

Middle Tennessee State University
Political Science 2010-008
American Government and Politics

2:40-4:05, TR
class room: Todd 210
Section # 008
Office: 259 Peck Hall

Instructor: Dr. Greg Ryan
office hours: MWF, 10:15-11:15; TR, 11:45-12:45
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A. Course Objective

It is the purpose of this course to provide students with a general overview and introduction to American Government and Politics and also to increase students' awareness of the contemporary political issues. Students will gain a basic understanding of the institutions, historical development, culture, and terminology related to American politics.

All students will benefit from acquiring skills necessary for understanding political behavior they encounter in their daily lives, for making deliberate, informed political choices, for gaining a better understanding of political events that affect the United States, and for beginning to make reasoned, clear, written arguments. Students planning to take more courses in political science will find this course useful in providing a basic understanding of the terminology, various areas, and approaches to political science.

B. Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes and complete all reading assignments before coming to class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class, and each student's attendance will affect his or her participation grade. Additionally, students are expected to contribute to discussions of the readings and lecture material. This will also influence participation grade.

Three exams will be given, including the final. The final will not be cumulative and will be worth the same as the other tests. Tests will include objective, short answer, and essay questions. Five quizzes will also be given during the semester. These quizzes may be announced or unannounced and will cover readings and class notes. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Exam #1	25%	
Exam #2	25%	
Exam #3	25%	(Final Exam: Tuesday, December 15, 3:30-5:30PM)
Quizzes	15%	
Participation	<u>10%</u>	
	100%	

C. Policy Concerning Make-ups, Extensions, Incompletes and Extra Credit

Under extraordinary circumstances (serious illness, death in the family, legitimate school activities) students who miss tests will be allowed to make up that specific test. If you miss a test for other reasons such as work, oversleeping, taking a dog to the vet, helping a friend to move, etc., you will be given an opportunity to make up this test by taking a cumulative exam on the last day of the semester. Incompletes will only be given in the most extreme cases. Nobody has ever asked me for one before, and I don't plan on granting any this semester.

There are two forms of extra credit opportunities. First, any student who will make an appointment to visit my office will be awarded three points on any test. (The purpose of this for me is to find out who you are, what your name is, what you hope to get out of the class, etc. The purpose for you is to get answers to specific questions and get the points.) Also, students may consult with me about written assignments for extra credit. If you've skipped half of the classes, don't bother to come in the last week of the semester and ask for the opportunity to write an extra credit paper. However, if you have been diligent throughout the semester but still need to improve your grade, come and talk to me before you write anything and we will jointly come up with a topic.

TEXT: Schmidt, Steffen W., Mack C. Shelley, and Barbara A. Bardes. *American Government and Politics Today* (Brief Edition 2008-2009). United States: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008.

Disability Statement

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. Students may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

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.

Academic Assistance

Middle Tennessee State University has a number of support and tutorial services that can assist students with writing, reading, and other academic activities. Students who are experiencing difficulties in class are encouraged to use the following support services: First Year Experience Halls – Cummings Hall and Corlew Hall, the University Writing Center, Development Studies Writing Lab, and the Development Studies Reading Lab.

D. Course Schedule (Approximate)

I. Introduction, The American System (Chapters 1-5), Weeks 1-6

September 1 – begin class, read The Politics
September 3 – read chapter 1 and article by September 8
September 8 – finish chapter 1, begin chapter 2, read chapter 2 by September 15
September 10 – Labor Day, no class.
September 15 – chapter 2, read chapter 3 by September 17
September 17 – chapter 3
September 22 – class debate
September 24 – chapter 4, read chapter 4 by September 29
September 29 – chapter 5, read chapter 5 by September 26
October 1 – TEST #1

II. The Politics of American Democracy and Congress, (Chapters 6-9), Weeks 7-9

October 6 – begin chapter 6, read chapter 6 by October 8
October 8 – complete chapter 6 and begin chapter 7, read chapter 7 by October 13
October 13 – chapter 7
October 15 – begin chapter 8, read chapter 8 by October 22
October 20 – no class, fall break
October 22 – chapter 8
October 27 – chapter 9, read chapter 9 by October 29
October 29 – chapter 9 and review
November 3 – TEST #2

III. Institutions of American Government, (Chapters 9-14), Weeks 11-14

November 5 – chapter 10, read chapter 10 by November 10
November 10 – chapter 10, read chapter 11 by November 12
November 12 – chapter 11, read chapter 12 by November 17
November 17 – chapter 12
November 19 – chapter 13, read chapter 13 by November 24
November 24 – complete chapter 13
November 26 – no class, Happy Thanksgiving
December 1 – chapter 14, read chapter 14 by December 3
December 3 – complete chapter 14
December 8 – final day of class, cumulative make up exam

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 15, 3:30-5:30PM

E. Classroom Conduct and Etiquette

Academic Honest and Integrity

I expect all work that is completed in this course to be original work, initiated and completed by each individual student. The *Student Handbook* prohibits all forms of academic misconduct as described below:

- (1) **Plagiarism.** The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment.
- (2) **Cheating.** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- (3) **Fabrication.** Intentional or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- (4) **Facilitation.** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

The Student Handbook further prohibits classroom misconduct. In the event that a student engages in classroom misconduct, the instructor “can direct the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct” or “report such misconduct to the assistant dean for Judicial Affairs...” Students should consult the student handbook for more information about academic and classroom misconduct. If academic misconduct takes place, the instructor reserves the right to give the offending student(s) a failing grade.

Classroom and Email Etiquette

The following are basic guidelines for the classroom setting design to provide the best possible environment for learning.

- Please do not enter the classroom late or leave early unless it is an emergency. I generally take attendance or pass around a sheet for students to sign and list their student id numbers as a method for checking attendance.
- Please refrain from talking to others or engaging in any other extraneous activity during class discussions.
- Please turnoff and disengage all beepers, cellular phones and other electronic devices that may distract others.
- Do not search the internet during class hours – students who do so will be asked to leave the class or may face severe penalty
- Students are expected to respect each other and each other's viewpoints.

- The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time, but students will given advance notice in this event.