

American Government

PS 2010/Spring 2009

Dr. Amanda DiPaolo/250 Peck Hall
Office Hours: MW 9:00-10:00 a.m.
TR 11:00-2:00 p.m

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Course Description

This course examines the ideas, institutions and policymaking behind the American regime. We will look at notions of equality and liberty, national political institutions, including Congress, the Presidency, and the Supreme Court, as well as key policy issues such as foreign policy and social concerns. Political parties, interest groups, elections, and the role of the media will also be studied.

The course is structured in a way that your attendance and participation are both necessary for success. Class time will incorporate a variety of tasks and formats for teaching and learning including lectures, class discussions, and out of class assignments. Emphasis will be placed on developing your research and writing skills as well as your critical thinking abilities.

Required Texts

There is one required texts for this course:

1. Nichols and Nichols. *Readings in American Government*. 7th ed. 2004

Evaluations

Your mark for the course will be based on the following requirements:

Weekly writing assignments (25%)

Test #1 – February 16 (25%)

Test # 2 – March 23 (25%)

Test # 3 – April 29 (25%)

Weekly writing assignments: We will not meet on Fridays. Instead, I will give you a question on Wednesday based on the readings that you must answer. They are due no later than noon each Friday. In theory, you will use the class time to write these responses. If you do the assigned readings ahead of time, this makes perfect sense. This is how it works: Sign into D2L. Under discussions, each Wednesday, I will add the topic for discussion. You will each write your own response to the topic by selecting “compose” after you click on the topic thread. I will not accept late posts. I will not track you down and beg you for your work. Either you do them or you don't. Weekly writing assignments should be thoughtful and based on the reading. It should show me you've done the reading. The assignments are graded on a ✓+, ✓, ✓-, or 0 basis.

I use the plus/minus scale. Grades divisions are thus: 90-100=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-; below 60, F

Do you have a lottery scholarship?

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a **cumulative** TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 **cumulative** GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a **semester** GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm>, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

Plagiarism

While it should go without being said, plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form in this class. If you have a question about whether something constitutes plagiarism, please see me before handing in an assignment. Violations will result, in the least, in **failure of the course** and possible expulsion from the university.

Course Outline and Readings

(subject to change)

January 16 Introduction

Founding Ideas

January 21 – Appendix - The U.S Constitution
#1 - Declaration of Independence

January 26 -- #4 – The Revolution of Sober Expectations
#2 - The meaning of the Declaration of Independence

January 28 -- #3- Exchange on State Sovereignty and the Problem of Majority Rule
#5 - The Small Republic Argument

February 2 --#8 - Federalist Paper #10
#9 - Federalist Paper #51

Congress

February 4 – #29 - On Congress
#31- In Defense of Congress

February 9 – # 32 - Congressional Government and the Separation of Powers
#30 - The Need for Cabinet Government in the United States

February 11 -- How a bill gets passed (no readings)

February 16 – Test #1

The President

February 18 – #21 - The Electoral College
#23 - The Electoral College and the American Idea of Democracy

February 23 -- #38- On the Presidency
#39 – The Power to Persuade

February 25 – #40 - The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency
#42 - Reagan, The Great Communicator

March 2 -- #44 - Youngstown, Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer
#45 - United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp.

March 4 -- #46 – Korematsu v. United States
#47 On the suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus

The Judiciary

March 16 – #50 - The role of the Supreme Court
#54 - Marbury v. Madison
#17 - McCulloch v. Maryland

March 18 -- #58 - Constitutional Interpretation
#52 - Against Judicial Review

#51 - The Problem of Judicial Review
#53 - The authority of the Supreme Court

March 23 – Test #2

Civil Rights

March 25 – The Civil Rights Movement
(presentation in class – no reading)

March 30 – #81 - Roe v. Wade
#84 - Brown v. Board of Education

April 1 -- #80 - Miller v. California
#64 - Grutter v. Bollinger

Citizenship Today

April 6 – #19 - Bowling Alone
#20 – By the People...

The role of the Media

April 8 – Handouts

Political Parties

April 13 – #24 - Political Parties and Presidential Ambition
#22 – Why great men are not chosen President

U.S. Foreign Policy

April 15 - #73 - The Moral Basis of International Action
#74 - The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy
#78 - American Foreign Policy and the Victory of Liberal Democracy

April 20 – Handouts (Fukuyama and Huntington)

Liberty and Equality

April 22 – #65 - Capitalism and Freedom
#66 - The new goals of Politics

April 27 -- #87 - Harrison Bergeron

April 29 – Test #3