

Exploring American Government: U.S. Constitution

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Office Hours: MWF 11:30-1:30 & 5:00-5:50
Tuesday 10:30-1:00 M-F by appointment

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OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACTING ME

You can stop by my office anytime to see me. You do not need an appointment. My office is in Wagoner in the hall between the nurses' office and the tunnel. I will almost always be there during my office hours listed above, and you may find me there at other times as well. If you can't come during my office hours, we can set an appointment for another time or meet by Zoom.

Outside of my office hours, please feel free to email me (jmarsh@bsu.edu) at any time. Of course, if it is in the evening, you may not get an answer until the next day. If the matter is of some urgency and I don't answer my email, you may call me on my Google phone (765 287-5347), preferably before 9pm. If you are fretting over an assignment, or confused about something, it's fine to call. I'd hate to have you worrying needlessly. If you are sick and will be missing the next day, you do **not** need to call. Email is fine. You will be given ample time to makeup missed work. Those policies are explained later in the syllabus.

If at any time you have questions, comments, problems, or suggestions please talk to me. If you are having difficulty in the course, *don't wait*. There are things we can discuss to help you. Most students will find themselves struggling occasionally in some classes, and it's not a weakness to ask for help. On the contrary, it shows wisdom and determination.

You don't need to be having a problem to come see me in my office. I encourage you stop in to simply chat. In fact, if you come sit and talk with me at my office at least once during August or September, I'll give you 1 extra credit point. That's a onetime offer, not a point for every visit.

COURSE DESCRIPTION FROM ACADEMY CATALOG

The Constitution of the United States is not only the law of the land, it is the fundamental political mechanism under which the nation has achieved unprecedented freedom and prosperity. This course will provide students with both a historical background and a modern working knowledge of the Constitution and the American political system. Discussion of the application of the Constitution to current issues will be a regular theme. Critical thinking and productive civil discourse will also be consistently emphasized. This is a very interactive course with the students engaged in simulations, discussion, role-play and research.



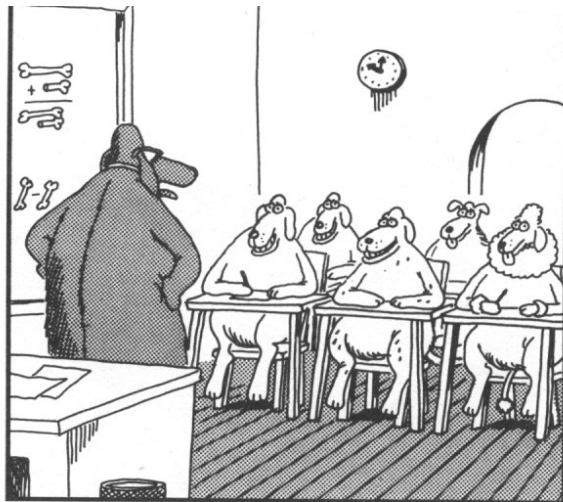
COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the historical antecedents of the U.S. Constitution and its themes and components
- Students will develop a working knowledge of the text of the Constitution and its essential components
- Students will develop a working knowledge of the broader system of constitutional government in America, including federal, state and local governments
- Students will develop the skills of analysis and synthesis required for interpreting and articulating the Constitution and subsequent texts and legal cases regarding its application
- Students will develop an ability to identify and discuss recurrent themes and current issues regarding the Constitution in American culture

REQUIRED TEXT & READINGS

American Government: Institutions & Policies – This is an ebook. You will get a code to access it.

There will also be numerous reading assignments from short articles, documents, etc., which will be made available on Canvas. They are listed on the schedule as “Canvas.” It is your responsibility to make sure you have, or can access, the readings for a class.



“Well, here we go again. ... Did anyone here *not* eat his or her homework on the way to school?”

BASIC COURSE STRUCTURE

A variety of methods will be used to present and analyze the course material. There will be some lecture, but there will also be many “hands-on” classroom activities such as discussions, debates, trials, and simulations. Likewise, grading will be based on a variety of methods including objective and essay tests and quizzes, projects, and class participation.

Concentration and good note-taking are very important during class time. Students are expected to read and study the given assignments **BEFORE** class. That is essential to their ability to follow the lectures and participate in class discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS

I have listed below the complete topics and readings/assignments for the first 3 weeks of classes. As the course progresses, I will provide you with the upcoming topics and readings/assignments. Also, it may be necessary to modify some assignments. I will give you notice of a week or more on changes to exams or major assignments. I will generally give you notice of several days or more if I change a reading assignment. However, circumstances occasionally require minor last minute changes or additions. I will e-mail to you any such changes no later than 6:00pm on the day before class. **So, you are**

responsible for checking your e-mail after 6:00pm on the night before class.

I will be assigning a small section of the text of the Constitution periodically, starting around the 4th week. We will discuss that section in class that day. In this way, you will gain a working knowledge of the entire Constitution's text in easy, bite-sized chunks, and also be preparing for the Mid-Term and Final Exams.

You must bring your laptop or tablet and any assigned readings for that day to class.

We usually use the text of the readings in our discussions, so you must have a copy to which you can refer. Not having the assigned readings with you will negatively affect your participation grade.

REQUIRED READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS

Section from the Constitution (in the back of the ebook)

*American Government**

Reading posted on Canvas or e-mailed to you

Abbreviation in schedule

"CONST"

"TEXT"

"CANVAS"

You must read the assignments prior to class on the designated day, and answer any discussion questions I may have given.

*Sometimes the readings in the *American Government* textbook will be "optional," not "required." You should assume they are required unless I put "**optional**" next to them. I try to be conscious to not overload students with the amount of reading. I have found that large numbers of pages tend to make it harder for students to zero in on the main points, and some just toss up their hands and don't attempt it at all. The other assigned readings (the Constitution's text and Canvas articles) are always crucial to the discussions and material presentations of the day. I expect you to thoroughly study them.

If I list the textbook as optional for a day, that means I have listed chapters and pages that provide important context and reference for the topics of the day. I strongly suggest you scan through the headings and sections before class, but you don't have to closely read them. The book will be useful to you, both inside and outside of class, as a reference for events, names and definitions. You of course also need it for the text of the Constitution itself, which is found in the back.

Topics Covered in Class		Assignments/Readings Due Before Class on the Day Listed
Aug 14	Introduction Go Over Syllabus Discussion: AI	READ the SYLLABUS There is a "Civics Survey" on Canvas which is due by 5pm on Sept 1, but you can take it any time. I suggest you do it right away, so you don't forget.

Aug 16	Intro Tinker vs. Des Moines Discussion: Application of Tinker case to later free speech issues regarding schools	CANVAS: Tinker Vs. Des Moines Every student will be involved in the class discussion regarding free speech in schools. Read the assignment!
Aug 18	Lecture & Discussion: Greek Democracy	CANVAS: Pericles Funeral Oration CANVAS: Aristotle's Politics
Aug 21	Discussion: British Constitution Lecture & Discussion: American Revolution	CANVAS: Evolution of British Constitution
Aug 23	Lecture & Discussion: Locke & Declaration of Independence	CANVAS: The Enlightenment and the Declaration of Independence TEXT: optional - Chapt 2, section 1 (2-1)
Aug 25	Lecture & Discussion: Slavery Lecture: Articles of Confederation	CANVAS: The Problem of Slavery
Aug 28	Lecture & Discussion: Constitutional Convention Sign up for debate sides	CANVAS: The Constitutional Convention TEXT: optional - Chapt 2, section 2 (2-2)
Aug 30	Lecture: Ratification Group Work: Prep for Federalist v. Anti-Federalist Debate	CANVAS: Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist Debate TEXT: optional - Chapt 2, section 3 (2-3)
Sept 1	Activity: Federalist v. Anti-Federalist Debate	Prep your role based on the assignment and previous group meeting TEXT: optional - Chapt 2, section 3 (2-3) CANVAS: Civics Survey – This is due online by 5pm on Sept 1 , but you can take it earlier.

Sept 6	Discussion: Rights Go Over Survey Preamble	No assignment
Sept 8	EXAM 1	

TENTATIVE EXAM DATES

Sept 8	Exam 1
Early Oct	Exam 2
Early Oct	Mid-Term Exam
Early Nov	Exam 3
Early Dec	Exam 4
Dec 15-20	Final Exam period

GRADES

Your course grade will be based on the following categories:

	Points Each Time	Approx. Total Points for the Semester	Approx. % of Course Grade
Reading Quizzes	5 points	100 points– the lowest gets dropped	20%
Participation Grade	50 Q1 & 50 Q2	100 points	20%
Projects/Assignments	5-35 points	50 points	10%
4 Regular Exams	50 points	150 points– the lowest gets dropped	30%
Midterm Exam	50 points	50 points	10%
Final Exam	50 points	50 points	10%

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

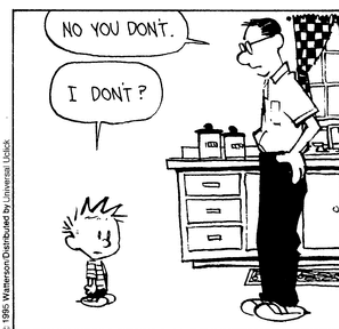
A = 92-100%	B+ = 88-89%	B- = 80-81%	C = 72-77%	D* = <70%
A- = 90-91%	B = 82-87%	C+ = 78-79%	C- = 70-71%	

CLASS POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES:

The policies in the Student Handbook regarding attendance and tardiness will be followed. Students are expected to

I REFUSE TO TAKE OUT THE GARBAGE! I HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO WHATEVER I WANT, ALL THE TIME!



attend, and be on time, for every class. If you are not in the classroom by the official starting time, you will be marked tardy. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked absent, however you will still be able to turn in assignments, per late policy listed below, and participate in the educational activities of the day, so it is definitely in your best interest to attend. You must notify me in advance, using Academy procedures, in the case of pre-arranged absences. Academy policy allows a faculty member to report a student as having an unexcused absence for sleeping in class or for improper use of their computer, tablet or phone during class.

MAKEUP WORK FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES: Exams, quizzes, online discussions and other assignments missed must be **made up within 1 week from the date of your return**, unless other arrangements are made with me in advance. Additional time can be granted for extended illnesses or other factors. Do not wait for me to contact you regarding a makeup. **It is your responsibility to contact me to schedule a makeup exam.** Likewise, for homework and class material, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and how to make it up.

INDIANA ACADEMY **UNEXCUSED** ABSENCE POLICY

"It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor. Although all absences, both excused and unexcused, are tracked within the Office of Academic Affairs, professors of each class are free to use discretion with a student's first three unexcused absences. Four or more unexcused absences in any particular class a student takes will lead to academic and residential consequences to be determined by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Residential Life that may include detention, residential groundings, parent/principal conference, among others."

CONSEQUENCES IN THIS CLASS FOR

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: There is no right to make up quizzes, discussion questions and other similar assignments as a result of an unexcused absence. However, you should still talk with me about how to not fall behind with the course material as a result of the unexcused absence. You will be given an opportunity to take an exam you missed due to an unexcused absence, but there will be a 1-letter-grade penalty on that exam score. That exam must be made up before I hand them back in class (usually about a week). After that, a zero will be entered for the exam score.



"And then there is the 'authoritarian' form of governing, which we'll be using in this class."

Unexcused absences will also negatively impact your Class Participation grade. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences without penalty to your Class Participation grade. 3 points will be deducted from your Class Participation grade for every unexcused absence after that.

Please be aware that Academy policy allows a faculty member to report a student as having an unexcused absence for sleeping in class or improper computer use in class.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Academic dishonesty (cheating) will not be tolerated. Some examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: copying or facilitating copying during exams, turning in written assignments with the same language as others, and copying from internet or print sources without proper citation. In accordance with department policy, “assigned papers as determined by instructor will be submitted electronically to the teacher and/or Canvas for possible plagiarism scrutiny.” Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the policies in the Student Handbook. If you have any questions on what constitutes academic dishonesty, I strongly encourage you to consult the Student Handbook, or discuss it with me.

USE OF AI FOR ASSIGNMENTS: AI programs like ChatGPT will bring about a massive shift in education this year. It is a brand-new world—both exciting and terrifying—and we are all still trying to wrap our heads around it.

After spending time experimenting with it myself, it is clear to me that many of the homework writing assignments I have used in the past have to be heavily modified or discarded. I’m not telling you anything you don’t already know, or at least will learn within a couple of weeks of arriving at the Academy. AI programs can research and write those assignments. That presents some huge problems. One, you won’t gain the crucial knowledge and practice of researching, analyzing and writing those assignments if you use AI to do it. And two, it would be academic dishonesty to pass off the AI’s work as your own.

We will discuss this in class during the first week. **How do we help you build the core knowledge base and critical thinking skills when AI has made unusable so many of the assignments which were designed to do that?** I really want your opinions on this. We are in this together. So please think about it and come in with suggestions. I think it would be foolish to try to police the use of AI outside of the classroom. We need to embrace it. It will no doubt bring many advantages too.

So here is the policy with which I am going to start the semester. **You can use AI when you are out of the classroom. You can NOT use AI in the classroom unless I specifically say it is ok for a particular activity.** Remember, I can look at your computer at anytime while you are in class. **Use of AI in class, whether for a discussion, quiz or other activity will result in a charge of Academic dishonesty.** Don’t even have the program up on your computer!

For example, if we are having a discussion in class where you are asked to analyze something, and you quickly ask an AI program to do that, and then you give that as *your analysis*, you are passing off some computer’s thoughts as your own. That is cheating, and it

will be enforced using the Academy's policies on academic dishonesty.

LAPTOPS: In class, you may use your laptop to take notes or to reference reading assignments. You are not required to bring laptops to class unless I tell you in advance.

Surfing the web, e-mailing, Instagram or any other activities are strictly forbidden during class. Using your laptop for anything other than educational purposes connected to the class **will result in an unexcused absence for that class period, plus 5 points will automatically be subtracted from your participation grade.** A second infraction will result in another unexcused absence, 5 more lost points, and you will be banned from bringing your laptop to class. I reserve the right to check your screen and currently running programs at any time during the class. Use of your laptop in class is a privilege, not a right.

CLASS ATMOSPHERE: Feel free to ask questions during the lectures, but always raise your hand and be recognized. Sometimes, if I am in the middle of making a point, I may signal that I have seen you, and will go ahead and complete my point before getting to your question. During class discussions as well, please raise your hand before speaking. Just as in the professional world, an atmosphere of mutual respect and appropriate behavior will be expected at all times. That includes listening to your fellow students as respectfully as you would to me. In addition, it is important to remember that topics we explore during class discussions will be on the exams as well. So don't relax your concentration on the material just because I'm not lecturing.



Democracy is by definition, conversation. Ideas, perspectives and information are exchanged in the political decision-making process.

Consequently, the right to freedom of speech, and the ability to have civil discourse in the public sphere are essential to a functioning democratic system. Anyone paying attention in recent years has noticed that our body politic has become increasingly polarized, and reasoned debate has often been supplanted by bitter personal attacks. Impugning the character and motives of someone is a way to marginalize and silence them. Many attempt to delegitimize their opponents with labels, so that they do not have to debate the substance of their ideas or policy suggestions.

This class is not a current events debate club. Our focus is not on arguing personal political views, and no one will ever be put on the spot for their personal opinions. However, we will be analyzing and discussing issues, events, ideas

and policies, and connecting them, where applicable, to current issues. Historical information and analysis are vital to the educated citizen in making informed decisions in our system of

self-government.

So, despite what is going on in the broader political sphere, in this classroom we will be practicing respectful and productive civil discourse. Politely disagreeing with the substance of ideas, and offering reasoned alternatives is always permissible, and is in fact healthy in a democratic system. But attacking another's character or motivations for their views, or referencing their personal characteristics or appearance, will not be allowed. This policy includes any online discussions we may have as part of this class. It also extends outside the classroom as well. Making derogatory comments about another student based on their expressed or assumed views as a result of a class discussion will not be tolerated. Should any such behavior potentially be in violation of Academy policies, such as those regarding bullying, Academy disciplinary procedures will be followed.

So, our class will be a model of civil discourse, and who knows, maybe our civility will rub off on others in our society.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT CONTENT WARNING STATEMENT

"As with many history classes, the lectures, readings, and discussions will include a range of topics that may be triggering, emotionally distressing, and difficult for some students. Engaging with topics such as slavery and human suffering is essential to this discipline. History seeks to understand the experiences and thought processes of former generations, whether for good or ill. Sometimes the language and word choices used by people in the past may be insensitive or politically incorrect today. Nevertheless, the goal of history is to understand the past within its own context and time. If a reading, image shown in class, or discussion is truly troubling to anyone, please do not hesitate to talk to your instructor. In some circumstances, an alternative reading can be assigned."

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY POLICY

"Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our [Beneficence Pledge](#) and through university resources found [here](#)."



MY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS. I am personally committed to doing everything I can to see that every student has the best possible experience in my course. So if I make a mistake on a name or a pronoun, please correct me. If there is something that is said in class, by me or another student, which bothers you or gives you concern, please talk to me. In our course, as in society at large, we can best address our problems and concerns with open communication.

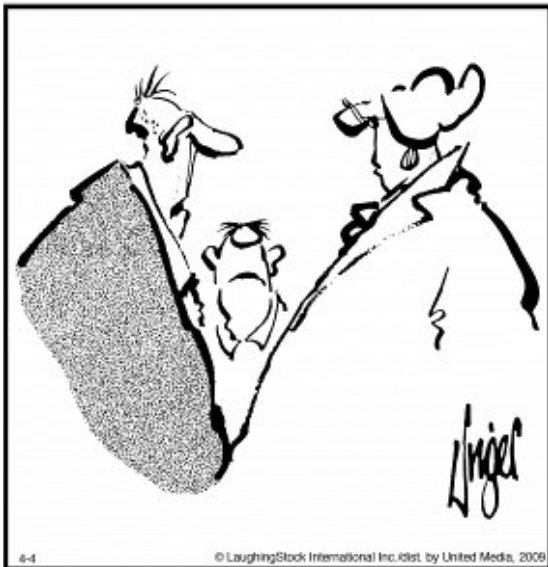
READING QUIZZES

A central feature of this class will be our study, analysis, and discussion of our assigned readings. **Therefore, it is absolutely essential that you prepare for every class by reading and studying the assignments for that day.** If students have not read the material, then we cannot have productive discussions.

To help ensure everyone reads the assignments, **we will have frequent, unannounced 5-point quizzes at the start of a class over the readings that were assigned for that day.** These basic quizzes should be fairly easy points if you've done the reading. They should also prove useful to you when studying for the quizzes and exams.

There will be no make ups for these pop quizzes. If you have an excused absence, that quiz will not be used in calculating your grade. If you have an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero for the quiz. I will drop the lowest of these quizzes.

HERMAN®



**"I taught him everything I know
and he's still stupid."**

PARTICIPATION GRADE

Learning is an active process, and the more you are engaged, the more you will get out of this course. I reserve 100 points during the semester for a participation grade. The participation grade is based on my assessment of your performance in the following areas:

- Attentiveness during lectures
- Studying assignments prior to class, taking notes on readings, answering discussion questions and bringing your laptop and readings to class
- Participation in class discussions, simulations, and activities
- Participation and effort in group projects
- Adherence to the standards of classroom conduct & civil discourse

Remember, improper use of your laptop during class will cost you 5 points for each infraction. To put that in perspective, losing 5 points is equivalent to dropping a half a letter grade on one of the regular exams. Don't risk it.

I will post 50 points of your participation grade at the end of the first quarter, and the other 50 points at the end of the semester. If you have any questions regarding your standing in that category, at any point during the semester, please talk to me.

PROJECTS

Most of the discussions and activities in class will be covered under the quarterly participation

grades. However, we will have some projects such as trials, simulations, or small-scale creative projects which will require additional preparation and effort on your part. So they will be worth additional points, commensurate with the effort required. There will be no lengthy research paper in this class.

FOUR REGULAR EXAMS

Exams 1-4 are worth 50 points each. They will be composed of both objective and short answer/short essay questions, and will cover the current material. I will provide you with study terms prior to each exam.

I will drop your lowest of these 4 exams, as long as that helps your final course grade. This way, if you had particular trouble on one exam, it won't negatively impact your final grade. Occasionally, a student performs extremely well on all the exams in comparison to other grades in the course, and dropping the lowest exam would actually lower their grade. In that case, the exam is not dropped.

MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS

The Mid-Term and Final Exams will be comprehensive. The Mid-Term Exam will cover the first half of the course, with questions drawn from Exams 1-2. The Final Exam will cover the second half of the course, with questions drawn from Exams 3-4. Be sure to keep your regular exams so you can use them to study for these comprehensive exams. These exams will be entirely objective questions. There will be no writing questions on these exams.

The Mid-Term and Final Exams are not dropped, except in the rare case of substantial extenuating circumstances, such as an extended illness. As listed above, if you get a zero on an exam due to an unexcused absence and the failure to make it up, that exam score is not eligible to be dropped.

TAKING NOTES

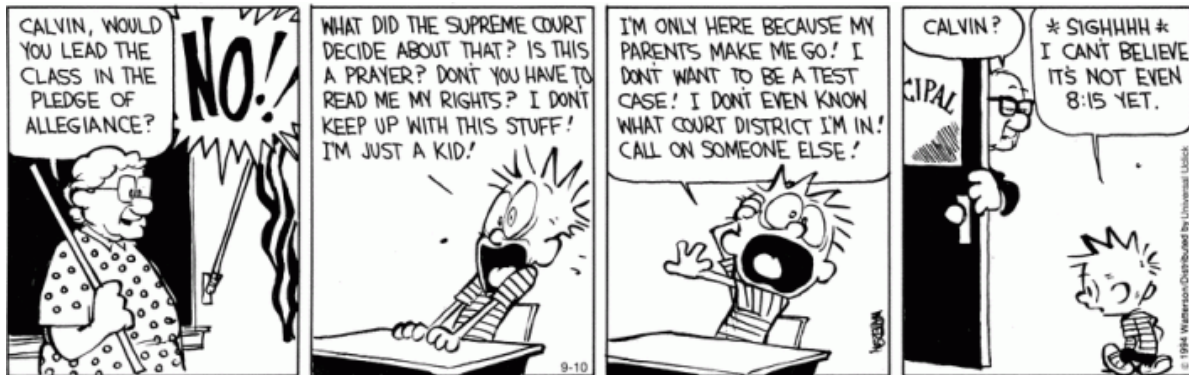
This course has a certain amount of lecture, and I will do my best to present the information in an organized and interesting manner. Concentration and good note-taking, during lectures as well as discussions, are essential for success in this course. Please talk to me if you are having any trouble taking notes.

Here are a few basic tips on notes:

- Focus on the main points. You can't possibly write down every word I say, but you can write down phrases, names, examples, concepts, and basic elements of a story.
- Be sure to write down any lists, summations, and conclusions I make, as well as anything I repeat.
- If you didn't hear or understand something, you may raise your hand and ask me. Otherwise, skip it and talk to me or a fellow student after class. Do NOT ask your neighbor during lecture as you will miss the current comments and fall farther behind. In addition, it will distract those around you.
- **Read your notes as soon as you can after class**, and make additions, corrections, or organizational changes while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. This will probably only take about 15 minutes, but it will save you loads of time down the road. Also, if

you are unclear on any material, you can ask me about it. This way you will have thorough notes, which you have already reviewed once, when it's time to study for an exam. On the other hand, if you wait until the night before the exam to read your notes, some points will seem unclear and any gaps will be harder to fill in.

- Read the assigned sections in the text before class. Even if you don't fully grasp it all the first time through, it will provide helpful context for the lecture.
- You may record the lectures if you wish. (Your laptop can do this in Word.)
- Make sure your note-taking system is organized. If you have to hunt all over your computer to match notes from 2 successive classes, then you need a better system.
- Remember, paying close attention and taking good notes during lecture is the first big step in studying for the exams.



EXAM PREPARATION

NOTES: Your notes are your best source of information for the exams. I am most likely to ask questions in a way that matches the description I gave in class. Study them thoroughly.

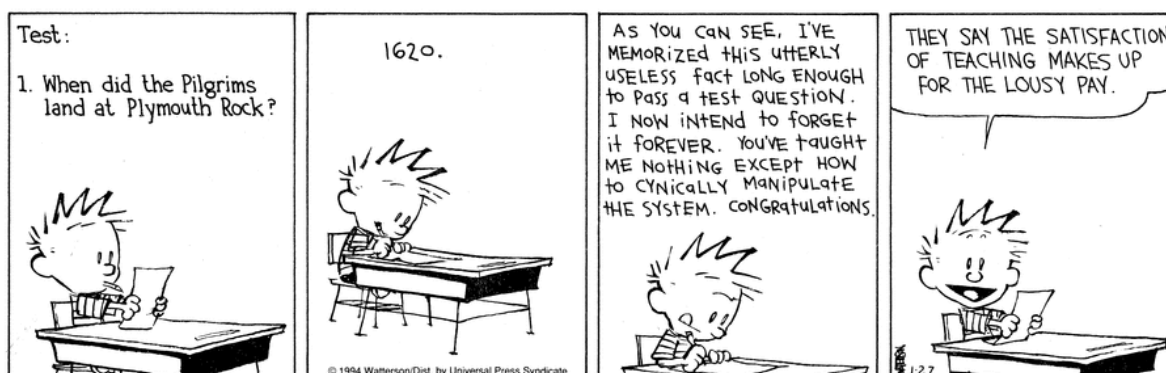
READINGS: The readings contain many of the essential concepts we will be studying in class. As mentioned above, you will be able to follow the lectures more easily if you have read the ahead of time.

Be careful not to let the amount of information in the readings overwhelm you. In the first place, when studying a text, continually try to focus on the key ideas. Ask yourself what are the main points, trends, events, ideas, etc. that the authors are trying to get across to you in each section. Second, use your study guides as described below.

STUDY GUIDES: The study guides list the specific names and terms which you will need to know for each exam. Most of the study terms will be covered in lecture or discussion. There may be a few that are not covered in class, and it is your responsibility to get their definitions from the books and readings.

The terms on the study guides will sometimes coincide with the order they are discussed in lecture. However, the guides are not lecture outlines, and I strongly recommend that you take notes on separate paper, and do not try to follow along on the study guides during class. After class, you should use information from your notes to define the names and terms on the study guides.

It is very important to keep in mind that the study guides address specific names and terms. They do NOT contain all the concepts and information covered in lecture. In other words, the study guides are to supplement your notes; they are not a substitute for them.



CHRONOLOGY & DATES: You will be required to know the basic chronological order of the major topics. For example, you'll need to know that the Articles of Confederation comes before the Constitution. As for specific dates, before each exam, I will give you a list of a handful of significant dates which you must memorize. Those are the only dates which you will have to list on the exam.

PUT YOURSELF IN A TEST SITUATION: Some students just read over the notes, terms, and dates a few times, and after they think they've put in enough time, they quit. Then when faced with having to recall information on the exam, they "draw a blank." To perform your best, you really need to spend at least some of your study time making yourself recall the material. For example, cover up the definitions of the study terms, make flash cards, or have a friend quiz you. If you have practiced putting yourself in a test situation, then during the exam, you will find yourself more able to recall the required information. **Caution: If you are using a Quizlet which someone else prepared, remember that your studying is only going to be as productive as the quality of the Quizlet. I have seen numerous examples of students spending hours memorizing info that was either inaccurate or trivial.**

SEEK HELP IF YOU NEED IT: It will be most productive if you study the material first, and then if you generate any questions, please contact me or see me. I'm happy to help you.