

# American National Government

790:201:01  
Mondays and Wednesdays  
4:00-5:20pm  
Hill 104

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**Instructor:** Dr. Morrison-Santana

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 11:30-12:30pm (Hill 720) or appointments available upon request

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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 it currently faces.

**Readings:** \*\*\* All available on Canvas \*\*\*

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.

## **Media Paper:**

You must write a paper that centers on different media sources and their slants, biases, or neutrality. Rubric for the paper is on page 4 of this syllabus.

## **Newspaper Article Essay (X2):**

Current events are directly linked to our course material. These two essays are comparison papers between recent news stories and our course material. The full rubric for this assignment is on page 3 of this syllabus.

**Tests:** These are short answer essay exams that will be available on the day of the exam and due the Sunday of that week by 11:59pm – submitted on Canvas – no late exams accepted. Directions will be included with the exam pertaining to length of responses, writing criteria, formatting, etc.

**Final Exam:** You will have a final exam essay that will be given out the last day of class and due that Sunday at 11:59pm. Directions will be included with the exam pertaining to length of responses, writing criteria, formatting, etc.

## **Grading:**

Attendance/Participation – 30% (300 points total)

Media Paper - 10% (100 points total)

Newspaper Article Essay - 20% (100 points each/200 points)

Tests - 25% (125 points each/250 points total)

Final Exam – 15% (150 points)

----- 100% - 1000 points total

## **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. No personal technology devices allowed in class.** This means no cell phones, iPads, laptops, or any other kinds of electronic devices (unless needed for medical reasons, with the proper documentation). These devices are distracting not only to you, but to the rest of the class as well. If you are caught using your phone or another device, you will lose participation credit for the day. Continuous use of these technologies may result in being asked to leave the classroom and lose participation credit for the day. If you are caught using any personal technology during an exam, you will receive a zero for the exam, and the matter will be handed over to the Office of Academic Integrity.
- 3.** 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.
- 4. 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 do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. Additionally, it is inappropriate for any parents to contact any professor about your grade, and there are laws that prohibit such communication.
- 5. 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.
- 6. DO NOT HAND IN WORK YOU’VE SUBMITTED IN ANY OTHER CLASS.** Even if you wrote it, it would still be considered plagiarism because you didn’t write it specifically for this class.
- 7.** 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.
- 8.** I cannot predict the future, and as we all know from these past few years, things can change overnight – this includes modality of courses taught, requirements for in person classes, etc. I will do my best to be as honest and upfront with you about what I know and to help ease whatever transitions we may need to make throughout the semester. We should all be prepared for everything.
- 9.** In order to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of the Rutgers-Newark community, masks must be worn by all persons inside campus buildings when in the presence of others, and in buildings in non-private enclosed settings (e.g., common workspaces, workstations, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Masks should securely cover the nose and mouth. Masks must be worn during class meetings. Each day before you arrive on campus or leave your residence hall, you must complete the brief survey on the My Campus Pass symptom checker self-screening app found at: **myRutgers Portal**.

## Newspaper Article Essays:

There are many critical international issues happening in the world today that are directly related to political issues and historical events we discuss in this class. For these essays, you must find a recent news article (from a credible source – email me if you are unsure of a source) about a current event (from 2020/2021) that is UNRELATED to our course material and write a paper about how the article relates to the topics discussed. These are not informative papers, but rather you must use critical thinking to discuss how the current event you choose is related to the topics we've discussed that week and how it differs using course readings and lectures to supplement your paper. This is also not meant for you to find a 2020/2021 article about our topic. Again, your news event should be UNRELATED to our course material in any way, and YOU make the connection. **You must use the course material in your paper (and cite it) - including lectures, readings, links, etc.** in addition to your news article.

Cite everything with **footnotes** (with full bibliographic information in them).

\*\*\* Your answer must be at least 5 full pages long (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. Remember, these essays make up a large portion of your grade, so it is important that you do them each week; failure to do so will result in failing the course. They should be well thought-out responses with a beginning, middle, and end in each.

**These papers are due weekly by Sundays at 11:59pm on a topic we covered that week.**

**\*\*\* SUBMIT YOUR PAPER THROUGH TURN-IT-IN ON CANVAS \*\*\***

**LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED for any reason. No exceptions.**

### **Guidelines:**

- Find an article from a credible source – avoid 24-hour news channels (NO Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, etc.)... If you are unsure of your source, please email me. Also, do not use op-eds (opinion pieces), as they are not investigative journalism.
- 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 2 sentences, MAXIMUM.
- **If you do not cite, even when you paraphrase, it will be considered plagiarism. PLAGIARIZED PAPERS WILL BE PENALIED 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... Read through it out loud before turning it in, which can help highlight errors.
- The heading of your paper should be your name ONLY – no title, date, course name, etc.
- 1-inch margins all around
- SINGLE SPACE FOOTNOTES
- The paper is to be 5 full pages long. Not less... (No cover page).
- **CITE EVERYTHING.**

## Media Paper Criteria

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 type/size, margins, footnotes, etc.) is the same as the Newspaper Article Assignments (on page 3 of this syllabus), but the purpose of this paper is different.

You are to pick two major news stories from THIS SEMESTER 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 assignment 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.

The **only** acceptable news sources for this assignment are:

CNN  
Fox News  
MSNBC  
BBC  
C-SPAN  
Newsmax  
OAN

## Fall 2021 - American National Government Schedule (subject to change)

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1-Sep	Introduction	
8-Sep	American Revolution	Declaration of Independence
13-Sep	Constitution & Federalism	"Constitution of the United States of America," Federalist Papers (1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 85)
15-Sep	The Bill of Rights	Madison Speech Proposing the Bill of Rights; Bill of Rights
20-Sep	Civil Rights Movement	"Letter from Birmingham Jail"
22-Sep	Civil Rights Movement pt. 2	Watch <i>Thirteenth</i> (link in Canvas)
27-Sep	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	"Public Opinion and Political Socialization"
29-Sep	Interest Groups	"Interest Groups: Voice of the People or Nuisance?"
4-Oct	The Media	Trust and Mistrust of the Mainstream Media <b>Media paper due - MUST BE SUBMITTED ON CANVAS</b>
6-Oct	<b>Test #1</b>	
11-Oct	Political Parties	(Links on Canvas)
13-Oct	Political Parties pt. 2	(Links on Canvas)
18-Oct	Campaigns & Elections	"Presidential Election Process"; "U.S. Trails Most Developed Countries in Voter Turnout"
20-Oct	Congress	House.gov; Senate.gov (links on Canvas)
25-Oct	Congress pt. 2	Current legislation (TBA)
27-Oct	The President	"The Executive Branch" <b>Newspaper Article Assignment #1 due - MUST BE SUBMITTED ON CANVAS</b>
1-Nov	The Courts	"Court Role and Structure" and "Comparing Federal and State Courts"
3-Nov	<b>Test #2</b>	
8-Nov	Domestic Issues	Impeachment; U.S. Economy at a Glance (subject to change)
10-Nov	Domestic Issues pt. 2 - Guest Lecturer Dr. Alejandro Santana	TBA
15-Nov	Foreign Policy History: Origins to 1945	American Foreign Policy: "The Turning Point"
17-Nov	Foreign Policy: America's Changing Role in the World (1945-present)	Jentleson Chapter 2
22-Nov	<b>Thanksgiving Week - NO CLASS</b>	
29-Nov	21st century politics: Bush--> Obama--> Trump	TBA
1-Dec	The 2020 Election: Candidates, Issues, & Controversy	TBA
6-Dec	The Trump Era	Domestic Issues (immigration); Foreign Policy Issues (Afghanistan, Iran, ISIS, Syria, and North Korea)
8-Dec	The Biden Era & Current Issues in the American Government	<b>*** Newspaper Article Assignment #2 due - MUST BE SUBMITTED ON CANVAS ***</b>
13-Dec	Last date of class - Final review	