

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 200:  
AMERICAN POLITICS  
SPRING 2016**

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. &  
Tuesdays, 1-1:30 & 4:15-5:00 p.m., & by appointment

***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

Survey of American politics, including political behavior of the American electorate, the theory of democracy, the structure and the function of American political institutions, and contemporary issues.

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***TEXTBOOK***

**OPTIONAL:** James Q. Wilson, *American Government* (brief version, *any edition*)  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009; on 2-hour reserve in the campus library

**REQUIRED:** Course binder: contains all needed lists, checklists, and review sheets for the semester.

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***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

- To introduce students to basic themes and concepts of political science and, specifically, American politics;
  - To introduce students to the major forces, interests, and institutions of American democratic politics;
  - To introduce students to the legislative and/or judicial processes through first-hand experiences and observations;
  - To prepare students to think critically and analytically about American politics and major political issues as they affect our lives;
  - To help students develop the habit of keeping up-to-date on political developments as they occur in the United States and, in relation to the United States, around the world.
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***CLASS SCHEDULE***

Week #1:      Tues., Jan. 19:              Syllabus Review  
   Introduction: Definitions on a *Tabula Rasa*

**AMERICAN POLITICAL FREEDOMS & INSTITUTIONS**

Week #2:	Tues., Jan. 26:	The United States Constitution
Week #3:	Tues., Feb. 2:	The United States Constitution (continued)
Week #4:	Tues., Feb. 9:	Congress
Week #5:	Tues., Feb. 16:	Congress (continued) <b>Legislative or Judicial Project #1 due</b>
Week #6:	Tues., Feb. 23:	The Presidency

Week #7:	Tues., March 1:	<b>Review Sheet #1 due</b> The Presidency (continued)
Week #8	Tues., March 8:	The Judiciary <b>Review Sheet #2 due</b>
	Fri., March 11	<b>Optional Review session at 11:00 a.m.</b>
Week #9	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Week #10	Tues., March 22:	<b>Exam #1</b> on Review Sheets #1 & #2 & Political Updates The Judiciary (continued)

### **AMERICAN POLITICAL FORCES**

Week #11:	Tues., March 29:	Political Parties
Week #12:	Tues., April 5:	Interest Groups
Week #13:	Tues., April 12:	The Media <b>Judicial or Legislative Project #2 due</b>
Week #14:	Tues., April 19:	Elections & Campaigns

### **AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

Week #15:	Tues., April 26:	Foreign Policy <b>Optional Extra Credit Project due</b>
Week #16:	Tues., May 3	Foreign Policy <b>Review Sheet #3 due</b>
	Friday, May 6:	<b>Optional review session at 11:00 a.m.</b>
Week #17:	Tues., May 10 :	<b>Exam #2</b> , 1:30-3:30 p.m. on Review Sheet #3 & Political Updates

### ***SUMMARY OF GRADED ACTIVITIES***

<u>DATE DUE</u>	<u>GRADED ACTIVITY</u>	<u>% OF FINAL GRADE</u>
Every class	Political Updates	15%
Tues., Feb. 3	Review Sheet #1	3.3%
Tues., March 8	Review Sheet #2	3.3%
Tues., May 3	Review Sheet #3	3.4%
Tues., Feb. 16	Judicial or Legislative Project #1	15%
Tues., April 12	Judicial or Legislative Project #2	15%
Tues., March 22	Exam #1	20%
Tues., May 10	Exam #2	25%
Tues., April 26	Optional Extra Credit Project	1%
<u>TOTAL.....</u>		<u>100%</u>

### ***GRADE LEVELS FOR EXAMS, PROJECTS, & FINAL COURSE GRADES***

98-103: A+: STUDENTS MUST HAVE A 98 TO 103 AVERAGE & DO AN EXTRA CREDIT PAPER IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR AN A+ IN THE COURSE)

93- 97: A	83- 87: B	70- 77: C	60- 62: D-
90- 92: A-	80- 82: B-	68- 69: D+	<u>0- 59: F</u>
88- 89: B+	78- 79: C+	63- 67: D	

### ***REVIEW SHEETS***

Review sheets are to help you prepare for exams. **They should not be done during class instead of taking notes.** Your completed review sheets are due on the dates listed above.

Review sheets are *not corrected*. Instead, they are graded in the following manner:

A	<i>all</i> questions are answered
C	<i>most</i> questions are answered
D	<i>some</i> questions are answered
F	the review sheet is <i>not submitted</i>

### ***EXAMS***

Regularly scheduled exams are objective and include the following parts:

Part 1:	30 Matching IDs (1 point each)....	30 points
Part 2:	35 Short Answer Questions	
	(2 points each).....	70 points

TOTAL..... 100 points

Make-Up Exams taken before or after regularly scheduled exams are *essay questions* and are generally considered harder than objective exams.

### ***CLASS PROJECTS***

Each student is required to visit one judicial and one legislature session and write a report about each session observed. See the class project handouts (in your course binder) for details and requirements for each project option.

### ***POLITICAL UPDATES***

Each class will include a discussion about recent political events or issues in the United States and in the world as it relates to the U.S.

Each student should be prepared to present at least 2 such events or issues. Headlines of their issues will be submitted on 3x5 index cards before each class starts.

This assignment will require regularly reading newspapers and/or news magazines and/or listening to radio and/or TV news broadcasts and/or reviewing internet sources.

Students who suffer psychological or emotional problems in making oral presentations should discuss their situation with the instructor. Instead of making oral presentations, they will be required to write half-page summaries of each of their two political updates each week.

### **A section on political updates will be on each of our two exams.**

#### ***EXTRA CREDIT***

Students can earn 1 extra credit point by writing a 1-page reaction paper after viewing one of the following videos available in our library:

"All the King's Men"	"All the President's Men"
"America & the World Since World War II"	"Chicano: Fighting for Political Power"
"Classics of Political Television Advertising"	"Crime and Punishment in America"
"Doing Time"	"Doing Time: 10 Years Later"
"The Equal Rights Amendment"	"Frontline: The Betrayal of Democracy"
"Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years" (6 tapes; watch any one or more)	"Good Night and Good Luck"
"The History & Functions of Congress"	"High Crimes & Misdemeanors"
"If Women Ruled the World"	"Hollywood on Trial"
"Inside the CIA"	"In Search of Bin Laden"
"Inherit the Wind"	"In the Face of Terrorism"
"The Kennedys"	"Justice Vision: Border Crossing"
"Listening to America" (7 tapes; watch any one)	"LBJ: A Biography"
"McCarthy: Death of a Witch Hunter"	"Malcolm X"
"Pornography & Obscenity"	"Munich"
"Mississippi Burning"	"Power, Politics, & Latinos"
(6 tapes; watch any one)	"The Rage for Democracy"
"The Road to Brown"	"The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow"
"The Speeches of Franklin D. Roosevelt"	"The Secret Government"
"The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony"	"The Speeches of John F. Kennedy"
"That Delicate Balance: The First Amendment & Hate Speech"	"Votes for Women"
and others, as approved by the instructor	"13 Days"
	"Suffragette"

***Students can earn another extra credit point by registering to vote and showing the instructor your new voter registration card. You can now register to vote on line.***

This one extra credit point is added to a student's final average. In other words, if a student has a final average of 89 and has done an extra credit essay, he/she will have a final average of 90. Instead of a B+ for the course, he/she will receive an A-.

Students *must* submit an extra credit project to qualify for an A+ in the course.

Extra credit papers must be submitted by Tuesday, April 26.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions, although they do not receive a grade for their participation.

However, if a student is borderline between two grades and he/she has participated often and well in class, he/she will receive the higher of the two grades in question. For example, if a student has an 89 average for the course and has participated often and well in class, he/she will receive an A- for the class rather than a B+.

### **PAIR & SHARE MOMENTS**

You will be asked to identify a person sitting near you to be your Pair and Share Partner. Periodically, questions will be asked in class that you will discuss with your Pair and Share Partner. After a few moments of discussion (called Pair and Share Moments), you may be asked to share your group's ideas with the class as a whole.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Students found cheating or plagiarizing will receive a zero for the exam or assignment involved.

Students may attend the same legislative or judicial sessions, but their reports on these

sessions ***must be completely different in wording and ideas.***

### **LATE POLICY**

Students who miss exams or submit assignments late will lose 5 points for every day (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) that they do not make up the exam or assignment.

This penalty is not enforced only if a student lets the instructor know *prior to* the scheduled exam or assignment that he/she has experienced an emergency and is unable to take the exam or submit the assignment. *If* the instructor agrees that it is in fact an emergency, a new deadline or make up will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Make-up exams are essay exams.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with special needs based on learning disabilities are encouraged to discuss them with the instructor. To be tested for learning disabilities, contact the Student Enrichment Center in the library building or at 925-8920.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students may tape lectures and discussions with tape recorders.

Students can bring cell phones to class to receive emergency calls. However all phones must be set to "SILENT" and should not ring during class.

Students cannot use any other electronic devices during exams.

### ***PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS***

Students who have a personal conversation during class time will be handed a yellow card, as their first and only warning. Students with a yellow card who continue talking will be given a red card and told to leave class for the rest of the day.

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### ***ATTENDANCE POLICY***

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, from start to finish. Attendance is ***taken before and at the end of each class session.***

Students can only sign in *prior to and at the end* of each class by initializing the attendance book. Late arrivals can not sign in, although they can stay to participate and take notes in class. **Late arrivals are considered absent.**

Students *must attend the entire class to be given credit* as attending class. Students who *leave before the end of class*. (and therefore do not sign the attendance book at the end of class) are *officially absent*.

***Students with 2 consecutive absences (that is, missing 2 straight days of class) or 3 regular absences (that is, missing any 3 days of class) will be dropped from the class by the instructor.***

There are no “excused absences.”

Students can not sign the attendance book for other students. ***Students who sign in or out for other students will be charged with an absence, as will the student he or she signed in or out for.***

***Students who have been told to leave the classroom cannot sign out and are therefore counted as absent for the entire class.***

If you are forced to miss a class due to an emergency, you are encouraged to get the notes for the day you missed from your Pair and Share Partner (or any other reliable member of the class) and carefully read the relevant section of the textbook.