

Fall 2009

PLS 101-006: AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
Dr. Roger C. Lowery

I hope that you had a good vacation and are looking forward to getting started on your new courses. In order to get an overview of our course's objectives, structure, assignments, and schedule, please:

- print a copy of these instructions and
- complete the following two sets of initial assignments.
- Phone or e-mail me if you have any questions or concerns.

ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED
PRIOR TO OUR 1ST CLASS, 20 AUGUST 2009

I. Go to the course web site at: <http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls101/index.htm>

A. Click the **SYLLABUS** link,

*[if you cannot open the SYLLABUS link,
then follow the 5 steps below to download free Adobe Acrobat Reader software to your computer.]*

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1. Click the **BACK** button on your web browser to go back to the PLS 101 home page, and
 2. Click on the **ADOBE ACROBAT READER** link that is listed under the *Home Pages* heading, and
 3. At the Adobe website, move your cursor over the **DOWNLOADS** link and then click on the **FREE ACROBAT READER** link,
 4. A new page will open, click on the yellow **GET ACROBAT READER** button,
 5. A new page will open, fill in the required information in *Step 1*, *Step 2*, and then click the red **DOWNLOAD** button in *Step 3*.

B. And then the **SYLLABUS** link,

C. And then print a copy of the course syllabus.

D. Go back to the course homepage and click the **COURSE SCHEDULE** link,

E. And then print a copy of the course schedule.

F. Read the syllabus and schedule carefully. If you have any questions, phone or e-mail me.

II. Purchase the two course materials required for this course:

A. Wilson, James Q. 2005. *American Government: Brief Version*. [Seventh Edition]. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

B. e-Instruction, *Student Response Keypad*

III. Once you have purchased your student-response keypad,

A. Follow the activation instructions posted at:

http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls101/Student-response_keypad_instructions.pdf.

B. Bring your activated *Student Response Keypad* to every class – starting with the first class meeting.

1. You will use the keypad in every class meeting to anonymously respond to true/false or multiple-choice questions that arise during class discussion.
2. The aggregated class responses are projected on an overhead screen as full-color bar- or pie-charts, so that the class and I can see and comment upon the distribution of class responses.
3. I find that the anonymity and confidentiality of this feedback method encourages all students to enthusiastically participate in this interactive form of active learning. Students who rarely or never raise their hand in response to questions are comfortable in responding with their keypads and are

more likely to join the resulting discussion of how and why the class divided in their collective responses.

4. The keypad responses also give me immediate feedback regarding the extent to which students understand concepts being discussed. This allows me to make informed decisions about the pace and organization of class discussions.

- IV. Memorize the following definitions:
- A. **Society**: a collection of individuals that interact with each other
 - B. **Politics: the process of conflict resolution**
 - C. **Law**: the rules and principles used to resolve conflict
 - D. **Government**: law makers, enforcers, and adjudicators
 1. The basic *ends* of government:
 - a. Balancing individual liberty with collective security or order
 - b. Balancing individual liberty with collective equality
 2. The alternate *means* that can be used to achieve those ends:
 - a. Constitutional limits on governmental power
 - b. Unlimited (authoritarian or totalitarian) governmental power

**ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED
PRIOR TO OUR 2ND CLASS, 25 AUGUST 2009**

- I. Go to the course web site at: <http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls101/index.htm>
 - A. Click the link to **WILSON TEXTBOOK CHAPTER OUTLINES**
 - B. Click the link to **1: WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT GOVERNMENT?**
 - C. Print a copy of this outline for Chapter 1 in the Wilson textbook.
- II. Read Chapter 1 in the Wilson textbook
 - A. Take notes on your chapter outline as you read the chapter,
 - B. Highlight material in the chapter that you judge is likely to be on the quiz,
 - C. Bring the Wilson textbook and Chapter 1 outline to class.
- III. Take the online practice quiz
 - A. Go back to the course web site at: <http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls101/index.htm>
 - B. Click the **WILSON TEXTBOOK CHAPTER REVIEW QUIZZES** link.
 - C. Click the Chapter 1 link: **WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AMERICAN GOVERNMENT?**
 - D. Type in the course/section number [PLS 101-006], your full name, and your e-mail address.
 - E. Take the practice quiz as an open-book exercise. Take your time – the quiz software will allow you to take up to 3 hours to complete the quiz (even though you won't need that long).
 - F. After answering the last question, click the **GRADE** button to see how you did [this grade does not count toward your course grade; the online quizzes are practice for the in-class quizzes, which do count].
 - G. Click the **EXPLANATION** button to see *why* each statement is true or false, *and to see additional information that I think is important that your textbook author did not include.*
- IV. Print out this Chapter 1 practice-quiz explanation.
 - A. Keep this printout (and bring it to the next class).
 - B. This practice-quiz explanation will not only be useful in preparing for the first in-class, graded quiz, but – along with other practice quizzes – will also be an important study aid to use when you prepare for the first hourly exam.