

American Government
"If men were angels, government would not be necessary."
-James Madison

Fall 2018

American Government T and Th

Tentative Course Syllabus

Professor: Amanda Cook Fesperman

IAI Equivalent: S5 904

Email: amanda_cookfesperman@ivcc.edu (This is the only IVCC email I check. If you send me an email to any other address, I will not receive it. I reply to emails within 24 hours. If you haven't received a reply from me, assume I did not get the email and resend it.)

Web Page: <http://www.ivcc.edu/cookfesperman>

Phone: 815-224-0203

Office: D307

Tentative Fall Office Hours: M, W and F 9:30-10:00 a.m., M: 12-1:30, and T and Th 11:30-12:30 or by appointment.

(Please note: I reserve the right to change office hours. If I change them, students will be notified in Blackboard and by email. Please check to make sure before coming to my office hours that I will be present. It is best to try to schedule an appointment ahead of time.)

ReaCH FaR: The capital letters in this statement represent the Core Values of IVCC. They stand for – Responsibility, Caring, Honesty, Fairness and Respect. It is expected that the students and the professor will know and carry out these values in all aspects of this course. Respect and Responsibility-- two of IVCC's core values - have been chosen as this year's campus-wide themes. Respect comes from trying to treat others as you would like to be treated and from trying to put yourself in someone else's shoes. It is also about self-respect, which shows in taking pride in yourself and your work. Responsibility means being motivated to do what you need to do to succeed and following the rules that are established. Keep these themes in mind as you complete course activities and interact with others on campus and in the community this semester.

Syllabus Changes: I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time during the semester. Students will be notified in class and/or through blackboard/email of any changes.

Text: *Gateways to Democracy, 4th Edition*, Geer, et al, ISBN **9781337097734** can be purchased or rented in person through the IVCC bookstore or by phone with a credit card by calling 815 224-0311.

Information on the textbook rental program can be found at

<https://ivcc.verbacompare.com/comparison?id=112026>

Blackboard Access: I will be using Blackboard for the purposes of group email, the plagiarism tutorial, any additional assignments/announcements, and for grading. You will be enrolled as a Blackboard user by the first day of classes. Blackboard, can be linked to at <https://ivcc.blackboard.com/webapps/login/>

You can find information about logging into and using Blackboard by visiting the following link:
<http://www.ivcc.edu/studenthelpdesk.aspx?id=16943>

Email Access: All students are required to login and check their IVCC emails on a regular basis. I will only accept emails from your official IVCC Outlook email account. If you do not know how to use your IVCC email or cannot gain access, you MUST visit the learning commons for assistance. I communicate with students via your Outlook email account and it is your responsibility to check that account for communications from me. I have only one email account that I check at IVCC and that is the email address listed at the top of the syllabus (Amanda_cookfesperman@ivcc.edu). If you attempt to email me at any other address, I will not receive the email. Additionally, when sending email to me, please make sure you do the following:

- 1) In the subject heading, put the class name and section (PSI 1000 03).
- 2) Address comments to Professor Cook Fesperman
- 3) Be specific about what it is you are emailing about (I need help finding sources for the paper. I would like to meet with you during your office hours on Monday, September 24th at 12:00. Is this a good time for you?)
- 4) Be polite. Use words like please and thank you.

Students can expect an email response from me M-S when the college is open within 24 hours (Note: I do not work on Sunday for religious reasons, so I will not check email or respond on Sundays). If you do not receive an email response from me, you should assume I did not receive it and send the email again. If you still do not receive a response, contact me by phone during my office hours, come by my office hours, or speak to me after class.

Gen Ed Goals:

To apply analytical and problem solving skills to personal, social and professional issues and situations
To communicate orally and in writing, socially and interpersonally.
To work and study effectively both individually and in collaboration with others.

Learning Outcomes:

Outcome #1: Students will be able to explain how human behavior relates to the social sciences, dictates its methods, and leads to the need for government in civil society.

Outcome #2: Students will gain an overview of the content of the Declaration of Independence, and learn the origins and content of the Constitution.

Outcome #3: Students will be able to demonstrate a knowledge of basic principles and applications of law as it relates to human behavior in American society.

Outcome #4: Students will gain an overview of civil liberties and rights in America.

Outcome #5: Students will gain an overview of the efforts that public opinions, interest groups, and voters make to externally influence our government.

Outcome #6: Students will gain an understanding of political parties, nominations, and elections in exercising internal control on our governmental system.

Grading:

Class Participation – 15% Class attendance is required and students should come to class prepared to discuss the materials assigned for that week and to discuss any news items on the United States government they come across that should be raised for discussion. I hope that students will come to class with insightful questions and/or comments about the assigned readings and news stories, and I will also be calling on students at random to answer some questions of my own. Answers to my questions should show that the student has read and understands the class materials and that she/he has the ability to apply critical thinking skills to those materials. The quality of your contributions is more important than the quantity, but both are expected.

Research Paper - 35%

Students will be assigned to write an 8-10 page research paper on one of the following topics:

1) Term limits are necessary in order to have a better functioning Congress/Term limits will not improve and will likely make Congress worse; (Due in Class October 18th)

-Term limits are currently not available to members of Congress, but 15 states have term limits on their state legislatures. By examining the states with term limits, what does the research say about the positive and negative effects they are having on state legislatures, and would this then apply to Congress?

2) The president has too much constitutional/extra-constitutional power/The president doesn't have enough constitutional/extra-constitutional power; (Due in Class October 25th)

-The Constitution doesn't give presidents a lot of specific power, but presidents have become very powerful. How has this happened? In what ways do presidents still have too little power?

3) Federal justices should be elected/Federal justices should be appointed; (Due in Class November 1st)

-The Constitution requires that all federal justices be nominated by the President and confirmed by Congress, but most states have some form of judicial elections. Looking at the state/local judicial elections, what are the pros and cons? What are the pros and cons of the current system?

4) The United States needs a strong third party system/Third parties cannot and/or should not be elected in this country; (Due in Class November 8th)

-The U.S. is not well-designed for 3rd parties to win Congressional and Presidential elections, but some state and local governments have many 3rd party candidates who win. What are the pros and cons of the current system and do 3rd party candidates serve important roles in our elections and government?

5)Special Interest Groups control Washington/Special Interest Groups provide citizens with a way to gain access to Members of Congress; (Due in Class November 15th)

-Special Interest Groups have a big influence on government, but is this necessarily a bad thing? Large corporate interest groups may seem to threaten our democracy, but small grassroots groups may allow citizens to aggregate their opinions and gain access to members of Congress and the President.

6) The News Media is the "4th branch of government"/News is biased and unreliable and no longer serves as a check on government; (Due in Class November 29th)

-In the era of fake news, are there any sources of media that are unbiased? Is this possible? How does the media hold the government accountable and in what ways does it fail in this mission?

Only 2-3 people may write a paper for each question and I will take volunteers the second day of class. The paper should look at both/all sides of the debate surrounding the given question and present each

side thoroughly and without bias. **This is not an opinion paper, so you should not write in the first person, nor should your personal opinion be present in the paper.** The goal is not to convince me that one side is right or wrong, rather it is to thoroughly investigate and report both or all sides of the debate.

All of the following steps must be met in order for the paper to be accepted and graded:

- 1) It must be double-spaced typed in 12 pt font, Times New Roman, with 1 inch margins and numbered.
- 2) It must be turned at the beginning of class on the date it is due. Late papers will be accepted, but for a 5 point deduction EACH DAY they are late starting with the beginning of class for which they are due and including holidays and weekends.
- 3) It must be AT LEAST 8 pages long and no longer than 10. At least 8 pages means that you start at the top of the page and go all the way to the bottom of each page.
- 4) It must have a cover page that has your name on it.
- 5) You must use AT LEAST 4 [credible sources](#) that are approved by me no later than Wednesday, October 17th during my office hours. **You must email me links to your sources** before you schedule an appointment to meet with me. If I run out of appointments on the last day, I will not extend the deadline for you. **Any student who doesn't have at least 4 credible sources by Wednesday, October 17th that have been approved by me will receive a 0 on the paper and will fail the course.** Final approved sources must be listed at the end of your paper in a reference page using APA format.
- 6) You must [properly cite](#) the paper using APA format. You should, however, **NOT** include an abstract, a running header, or section headings.
- 7) You must visit the writing center for assistance with your paper on at least one occasion at least 1 week prior to the due date of your paper. The meeting must be for at least 20 minutes, and you must attach a signed form from the writing center to your paper stating that you were there, what it is that you discussed, and the length of time you were there. **Students who fail to visit the writing center at least 1 week prior to the due date of their paper will receive 5 point per day penalty on their paper until they do meet with the writing center.**
- 8) The paper should be written formally and be grammatically correct. Spell and grammar check exists on all word type programs. You should also have someone else read your paper to make sure it makes sense. **If I can't read it, or I have to make substantial grammar changes to your paper, I will not grade it and you will receive a zero on the paper and will subsequently fail the course.**
- 9) An electronic copy of the paper must also be submitted to me in an attachment (**.rtf, .doc, or .pdf ONLY**) via email the day the paper is due. The paper will be checked for plagiarism using safeassign. **Any paper that is plagiarized will receive a grade of zero and the student will subsequently fail the course.**
- 10) **Students must complete the plagiarism tutorial with a score of 100 percent by the assigned due date or receive a 5 point deduction off of the top of their paper each day after that it is late.**
- 11) The paper cannot be all or mostly in quotation marks. **If it is, the paper will receive a grade of zero and the student will subsequently fail the course.**

Please feel free to stop by my office for help. I will be happy to review a draft of your paper as long as you get it to me at least 1 week prior to the due date of the paper. I will not spell or grammar check the

paper. I will look at it for content only. **Don't wait to start the research.** This is only an 8-10 page paper, but it must be packed with good information from start to finish.

Exams - 50%: There will be four exams throughout the semester. The dates and topic materials are listed in the syllabus. **You must bring a blue book with you to class on exam day.** Blue books can be purchased in the bookstore for a nominal fee. Exams will consist of short answer questions. Students will be given a note card 1 week prior to the exam that they may use to write down any material they want to use on the exam. Only that note card may be used, the note card must be prepared by you, in your handwriting, cannot be copied from someone else's note card/notes and must be turned in with your exam. You MAY NOT photocopy my notes or write them word for word on your card!! Please come prepared on exam day, meaning that you have a thorough understanding of the materials presented in the notes, readings, class discussions and study questions. **Make-up exams will only be granted to students who have a valid excuse that can be documented in writing and when I have approved the absence ahead of time.**

Academic dishonesty: Plagiarism, cheating or dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. This includes so-called "cooperative work" which means work done with the assistance of another student or where students share an assignment. All words or ideas that are not your own must be cited in all of the work that is submitted for this course. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing may receive a failing grade for the entire course. Additionally, a report of the transgression will be filed with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to the following examples: 1) Turning in any work that is not your own or having someone else do the work for you. 2) Using someone else's note card (a copy, a handwritten replica, or material not from your own notes), etc. 3) Having someone else take an exam for you. 4) Cheating off of someone else's test to obtain the answers. 5) Asking another student for an answer to a test. 6) Obtaining the exam (or old versions of exams) ahead of time to know what will be on the exam. 7) Using materials other than the one note card given to you to take the exam, 8) Having another person do your paper or any other written work for you. 9) Purchasing or downloading a paper from the internet in whole or in part. 10) Failing to properly cite or give credit to sources in your paper. 11) Putting anything in your paper that is not in your own words without putting quotation marks around it. 12) Citing an article in your research paper that you did not read. 13) Lying to or trying to deceive any member of the IVCC faculty or staff for personal academic gain.

Extra Credit: There will be extra credit opportunities throughout the semester that I will announce in class and/or through blackboard. Extra credit usually involves attending events on-campus that I think are relevant to the course or will enhance your overall experiences as a student. Extra credit is added to the exam portion of your grade. The first extra credit assignment is as follows:

Extra Credit Assignment 1. Point Value - 10. Submit an entry to me for the 2017 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Writing Contest. The entry can be about any aspect of the civil rights, historic or modern, and does not have to be about Dr. King himself. The entry can be in any writing style (essay, poem, short story, etc.), but must be a serious attempt (no Haikus) and must be your own original work. Entries must be

typed, include your name and phone number, and must be submitted no later than Friday, December 7th. **Please email me your entry as an attachment.**

Final grades: The grading scale for this course will be as follows:

90-100%=4.0 80-89%=3.0 70-79%=2.0 60-69%=1.0

I round grades up at .5 and down at .4 so every point counts in this class. Also, please be aware that the final grade is not based on total points, rather on weighted grades. The weighting is as follows: 10% for Class Attendance, 50% for exams, and 40% for research papers. The final weighted grade in Blackboard is the correct grade. **Please note: I do not use total points.** The grades are weighted so you cannot calculate your grade by adding up the points you have a dividing by the total points. The weighted grade in blackboard is your current semester grade.

Special Needs If you are a student with a documented cognitive (learning disability), physical or psychiatric disability (anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, AD/HD, post-traumatic stress, and others) you *may* be eligible for academic support services such as extended test time, texts in audio format, note taking services, etc... If you are interested in learning if you can receive these academic support services, please contact Tina Hardy (tina_hardy@ivcc.edu, or 224-0284), or stop by the Disability Services Office in C-211.

My hope is to create an equitable learning environment for all students. If you want to discuss your learning experience, please talk to me as early in the term as possible. If you know you have, or suspect you have a disability (learning disability, physical disability, or psychiatric disability such as anxiety, depression, AD/HD, post-traumatic stress, or others) for which you may need accommodations, please contact the Disability Services to determine if you are eligible for support.

Course Withdrawal: The final date to withdraw from this course is Friday, November 2nd. Effective Summer 2011, students are now able to withdraw themselves through WebAdvisor. Instructions for doing so can be found at <http://www.ivcc.edu/admissions.aspx?id=1984>

Please Note: Before withdrawing yourself from a course it is HIGHLY recommended that you speak to your instructor and the financial aid office (if you are receiving financial aid) first. Students often believe they are doing worse in a course than they are, or, if special circumstances exist, a faculty member may be able to work out an alternative to a withdrawal like an incomplete. Faculty members still reserve the right to withdraw students for violations of class polices, or to issue them a failing grade. Students cannot withdraw from a class in order to avoid receiving a punitive grade. Those who do will be reinstated.

A Note About Respect: IVCC is an academic institution where all sincere viewpoints are welcomed, however, this does not give you license to verbally attack or intentionally offend your fellow classmates or professor. If you disagree with a person's point of view, please do so respectfully and by using critical thinking, not by issuing personal attacks, sarcasm, or insults. Any student who violates these class policies will be removed from class at the discretion of the instructor and will receive a failing grade for the semester. Egregious violations of this policy will be referred to the college for disciplinary action.

Mandatory Attendance Policy: This is a college level transfer course and I expect college level work and behavior from my students. You are expected to attend class on a regular basis, do the assigned readings and work, take the exams and submit a research paper. A student may be automatically withdrawn by me for any of the following reasons: 1) Failure to attend classes for two weeks in a row; 2) Missing class more than 6 times during the semester; 3) Missing more than one exam; or 4) Failure to submit a gradable paper. If the failure to comply is beyond the withdrawal deadline, a failing grade may be issued instead. **It is up to you to keep track of your absences. I will try to notify students if I believe they are close to being withdrawn, but this is not always possible!**

A Few Rules:

1. Please turn off all cell phones/tablets before coming to class.
2. Do not text in class.
3. Do not sleep in the classroom.
4. Do not talk while I am or others in the class are talking.
5. Do not pack up your things or rustle papers until I have dismissed you from class.
6. If you have an electronic device that you will use for taking notes, you may only use it for that purpose and not to surf the internet, chat, check email, etc.
7. Do not come to class late. If you are late on occasion, please come into class quietly and do not disrupt the classroom.
9. Chewing Tobacco is not permitted in the classroom or in my office.
10. IVCC is a smoke-free campus. You may not smoke anywhere on the campus. This includes E-cigarettes.
11. If you smoke or wear perfume/cologne, please do not sit in the front of the class due to my asthma.
12. Please address me in person and in all written communication as Professor Cook Fesperman.
13. No portion of my class may be video or audio recorded and no photos may be taken without the specific written consent of me and then only for a legitimate academic need.

Failure to obey these rules may result in a student being asked to leave the class temporarily or permanently, depending on the nature of the offense and at the sole discretion of me. Students asked to leave the class for the entire semester will receive a failing grade.

Privacy and Parents

Federal law prohibits me from releasing ANY information about a student to a third party without the specific written consent of a student. To do this, you must go to the college alone, sign a FERPA release form, and list the specific information that I can release to specific individuals. Once this is done, I will release that information. However, I want to make it clear that it is my policy that I do not meet with, communicate with, or have any discussions with parents or any other third parties. This is a college class and you are expected to behave as a responsible college student regardless of your age. If you or your parents or representatives do not want to abide by this policy, then you should not take this class. I am happy to meet with students and discuss their progress or concerns.

Class Assignment Schedule

August 16th Welcome! Class procedures and policies.

Assignment: Plagiarism tutorial in blackboard (must be completed by Thursday, October 11th at noon)

Reading Assignment – Critical Thinking and Cognitive Dissonance and Jared Diamond's Soft Sciences are Often Harder than Hard Sciences (available in Blackboard under Lecture Notes)

August 21st Pick Paper Topics, Discussion of Critical Thinking and Cognitive Dissonance and Diamond

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 1

August 23rd Discussion: Democracy

August 28th Discussion: Democracy continued

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 2 and The United States Constitution and Amendments (Geer back of your book).

August 30th Discussion: The Constitution

September 4th Discussion: The Constitution continued

Reading Assignment: Federalist Papers 10 and 51 (Back of your book)

September 6th Discussion: The Federalist Papers

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 3 and lecture notes

Reading Assignment: Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States, Katzenbach v. McClung and Wickard v. Filburn (available in Blackboard under Lecture Notes).

September 11th Discussion: Federalism

September 13th Exam I – All Materials to Date (Remember your blue book, note card and blue or black pen) Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 12 and lecture notes.

September 18th Discussion: Congress

September 20th Discussion: Congress continued

September 25th Discussion: Congress continued

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 13 and lecture notes.

September 27th Discussion: The Presidency

October 2nd Discussion: The Presidency continued

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 15 and lecture notes.

October 4th Discussion: The Courts

October 9th – Class will be held in the library. This is a mandatory attendance day. If you do not come, you will need to either make it up or you will receive a 10 point deduction off of your paper grade. Discussion will be held via video lecture which I will post in Blackboard. Complete the plagiarism tutorial if you haven't already done so. Work on your research papers.

October 11th - Exam II – All materials post-Exam I (Remember your blue book, note card, and blue or black pen).

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 9 and lecture notes.

October 16th Discussion: Political Parties

October 18th Discussion Political Parties

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 8

Paper #1 Due in Class

October 23rd Discussion: Interest Groups

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapters 10 and 11 and lecture notes

October 25th Discussion: Elections and Campaigns

Paper #2 Due in Class

October 30th Discussion: Voting

November 1st Discussion: Voting continued

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapters 6 and 7 and lecture notes.

Paper #3 Due in Class

November 6th Exam III - All Materials Post Exam II (Remember your blue book, note card, and blue or black pen)

November 8th Discussion: Public Opinion and the Media

Paper #4 Due in Class

November 13th Discussion: The Media Continued

Reading Assignment: Geer, et al, Chapter 4 and lecture notes.

November 15th Discussion: Civil Liberties

Paper #5 Due in Class

November 20th Discussion: Civil Liberties continued

Reading Assignment: Ginsberg, Chapter 5 and Civil Rights lecture notes online. Also read "[I Have A Dream](#)" online.

November 21st-25th – No Classes. Thanksgiving Break!

November 27th Discussion: Civil Rights

November 29th Discussion: Civil Rights continued

Paper #6 Due in Class.

December 4th Discussion: Civil Rights Continued

December 11th Exam IV - All Materials Post Exam III (Remember your blue book, note card, and blue or black pen)

Research Paper Check List

- Paper is double-spaced typed in 12 pt font, Times New Roman, with 1 inch margins and numbered.
- Paper is turned in at the beginning of class on the day it is due.
- Paper is at least 8 full pages long.
- Paper has a cover page with your name on it.
- Paper has AT LEAST 4 sources that have been approved by my professor.
- Paper has a reference paper in APA format.
- Paper has been properly cited using APA method. (There are no section headers or abstracts)
- I have visited the writing center and have a sheet from the writing center attached to the paper.
- Paper is grammatically correct. I have used spell check and read over it to make sure this is the case.
- An electronic copy of the paper has been submitted to the professor in an attachment (.rtf, .doc, or .pdf ONLY) via email the day the paper is due.
- The plagiarism tutorial was completed.
- Paper is not all or mostly in quotation marks