

**UConn Coop**  
**Political Science 173**  
**INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**  
**Fall 2006**  
**Mr. Shearer**  
[shearerg@stafford.ctschool.net](mailto:shearerg@stafford.ctschool.net)

**Course Description:** This course is designed to focus on two aspects of our political landscape. The foundations of our political system will be one focus while the issues faced in the political arena will be the second aspect. We will pay special attention to the roles of individuals and groups in our system. Students will be expected to understand how the system was designed and what the realities and nuances of its workings are today. Students must stay current on the issues being debated as part of the national agenda and to research one of these issues for a class presentation and term paper. Students are encouraged to use the LMC to access the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. This course is designed to meet the goals and expectation of the University of Connecticut Department of Political Science Course 173 “Introduction to American Government”.

**Materials:**

*The Enduring Debate* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2003), edited by David T. Canon, John J. Coleman and Kenneth R. Mayer.

*We the People*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, and Margaret Wier

*The New York Times*

Brown University: *Choices Program*

Numerous primary and secondary sources will be used during the course. Many are listed in the weekly syllabus.

**Grading:**

Term Paper	100 Points
Topic Presentation/Discussion	100 Points
Exam # 1	100 Points
Class Discussion (50 Points each quarter)	100 Points
Exam # 2	100 Points
Final Exam	<u>125 Points</u>
Total	625 Points

## Term Paper/Presentation/Discussion Topics:

You must select your paper/presentation topic from this list. These are very broad, and your paper will have to focus the topic to a manageable size. Other topics may be submitted for approval. Term papers must be ten pages in length and meet the requirements of the SHS Social Studies Department Term Paper Guide. The paper must reference legislation pertaining to the issue as well as applicable court cases. Students will prepare a class presentation on “Presentation Thursdays” for the class. Students are expected to present the most current research and information on their topic to the class. Students may use PowerPoint, presentation boards, handouts, video clips (max ten minutes) and other media to inform the class about their specific topic. Students are expected to have background information for the class as homework for the night and then to lead the class in a discussion of the topic on Friday. Class readings for Thursday night should offer depth and competing opinions to allow for a spirited discussion on Friday. The readings should not be a simple regurgitation of the information offered on Thursday. Articles for Thursday night reading must be submitted to the teacher by Tuesday to facilitate copying.

Affirmative Action

Gun Control

Abortion/Adoption

Death Penalty

Euthanasia

National Sales Tax

Death Tax

Gay Marriage

Free Trade

“Closed Shop” labor policy

Alternative Energy

Casino Gambling

Clean Air

Clean Water

Judicial License

Eminent Domain

Racial Profiling & Terrorism

Logging Rights

School Prayer

Stem Cell Research

Prescription Drugs

Maternity Leave

Disabled Rights

Intellectual Property Rights

Media Regulation

Performance Based Education

Higher Education Assistance

Welfare Reform

Term Limits

Ballot Box Reform

School Vouchers

Tribal Recognition Process

Faith Based Initiatives

Corporate Globalization

## Weekly Topics & Assignments:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading &amp; Assignments</b>
August 28	Why do we need government?	<i>We the People</i> Ch 1 John Locke: An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent and end of Civil Government Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> “What are the Real Advantages which American Society Derives from a Democratic Government”
September 4	What is Politics??	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 1 John Winthrop “A Model of Christian Charity: City on a Hill”

September 11	Constitutional History	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 2 Brown University, Choices Program: <i>A More Perfect Union: Shaping American Government</i> <i>Federalist # 51</i> <i>The Ratification Controversy in New York 1787-1788</i> Gary Shearer
September 18	Constitutional Framework	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 3 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “The Price of Federalism” by Paul Peterson <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Speech at James Madison University” by Justice Clarence Thomas
September 25	Civil Liberties & the Bill of Rights	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 4 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “In Defense of Prejudice” by Jonathan Rauch
October 2	The Amendments	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 4 <i>The Bill of Rights</i> <i>The Patriot Act</i> <i>Brutus II</i> <i>Federalist # 84</i>
October 9	Congress	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 12 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Too Much of a Good Thing: More Representation Is Not Necessarily Better” by John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Thesis-Morse <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Congress: The Electoral Connection” by David R. Mayhew <i>Federalist #s 52-57</i> <i>Brutus # IV</i>
<b>First Quarter Term Papers Due</b>		
October 16	Congress	<i>We the People</i> Ch 12 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Rolling Out the Pork Barrel” Sean Paige <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Roll Out the Barrel: The Case Against the Case Against Pork” Jonathan Cohn <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Pork Barrel or a Kick Start” Allan Slocum with Rich Thomas and Adam Bryant <i>Federalist #s 62 &amp; 63</i> <i>Brutus XVI</i>
October 23	The Presidency	<i>We the People</i> Ch 13 <i>Cato # 5</i> <i>Federalist # 67</i> <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : Debating the Issues—Imperial Presidency or

		Responsible Leadership? “A President in Full” by Fred Barnes, “The Return of the Imperial Presidency?” by Donald R. Wolfensberger, and “Checking and Balancing” by Richard E. Cohen.
October 30	The Presidency	<i>We the People</i> Ch 13 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Perspectives on the Presidency” from <i>The Presidency in a Separated System</i> by Charles O. Jones <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “A Symbolic, but Muddled, Victory” by John F. Harris <i>All the President’s Men</i>
<b>Exam # 1</b> <b>Mon—M/C</b> <b>Tue--Essay</b>		
November 6	Political Parties	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 9 <i>Farewell Address</i> of George Washington <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : Debating the Issues: Political Parties—Strategies For The Future. “Family Tree, Party Roots” by Carl Cannon, “Liberal Loss or Progressive Mandate?” by Will Marshall, and “Remarks at the National Press Club” by Ralph Nader. <b>Political Parties in Action--WebQuest</b>
November 13	Political Campaigns	<i>We the People</i> Ch 10 FILM-“Journeys With George” <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “The Voice of the People: An Echo,” from <i>The Responsible Electorate</i> by V.O. Key <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “‘Give’em Hell’ These Days Is a Figure of Speech” by Eileen Shields West
November 20	Federal Courts	<i>We the People</i> Ch 15 <i>Brutus</i> #s XI, XII, and XV <i>Federalist Papers</i> 78-83
<b>Second</b> <b>Quarter Term</b> <b>Papers Due</b>		
November 27	Federal Courts	<i>We the People</i> Ch 15 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : Debating the Issues: Interpreting the Constitution: Originalism or a Living Constitution “Common-Law Courts in a Civil Law System: The Role of the United States Federal Courts in Interpreting the Constitution and Laws” Antonin Scalia and “Our Democratic Constitution” Stephen Breyer.
December 4	Foreign Relations	<i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “The Age of Open Society” George Siros <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Reality Check” Peter D. Sutherland
December 11		<b>Brown University, Choices Program:</b>

		<b><i>Dilemmas of Foreign Aid: Debating U.S. Priorities, Policies, and Practices</i></b>
December 18  <b>Exam # 2</b> <b>Mon—M/C</b> <b>Tue—Essay</b>	Interest Groups	<i>We the People</i> Ch 11 <i>Federalist # 10</i> Film “The Corporation” The Enduring Debate: “Associations Without Members” by Theda Skocpol
January 1	The Media	<i>We the People</i> Ch. 7 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Poling the Public” from <i>Public Opinion in a Democracy</i> by George Gallup <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “Why Americans Hate Politics and Politicians” by Michael Nelson
January 8	Bureaucracy	<i>We the People</i> Ch 14 <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : “The Study of Administration” by Woodrow Wilson <i>The Enduring Debate</i> : From <i>Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It</i> by James Q. Wilson
January 15	<b><u>Final Exam</u></b>	