GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

POS 2041 (2)

3 Credits

Friday 8:00 – 9:20 AM

PA 101

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Course Catalogue Description

American political institutions and processes; the constitutional and legal framework of American government; the policy-making process; national-state-local relationships; political participation, elections and public control of government. This is a General Education course.

Course Section Description

**This course meets the state-mandated Civic Literacy requirement**. It explores the organization and operation of national state power in the United States. It begins with a “textbook” account of American government and politics focused on the formal institutional arrangements of the U.S. national state (viz., the constitution, separation of powers, federalism, congress, president, and Supreme Court), as well as the formal mechanism through which the state is linked to American citizens (esp., public opinion, elections, political parties, and interest groups). Armed with this formalist view, we turn our attention to an examination of American government and politics from a political economy perspective – one that focuses on the relationship between capitalism and democracy and that takes into account the grossly uneven distribution of political and economic power in the United States.

Course Format

This is a lecture course; however, student participation will figure prominently. Student participation will take two forms: faculty-directed small group discussions; and active student involvement in the question and answer phase of lecture.

Requirements & Grading

Students are expected to come to each class session having read and thought about the reading assignment for that week and to actively participate in lectures and small group discussions. In addition to active participation, grading will be based on five multiple choice quizzes and two essay exams. Two of the five multiple choice quizzes will be administered as part of the mid-term exam and three will be administered as part of the final exam. In addition to the quizzes the mid-term and final exams will consist of in-class essays. The mid-term exam will consist of two questions; students must answer one. The final exam will consist of three questions; students must answer two.

Specific point distribution for grading purposes will be as follows (total possible points = 100):

• Completion of assignments in the web-based text, We the People: An Introduction to American

Government (see below): 10 points.

• Five Multiple Choice Quizzes: 35 total points (two @ 10 points; three @ 5 points)

• In-Class Mid-Term Exam: 20 points

• In-Class Final Exam: 35 points

• Extra-Credit for Perfect Attendance: 5 points

• Extra-Credit: if class produces a 90 percent or more response rate to online SPOTS: 5 points

Final grades are based on the following University scale:

93-100 = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-79 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

67-69 = D+

63-66 = D

60-62 = D-

0 – 59 = F

University Attendance Policy Statement

Attendance Policy Statement: Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student’s responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student’s final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

Course Attendance Policy & Small Group Work

Students are expected to attend all classes unless they are excused by the instructor. The instructor will take attendance on most class days throughout the semester. Every non-excused absence on the days attendance is taken will result in a two (2) point reduction in the student’s final grade. For example, if attendance is taken five times during the semester and the student is absent all these times the student’s final grade will be reduced by 10 points. If attendance is taken 10 times and the student is absent all these times, their final grade will be reduced by 20 points, and so on. This is a firm policy and will be strictly enforced. Furthermore, it is the student’s responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class and to inform the instructor if the attendance and small group participation record on Canvas is incorrect. This must be done within two weeks of the posting of the attendance and small group participation grades throughout the semester. Canvas records are final. No changes to Canvas records will be made after the final regular class of the semester (i.e., the last class before finals).

A similar system will govern small group work. Every time a student does not participate in small group work two (2) points will be taken off student’s final grade (unless excused by the instructor). For example, if a student does not participate in small group work five times during the semester the student’s final grade will be reduced by 10 points. If a student does not attend and participate in small group work ten times during the semester, the student’s final grade will be reduced by 20 points and so on.

Readings

This class will use two texts: Thomas E. Patterson, We the People: An Introduction to American Government (New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education, 2015); and Ira Katznelson, Mark Kesselman, and Alan Draper’s, The Politics of Power: A Critical Introduction to American Government, 7th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012). We the People is available online through McGraw Hill’s Smart Book web-based platform or at the FAU bookstore. (For more detail on the options see last page of syllabus.) The Politics of Power is available in the FAU bookstore. Both books are required reading.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

Course Competencies and Outcomes:

1. Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government;
2. Understanding of the Constitution of the United States and its application;
3. Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance;
4. Understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society;
5. Help students develop critical reading, writing, and speaking skills, especially how to make a convincing argument;
6. Help students to become self-directed learners;
7. Help students learn how to participate as a member of a peer-based team of learners;
8. Prepare students for further work in political science.

Intellectual Foundations Program (IFP)

This is an IFP course (see www.fau.edu/deanugstudies/NewGeneralEdCurriculum.php). As such, it fulfills requirements for IFP Learning Outcomes for Gen. Ed. Foundation F4, including: 1. be able to identify patterns of human behavior; 2. demonstrate an understanding of how political, social, cultural, or economic institutions influence human behavior; 3. understand key social science methods and the theoretical foundations behind these methods; 4. be able to apply social science methods to the analysis of social, cultural, psychological, ethical, political, technological, or economic issues or problems. The course also fulfills IFP General Education Outcomes, including: 1. knowledge in several different disciplines; 2. the ability to think critically; 3. the ability to communicate effectively; 4. an appreciation for how knowledge is discovered, challenged, and transformed as it advances; and 5. an understanding of ethics and ethical behavior.

Disability Statement

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS)—in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 131 (954-236-1222); or in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8585) —and follow all SAS procedures.

Code of Academic Integrity

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001\_Code\_of\_Academic\_Integrity.pdf

Course Schedule

Week 1: Where Does “Government” Come From?

Part I: An Institutional Approach

Week 2: The American Constitutional System: Origins and Structure

Chapter 2, “Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self-Government” (Smart Book)

Week 3: State Institutions: Congress and the Presidency

Chapter 11, “Congress: Balancing National Goals and Local Interests”; and Chapter 12, “The Presidency: Leading the Nation” (Smart Book)

Week 4: State Institutions: the Judiciary and Federalism

Chapter 14, “The Federal Judicial System: Applying the Law”; and Chapter 3, “Federalism: Forging a Nation” (Smart Book)

Week 5: Citizens and the State: Public Opinion and Political Participation

Chapter 6, “Public Opinion and Political Socialization: Shaping the People’s Voice”; Chapter 7, “Political Participation: Activating the Popular Will” (Smart Book)

Week 6: Citizens and the State: Political Parties and Interest Groups

Chapter 8, “Political Parties, Candidates, and Campaigns: Defining Voter’s Choice”; and Chapter 9, “Interest Groups: Organizing for Influence” (Smart Book)

Week 7 (October 1): **Mid-Term Exam (in-class)**

Part II: A Political Economy Approach

Week 8: Reconsidering American Government

Chapter 1, “Democracy’s Challenge,” The Politics of Power (hereafter, TPP)

Week 9: The American Political Economy

Chapter 2, “Capitalism and Democracy,” (TPP)

Week 10: Political Participation

Chapter 4, “Political Parties, Elections, and Public Opinion,” (TPP)

Week 11: Political Participation – continued

Chapter 5, “Interest Groups and Social Movements,” (TPP)

Week 12: No Class (Veteran’s Day)

Week 13: Political Institutions

Chapter 6, “The Presidency,” (TPP)

Week 14: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15: Political Institutions – continued

Chapter 7, “The Congress” (TPP)

**FINAL EXAM (in-class)**

**TBA**

SMART BOOK INFORMATION

For this course you are required to purchase McGraw-Hill Education Connect access for the text, We the People 11th edition by Thomas Patterson. You are not required to have a print text and please be aware if you purchase a used textbook you will still need to purchase Connect access.

Connect codes are available in the bookstore. If you would like a print version of the text to accompany Connect, the FAU bookstore is carrying a discounted bundle of the text which includes a Connect access code. A print-upgrade option is also available via Connect if you find yourself wanting a print companion at some point during the semester. This will be a full color binder-ready version of the text.

You may also purchase access to Connect and the text book directly from McGraw-Hill Education.

Information on Connect and text book (Smart Book)

Thomas Patterson, We the People: An Introduction to American Government 11th edition (McGraw-Hill Education). ISBN