INTRODUCTION to AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Political Science 220 – Fall 2002
8:15-9:30 a.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays

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Office Hours: 1:45-3:15 pm Tue./Wed./Thur. (if these times are not convenient for you, we can always set up one that is)

This course will serve as an introduction to power, how our country’s governing institutions wield it, and what its effects are on individuals, organizations, and other countries. We will examine the unique origins of our country’s founding, its Constitution and federalist structure, and our national institutions (including the presidency, Congress, and the Supreme Court). We will also study the roles of campaigns & elections, interest groups, the media, and how they influence the making of public policy. The purpose of the class is to provide you with an understanding of how and why politics and government are so important to our daily lives, whether we realize it or not.

In addition to covering the basic elements of American government, the semester will be divided into two thematic parts that occasionally overlap. The first part will include a survey of American national security and its post-W.W. II evolution. In the second part, we will examine the domestic politics and policymaking that stem from America’s position in a world economy. The more we examine our policies and other countries’ perceptions of our country post-9/11, the more we have come to realize that the two themes are far more intertwined than many originally realized. America’s cultural and economic influence throughout the world has enormous implications for its national security.

What will become apparent from our research and readings is that government is the ultimate manager of risk. Government policy and institutions are frequently designed to reduce and reallocate the inherent risks of life: the risk of foreign aggression (Dept. of Defense, CIA, State Dept., NSA, the military, Homeland Security); the risk of eating diseased food or using harmful pharmaceuticals (Food & Drug Administration); the risks associated with unemployment and poverty (unemployment insurance, bankruptcy laws, TANF, Medicaid, food stamps, public education, worker retraining schemes); the risks associated with old age (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid); the risks of investing in capital markets (SEC); the risks of using paper money as currency and banks as financial depositories (Federal Reserve, FDIC); the risks posed from hostile people (law, police, courts, prisons, FBI/Dept. of Justice); the risks of travel (FAA, NTSB, Dept. of Transportation); the risks of abuse of power (lower courts, Supreme Court); the risks of contagion and ill health (CDC, Dept. of H&HS, NIH); the risks of natural disasters (FEMA, Red Cross); the risks of environmental damage (EPA); the risk of unsafe work-sites (OSHA); the risk of injurious business practices and accidents (FTC, product liability, workers’ comp., anti-trust law, Dept. of Justice, SEC), and on and on… Most political struggles over public policy are only superficially “liberal” vs. “conservative.” The underlying question that drives the majority of debates is the extent to which government should (and can) manage risk and the extent to which it should be left to each individual and the free market. Thus, a major part of this class will include debates over the costs, benefits, and inherent tradeoffs involved in the political management of risk.

Books & Surveys: (10 total)
- Karen O’Connor & Larry J. Sabato’s American Government: Continuity & Change (Longman 2002)
- Benjamin Barber’s Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism’s Challenge to Democracy (Ballantine Books 2001)
- David Gergen’s Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton (Touchstone 2000)
- Bob Woodward’s Shadow: Five Presidents and the Legacy of Watergate (Simon & Schuster 2000)
- Robert Reich’s Locked in the Cabinet (Vintage 1997)
- Joe Klein’s The Natural: The Misunderstood Presidency of Bill Clinton (Doubleday 2002)
- Ted Halstead and Michael Lind’s The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics (Doubleday 2001)
- Economist Survey: “Present at the Creation: A Survey of America’s World Role” (June 2002)
Grading & Assignments:

Summary Critique Papers (10 total) 20%
Moot Court (September 17 & 19) 10%
Mid-Term Exam (October 15) 20%
Term Paper (November 26) 20%
Participation 10%
Final Exam 20%

Summary Critiques of Selected Weekly Readings (20% of grade, 2 points/per summary critique):

You are to turn in 10 one to two-page, single-space critiques of eleven specified readings (indicated in the syllabus by an * on the following dates: August 29; September 3, 24; October 1, 17, 22, 24, 29; November 12, 14; and December 5). Thus, you are permitted to skip one reading over the course of the semester. Each critique consists of a summary of the reading, an encapsulation of the author’s main argument(s), and a brief section in which you weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s argument(s). For the format of the summary critique, see the last page of this syllabus. You will receive a grade of “√” (1 point), “√)” (2 points), or “√+” (2.5 points). The “√+” will be extremely rare, given to those students who have done an unusually outstanding critique. All summary critiques must be turned in at the beginning of class. Failure to turn in your summary critique will result in zero (0) points.

Honor Code: Every assignment and exam must be submitted with your signature next to this written pledge: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”

Classes will be conducted seminar-style, which assumes that you have done all of the assigned reading in advance, have thought about it, and are prepared to engage in a Socratic discussion of the major issues involved. It is also assumed that you will be incorporating current events into our discussions. Attendance is not strictly mandatory, but I know who is present and who is absent for every class and this information feeds directly into your participation grade. The reading load is fairly substantial for this class, so get ahead on the readings and budget your time wisely.

Scoring:

A= 100-95 A-= 94-93 B+= 92-90
B= 89-85 B-= 84-83 C+= 82-80
C= 79-75 C-= 74-73 D+= 72-70
D= 69-65 D-= 64-63 F= 62-0.

Moot Court:

A moot court is a mock trial, in which two sets of lawyers argue their respective cases before a judge, jury, or (in our class) nine Supreme Court Justices. We will discuss this exercise at length prior to the week of Sept. 16-20. Do, however, preview the cases we’ll argue and begin to think about which role (Attorney or Justice) you will want to play.

September 17: Moot Court 1 Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County et al. v. Earls et al. (2002) 4th Amendment – Student Drug Testing and Illegal Searches & Seizures
http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/01-332.ZO.html

http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-1751.ZS.html
**Term Paper:** (due December 3: 10 double-space pages with 1-inch margins)

In light of arguments made by Robert Reich in *Locked in the Cabinet* and Ted Halstead and Michael Lind in *The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics*, write a 10-page paper that analyzes the two families (the Neumanns and the Stanleys) portrayed in Bill Moyers’s *Surviving the Good Times: America in the 1990s.* Explain how the two families both differ and are similar in terms of their educational, vocational, economic, marital, health insurance, and family characteristics during the 1990s. Discuss which family, by 2000, appears to be doing better in which areas and why. Based in part on the two families’ situations at the end of the documentary, conclude your paper with a discussion of which specific domestic policy initiatives you believe President Bush should pursue in 2003-04. Tie in the related fiscal, monetary, health, labor, trade, educational, and retirement issues that affect the two families.

**Late Policy:**

My policy is firm but fair, and I don’t expect to have to use it. Nevertheless, if necessary it will be put into effect. In short, paper grades will be automatically reduced one full grade for every day late. Any paper submitted more than 2 days late will receive an automatic “F.” Those with genuine emergencies will be given extensions, but they must be cleared with me in advance.

**“Wednesday Night at the Movies”** (begins at 6:45 p.m.; attendance is mandatory except on October 9 and 21)

September 4:  Thirteen Days: JFK and the Cuban Missile Crisis  * (starts at 6:30 p.m.)*
  [http://www.thirteen-days.com/](http://www.thirteen-days.com/)
September 11:  HBO’s “9/11 – In Memoriam”
September 18:  PBS American Experience’s “LBJ” (part 2)
^September 23:  A Perfect Candidate
  *(Monday)*
  [http://movie-reviews.colossus.net/movies/p/perfect.html](http://movie-reviews.colossus.net/movies/p/perfect.html)
September 25:  Platoon
^September 30:  The Insider   * (starts at 6:30 p.m.)*  
  *(Monday)*
  [http://www.jeffreywigand.com/insider/60minutes.html](http://www.jeffreywigand.com/insider/60minutes.html)
October 2:  Nixon  * (starts at 6:30 p.m.)*  
October 9:  The Killing Fields  * (strictly optional) *  
^October 21:  Black Hawk Down  * (strictly optional) *  
  *(Monday)*
October 23:  PBS Frontline’s “Looking For Answers”
^October 28:  Wall Street
  *(Monday)*
  [http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/ 1987/12/268135.html](http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1987/12/268135.html)
October 30:  Roger & Me
  [http://www.dogeatdogfilms.com/ebert.html](http://www.dogeatdogfilms.com/ebert.html)
THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHOICE

August 29: The Costs & Benefits of Democratic Government
O’Connor & Sabato, Appendices I-IV, pp. 745-765

What is government? Where does it come from and why?
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 1, pp. 3-32

*Jonathan Rauch, “Seeing Around Corners: Government, Genocide, and Artificial Societies”
Atlantic Monthly (April 2002)
http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2002/04/rauch-movies.htm [watch artificial society animations at this link]

Thomas Friedman, “In Oversight We Trust,” New York Times (July 29, 2002)

Introduction
Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld, pp. xi-20

September 3: The Dilemmas Surrounding the Founding & the Constitution
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 2, pp. 35-67

Federalism: The Logic of Delegated Powers
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 3, pp. 71-100

http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan_print.html

*The New World of McWorld
Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld, Chs. 1-3, pp. 23-58

September 4: MOVIE “Thirteen Days: JFK and the Cuban Missile Crisis”
(Wednesday) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

THE INSTITUTIONS of GOVERNMENT

The Executive Branch

September 5: The Presidency: A leader or glorified clerk?
O’Connor & Sabato, Chs. 8 and 9, pp. 263-332

“13 Days at the End of the World: A Timeline”
http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/cubachronology1016/

The New World of McWorld
Barber, Jihad vs. McWorld, Chs. 4-5, pp. 59-87

The Legislative Branch

September 10: Congress: Stronger or weaker than the president?
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 7, pp. 215-259

continued . . .
**Congress’s Regulatory Oversight Responsibility:**

PBS Frontline’s “Bigger Than Enron” (June 2002)
[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/regulation/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/regulation/) (read all articles at this link)

The New World of McWorld
Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Chs. 6-7, pp. 88-117

**September 11:** MOVIE HBO’s “9/11 – In Memoriam”
(Wednesday) 6:45-7:55 p.m.

**The Judicial Branch**

**September 12:** The Supreme Court: A democratic institution?
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 10, pp. 335-379

Civil Rights & Liberties: Can we still afford them, especially after 9/11?
O’Connor & Sabato, Chs. 5 and 6, pp. 137-211

The New World of McWorld
Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Ch. 8, pp. 118-136

**September 17:** Moot Court 1: *Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County et al. v. Earls et al. (2002) 4th Amendment – Drug Tests and Illegal Searches & Seizures*
[http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/pdf/01-332P.ZO](http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/pdf/01-332P.ZO) (opinion – don’t print out)

**September 18:** MOVIE PBS American Experience’s “LBJ – Part 2”
(Wednesday) 6:45-8:45 p.m.

**September 19:** Moot Court 2: *Zelman v. Simons-Harris (2002) 1st Amendment – School Vouchers and the Separation of Church & State*
[http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-1751.ZS.html](http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-1751.ZS.html) (syllabus)
[http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/pdf/00-1751P.ZO](http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/pdf/00-1751P.ZO) (opinion – don’t print out)

**INFLUENCES ON, and CONTROL OF, GOVERNMENT**

**September 23:** MOVIE “A Perfect Candidate”
(Monday) 6:45-8:30 p.m.

**September 24:** Campaigns: Who votes and why?
O’Connor & Sabato, Chs. 13 and 14, pp. 467-552


The New World of McWorld
Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Ch. 9, pp. 137-151

**September 25:** MOVIE “Platoon”
(Wednesday) 6:45-8:45 p.m.
September 26: **Public Opinion & Political Socialization**: Are we becoming our parents?  
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 11, pp. 383-414

http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/AD_Issues/amdipl_1/holsti_1.html  
http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/AD_Issues/amdipl_1/holsti_II.html

The New Old World of Jihad  
Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Chs. 10 and 14, pp. 155-168 and 205-216

^September 30: MOVIE “The Insider”  
(Monday) 6:30-9:00 p.m.

October 1: **The Media**: The 4th branch of government?  
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 15, pp. 555-616

David Aaron, “The New Twilight Struggle: Old Echoes of Vietnam in a New War Against Terror,”  
*The American Prospect* (October 22, 2001)  
http://www.prospect.org/print-friendly/print/V12/18/aaron-d.html

The Presidency and the Media: Nixon  

Jihad vs. McWorld  
Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Chs. 15, 16 and Afterword, pp. 219-246 and 293-300

^October 2: MOVIE “Nixon”  
(Wednesday) 6:30-9:00 p.m.

October 3: The Presidency and the Media After Watergate: Ford to Carter  
*Gergen, Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton*, Ch. 4, pp. 107-148  

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/choice/bob/blumenthal2.html

Watergate and the Nixon Legacy in American Government  (peruse the articles at these links)  

end of “Nixon” film and in-class discussion of post-Nixon era of politics, policy and governance

*Fall Break* (*read the upcoming Gergen and Woodward assignments over break*)

^October 9: MOVIE “The Killing Fields” * (strictly optional) *  
(Wednesday) 6:45-8:45 p.m.

October 10: **Interest-Groups**: Whose interests?  
O’Connor & Sabato, Ch. 16, pp. 587-616

Richard Kogan, “Where Has All the Surplus Gone?” Center on Budget & Policy Priorities (Nov. 1, 2001)  
http://www.cbpp.org/11-1-01bud.htm

The Presidency After Watergate: Reagan to Bush  
*Gergen, Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton*, Chs. 5-7, pp. 149-247  
October 15: MID-TERM EXAM

October 17: Western Liberal Democracy and Capitalism Triumphant? and Lessons From the America’s First War on Terrorism in the 1980s
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/ (read all articles at this link)

Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” National Interest (Summer 1989)
http://www.wku.edu/~sullib/history.htm

Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” Foreign Affairs (Summer 1993)
http://www.alamut.com/subj/economics/misc/clash.html

http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kurtz_print.html

O’Connor & Sabato, “Foreign & Military Policy,” Ch. 19, pp. 703-742

^October 21: MOVIE “Black Hawk Down” * (strictly optional) * 6:45-9:15 p.m. (Monday)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ambush/

http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/011119fa_FACT2

http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=1045181


http://wwics.si.edu/OUTREACH/WQ/WQSELECT/BULLIET.HTM

^October 23: PBS Frontline’s “Looking For Answers” (Wednesday) 6:45-7:45 p.m.

October 24: What explains the hatred behind the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history?
Why has radical Islam sprung from Egypt and Saudi Arabia—two of America’s key Middle East allies?
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/terrorism/ (read all articles at this link)

*Graham Allison, “Fighting Terrorism: Could the Worse Be Yet To Come?” The Economist (November 2001)
http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=842483

Timur Kuran, “The Religious Undercurrents of Muslim Economic Grievances,” Social Science Research Council
http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/kuran_text_only.htm

Syla Benhabib, “Unholy Politics,” Social Science Research Council (November 2001)
http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/benhabib_text_only.htm

PBS Frontline’s “Inside the Terror Network” (2001)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/network/ (read all articles at this link)
AMERICA in a WORLD ECONOMY

October 28: MOVIE “Wall Street”
(Monday) 6:45-8:45 p.m.  http://www.msnbc.com/news/783161.asp (read this article)

October 29: The 1980s: Manufacturing’s Decline, Growing Budget Deficits & Japan’s Economic Rise
Bob Kuttner, “The Declining Middle,” Atlantic Monthly (July 1983)
Brenner, The Boom and the Bubble: The U.S. in the World Economy
Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-47

October 30: MOVIE “Roger & Me”
(Wednesday) 6:45-8:30 p.m.

October 31: The 1990s: Clinton, Budget Balancing, and Unprecedented Economic Expansion
Reich, Locked in the Cabinet
Klein, The Natural
pp. Introduction-120  pp. 1-105
PBS Frontline’s “The Clinton Years, Chapters 1-2”
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/chapters/1.html
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/chapters/2.html

November 5: Reich, Locked in the Cabinet
Klein, The Natural
pp. 121-180  pp. 106-157
Brenner, The Boom and the Bubble: The U.S. in the World Economy
Chapters 2,4-5, pp. 48-93, 128-153
PBS Frontline’s “The Clinton Years, Chapters 3-4”

November 7: Reich, Locked in the Cabinet
Klein, The Natural
pp. 181-348  pp. 158-217
PBS Frontline’s “The Clinton Years, Chapters 5-6”
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/chapters/5.html
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/chapters/6.html
November 12:  PBS Bill Moyers' “Surviving the Good Times,” Part 1


http://www.fortune.com/indext.jhtml?channel=print_article.jhtml&doc_id=205334

*Shiller, Irrational Exuberance*
Chapters 1-3, pp. 3-68

Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble: The U.S. in the World Economy*
Chapters 7-8, pp. 171-217

November 14:  PBS Bill Moyers’ “Surviving the Good Times,” Part 2


Shiller, *Irrational Exuberance*
Chapters 8, 11, pp. 148-168, 203-233

Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble: The U.S. in the World Economy*
Chapters 9-11, pp. 218-284

November 19:  American Politics and Policy in the New Millennium


Halstead and Lind, *The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics*
Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-105

Chapter 3-5, pp. 107-228

November 26:  TERM PAPERS DUE

Discussion of your papers in class

THANKSGIVING BREAK  (read the final Woodward and Gergen assignments below over break)

Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton*, Chs. 8-Conclusion, pp. 249-342

December 5:  **“Present at the Creation: A Survey of America’s World Role,” *The Economist* (June 2002)**
[http://www.policyreview.org/OCT01/lindberg_print.html](http://www.policyreview.org/OCT01/lindberg_print.html)

*Final Exam Preparation and Summary Discussion*

FINAL EXAM
David Brooks, “One Nation, Slightly Divisible,”
*Atlantic Monthly* (December 2001)

**PAGE 1**

Summary of Reading:

**PAGES 1-2**

Brooks’ Main Argument(s):

1.

2.

Argument(s)’s Strengths & Weaknesses

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