I. CONTENTS:
A. Overview of course administration
B. Issues in American government and politics

II. THE COURSE:
A. What you absolutely must do.
   1. Read the syllabus carefully.
   2. Attend class regularly
   3. Subscribe to the New York Times (or at least keep up with current events).
   4. Meet deadlines
B. Class periods are devoted interpretations of American government and politics.
   It is not a systematic review of the parts of American government.
C. Readings:
   1. Main “texts”:
      i. Elizabeth Drew, The Corruption of American Politics
      ii. Robert Heilbroner and Lester Thurow, Economics Explained
      iii. Web readings in the “Cyber Reserve Room”
   2. Independent reading:
      i. Robert Tucker, May God Have Mercy
      ii. The New York Times
   4. You’ll always be told where to be in the reading.
D. Current Events
   1. Please! Purchase a subscription to the New York Times from the Newsstand on Main Street. (Near Rainbow Records.)
E. Web site and e-mail.
   1. If you don’t pick up something, lose it, or just want a copy get it at www.udel.edu/htr/American
   2. Review questions are not included. You have to come to class for those.

III. ISSUES IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT
A. The role of government in society.
   1. How much government is necessary and desirable.
   2. September 11th and recent elections
B. Building and maintaining democracy.
   1. Democracy means government “by” the people.
      i. People in general, not just some of them, must be able to make
collective decisions and hold state managers accountable.

2. Democracy is in decline
   i. Note: this an interpretation that not all political scientists accept.
   ii. Some indicators.
      1) Unsatisfactory citizenship.
         a) Turnout in elections has decreased more or less steadily over the last 100 years.
      2) Elected and administrative officials are increasingly “corrupted” by money.
         a) The cost of running for even “minor” offices has skyrocketed.
         b) Growth in special interest groups.
      3) Low levels of democratically useful political discourse and enlightened understanding.
         a) Impoverished political debate.
         b) Americans lack functional understanding of government and politics.
         c) Quick poll: how many here know what “switch hitter” and “sacrifice bunt” mean in baseball? Now, how many know what a “progressive” politician stands for?
      4) The absence of news in the media.

C. Confusion about state power and who’s “for and against it.”
   1. Layers of decision making and types of policies.

D. Disappointment on the American way of life.
   1. Growth of the have nots and the disappearance of the middle class.
      i. Despite growth in government wealthy as wealthy as ever.
      ii. Stagnating wages and family incomes.
      iii. Persistent poverty.
   2. Ethnic diversity.
      i. Hispanics rapidly becoming the largest minority.
   3. Globalization
      i. The shifting balance between production of information versus material goods creates imbalances and especially anxieties in labor markets.
      ii. Disruptions in labor markets.

IV. NEXT TIME:
   A. Why government is desirable as well as inevitable.
   B. Reading:
      1. Required:
   (www.udel.edu/American/Texts/needfor.html.)