish. Thus, avoid filler material... **DO NOT USE BLOCK QUOTES FROM THE ARTICLES OR READINGS.** Direct quotes should be no longer than 1 sentence, MAXIMUM.
- **IF YOU DO NOT CITE, EVEN WHEN YOU PARAPHRASE, IT WILL BE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARIZED PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED EITHER BY AN F ON THE PAPER OR THE COURSE AND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN.**
- PROOFREAD YOUR PAPER. You will be marked off for typos, punctuation errors, and/or major disorganization.
- The heading of your paper should be your name ONLY.
- 12-point Times New Roman font
- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins all around
- CITE EVERYTHING.
- The paper is to be 5 pages long. Not less (No cover page).
- This paper must be written specifically for THIS CLASS. Any papers submitted from previous courses will automatically receive an F.

**\*\*\* SUBMIT YOUR PAPER THROUGH TURN-IT-IN ON CANVAS \*\*\***  
(I will not accept it any other way)

<b>SPRING 2022 - American National Government Online Schedule (subject to change)</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>
<b>WEEK 1 (1/18-1/23)</b>	Introduction	Discussion post and response
	American Revolution	Journal
<b>WEEK 2 (1/24-1/30)</b>	Constitution	Discussion post and response
	Federalism	Journal
<b>WEEK 3 (1/31-2/6)</b>	The Bill of Rights & Other Amendments	Discussion post and response
		Journal
<b>WEEK 4 (2/7-2/13)</b>	Civil Rights Movement	Discussion post and response
		Journal
<b>WEEK 5 (2/14-2/20)</b>	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	Discussion post and response
	Interest Groups	Journal
<b>WEEK 6 (2/21-2/27)</b>	Political Parties	Discussion post and response
	Political Parties pt. 2	Journal
<b>WEEK 7 (2/28-3/6)</b>	The Media	Discussion post and response
		<b>Media Paper due</b>
<b>WEEK 8 (3/7-3/13)</b>	Campaigns & Elections	Discussion post and response
		Journal
<b>SPRING BREAK (no assignments)</b>		
<b>WEEK 9 (3/21-3/27)</b>	Congress	Discussion post and response
		Journal
<b>WEEK 10 (3/28-4/3)</b>	The President	Discussion post and response
		Journal
<b>WEEK 11 (4/4-4/10)</b>	The Courts	Discussion post and response
	The Bureaucracy	Journal
<b>WEEK 12 (4/13-4/17)</b>	Domestic Issues: COVID-19; U.S. Economy at a Glance (subject to change); Social Issues; Environmental Issues	Discussion post and response
		Journal
<b>WEEK 13 (4/18-4/24)</b>	Foreign Policy History: Origins to 1945	Discussion post and response
	Foreign Policy: America's Changing Role in the World (1945-present)	Journal
<b>WEEK 14 (4/25-5/1)</b>	Current Domestic & Foreign Policy Issues (COVID-19, immigration, Iran, ISIS, Syria, and North Korea)	Discussion Post
	The Biden Administration - Where are we now?	Journal & Newspaper Article Essay
<b>WEEK 15 (5/2-5/9)</b>	Where are we now?	<b>Final Essay due 5/8</b>