

POL 210 American Politics

Dr. Mantzopoulos

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Course Description:

This course surveys the American political system. The course familiarizes students with the basic concepts of the American political system: its foundations, its primary institutions and their interaction with one another, its primary actors and their political behavior, and its public policy-making process.

Text:

Steffen W. Schmidt, Mack C. Shelley, Barbara A. Bardes, *American Government and Politics Today*, Brief Edition 2001-2002. Wadsworth, 2001, ISBN 0-534-57099-2.

Examination:

There will be two exams worth 40% each. Each exam will cover the text book information and student presentations. Each exam includes both multiple choice and short-answer essay questions. Students are expected to write with proper spelling and grammar. The second exam is not cumulative. **ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE-UP EXAMS!!!** Students arriving late will have only the remaining allocated time to complete the exam.

Study Guides:

There will be daily study guides to be submitted by the students for 20% of the final grade. The study guides serve multiple functions. First, they assist in the better reading of the text. Second, they allow the student to emphasize the major parts of the readings. You've prepared yourself for the next day's class: if I call on you, you're ready to say something intelligent. In addition to training you to be a smarter reader and preparing you for class discussion, the study guides are designed to make it easier for you to prepare for the exams. Many of the questions are taken from the ideas in the study guides, in some cases word-for-word.

(WARNING: Never turn in, or attempt to turn in, a study guide without coming to class! This constitutes cheating, and will be treated exactly as if you are caught cheating on an exam: You

will fail the class and face possible expulsion from the College and University for academic dishonesty. This applies as well to the student who turns in a study guide for someone else.)

Each study guide is numbered, gives you the relevant reading assignment for that particular class period, and the due date, which is the same day we will discuss this material in class. The **only** way to get credit for the study guide is to turn it in at the BEGINNING of class. **The only time you can turn in the assignment for credit is at the beginning of class the day it is due!** Since one of the purposes of this assignment is to prepare you for class discussion, you can't get credit without being in attendance that day. Nor can you get credit for sitting through the class, filling out the study guide for that day, and turning it in after class. Nor can you give it to a friend and have her or him turn it in for you in your absence. Nor can you anticipate missing a class and turn it in in-advance for credit. Nor can you miss a class, for any reason, and turn it in later for credit. This assignment is designed to help you read smarter, understand the material better, contribute to class discussion more confidently, attend each and every class, be ready for the exams, review for the exams, get a better grade, and, ultimately, learn more.

Attendance:

Class attendance is expected in this class. Points will be deducted from the final grade based on the following absences (any student arriving late or leaving early will be considered absent):

0-1 0% deduction, 2-3 5% deduction, 4-5 10% deduction, 6 or more 20% deduction

The instructor reserves the right to deny any student missing 5 or more class meetings participation on any project or exam. The student may be required to withdraw from the course.

Grading Scale:

The following grading scale is used for the final course grade: 92-100% A, 90-91% A-, 88-89% B+, 82-87% B, 80-81% B-, 78-79% C+, 72-77% C, 70-71% C-, 68-69% D+, 60-67% D, 0-59% F.

Notes:

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes to these requirements.

The instructor reserves the right to set a seating arrangement at any time.

Students leaving early or arriving late will be considered absent from class.

Plagiarism, fraud, or academic misconduct will result in an F for the course and a report to the Dean's office.

READINGS SCHEDULE

- May 3 Introduction
- 5 Chapter 1: The Foundations of American Government
- 10 Chapter 1: The Foundations of American Government
- 12 Chapter 2: The Forging of a New Government
- 17 Chapter 3: Federalism
- 19 Chapter 4-5: Civil Liberties/Civil Rights
- May 24 EXAM (Chapters 1-5)**
Chapter 6: Public Opinion/Socialization
- 26 Chapter 7: Interest Groups and Political Parties
Chapter 8: Campaigns, Elections, and Voting Behavior
- May 31 No Class—Memorial Day
- June 2 Chapter 9: The Congress
- 7 Chapter 10: The Presidency
- 9 Chapter 11: The Bureaucracy
- 14 Chapter 12: The Courts
- 16 FINAL EXAM (Chapters 6-12)**