Political Science (POS) 2041
American Federal Government
University of Florida
Fall 2012
Tuesdays 8:30-10:25, Thursdays 9:35-10:25

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Course Description

This course is designed to survey topics that are vital for an understanding of American national politics and government. Readings and lectures will examine the structural foundations, institutions, citizen-government linkages, and processes that characterize the American political system.

This is a 3 credit hour course with 100 minute lectures on Tuesdays and 50 minute lectures on Thursdays.

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory.

Required Readings (available at campus area bookstores and sold as a bundle)


Grades

Grades will be based on exams, quizzes, assignments, and attendance in lecture. Below is a breakdown of how your grade will be determined for the course:

Constitution exam (13 September) 20.0 %
Mid-term exam (11 October) 25.0 %
Final exam (Monday, 10 December, 5:30-7:30 p.m.) 25.0 %
Weekly on-line news quizzes 10.0%
Attendance and conduct in lecture 10.0 %
Quizzes (in class) 10.0 %

The Constitution exam, mid-term exam, and final exam will be in-class on the dates specified in the course outline and will be closed book, closed note. The exams will be multiple-choice and true-false, with questions taken from reading material, lectures, films, and discussions.

► No exams will be given earlier than the time and date scheduled for this course.
► Make-up exams are entirely at Professor Conley’s discretion and are rarely granted.
► Teaching assistants cannot grant make-up exams.

Make-ups will only be given under the most extreme circumstances—which will necessarily require verifiable, written documentation of an emergency (illness or accident) or unavoidable legal obligation. Forgetting the exam date, “my alarm didn’t go off,” or “the bus was late” are not acceptable excuses. Any and all make-up
exams that are granted will be in essay format, will take place immediately after the final exam scheduled for the course, and will be graded by Professor Conley.

The final exam will be given at the date and time scheduled by the University— which is fixed and final. If for any reason you cannot attend any of the exams scheduled for this course (e.g., you have travel plans), you should not enroll in this course unless you are willing to accept a 0 for that exam.

Neither individual assignments nor final grades in this course will be subject to a “curve.” Letter grades for the final grade in the course will be assigned per the following schedule:

A  90+
A- 87-89
B+ 84-86
B  80-83
B- 77-79
C+ 74-76
C  70-73
C- 67-69
D+ 64-66
D  60-63
D- 57-59
E < 56 (failing)

Information on how these letter grades equate in grade point terms is available from the Registrar’s Office at http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html

Attendance Policy

► Attendance for this course is mandatory— which means you are expected to attend lecture on a regular basis. Students who are unwilling to commit to attending lectures consistently should not enroll in this course.

► Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the lecture period. This course starts on-time. Students who are late when attendance is taken will not receive credit. Please, no excuses.

► Students will be assigned seats in the lecture hall beginning the second week of classes.

► Students who leave during the lecture will be noted on the attendance sheet and will not receive credit for attendance that day. Leaving during the lecture is rude and disrespectful to the instructor and is distracting to other students. [Also see the section below on Students’ Classroom Conduct. Proper academic comportment is expected.] You control your lecture attendance grade. The number of times you attend lecture will be divided by the total number of lecture meetings during the semester (after the first week). **Tuesday lectures will count double, given that lectures are 100 minutes.**

Weekly On-line Quizzes

► Weekly on-line quizzes on news events must be completed at http://www.mypoliscilab.com The registration id for the course will be made available at http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/rconley. Instructions on registration procedures will be detailed in class.

► Assignments are graded automatically on line.
Classroom Conduct: Laptop Computers/Cellular Phones/Beepers/Palm Pilots and Reading Newspapers/Magazines, Listening to I-Pods, MP3 Players, etc.

► Students are expected to show respect for the instructor, teaching assistants, and each other.

► The use of laptop computers and all portable electronics is prohibited during lecture.

► Cellular phones, beepers, and all other electronic devices must be turned off to avoid distractions.

► Students who fail to comply with the rules on electronic, telephonic, and computer devices during lectures or discussion sections may be summarily dismissed for the remainder of the class period and will receive a failing grade for the day that will be the equivalent of 3 absences from lecture. Failure to comply with any part of these rules during quizzes or exams will result in a failing grade on the quiz or exam. Further, students receiving any messages from these instruments or any computer device during quizzes or exams will referred to the proper University authorities for cheating. Take this rule very seriously.

► Text-messaging, reading newspapers, reading magazines, listening to MP3 players or I-Pods, or doing other coursework during lectures is unacceptable. Students who engage in this activity or disrupt class in other ways (e.g., chatting during lecture, leaving lecture early/slamming the lecture hall door) will receive a failing grade for the day (equivalent to 3 absences from lecture); students who disrupt class repeatedly may be summarily dismissed for the remainder of the class period.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism (using someone else’s ideas without giving him proper credit) is a serious offense. Students are bound by the University of Florida’s Student Code of Conduct. Cheating on examinations and plagiarism are violations of the academic honesty standards of the University of Florida, will have a serious effect upon your grade in this course, and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action.

Office Hours

Professor Conley and the teaching assistants keep regular office hours to ensure that we are available to assist you. I encourage you to consult with us on course readings, assignments, problems you may be having with the course, or if you simply wish to come by to discuss your interests in American politics. If scheduled office hours are not convenient for you, Professor Conley and the teaching assistants will make every effort to schedule alternate meeting times. You may also reach Professor Conley and the teaching assistants via email. Messages may be left for Professor Conley on his office phone (352) 273-2385.

Students with Handicaps or Special Needs

If there is any reason why you need extra time on the examinations and/or require special physical accommodation in lecture and/or discussion sections, please contact Professor Conley in confidence as soon as possible at the beginning of the course. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs within the guidelines set forth by the University. Students with handicaps or special needs will need to coordinate with Student Services at 202 Peabody Hall, and we stand ready to assist any way we can.
READINGS AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – Introduction & Studying American Politics

Thursday, 23 August
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 1

WEEK 2 – Foundations of Thought/Political Culture

Tuesday, 28 August
Thursday, 30 August,
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 4
► Rourke, Section 5: The Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 3 – The Founding and the Constitution

Tuesday, 4 September
Thursday, 6 September
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 2
► Rourke, Section 5: The Constitutionality of Mandated Health Insurance

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 4 – Federalism

Tuesday, 11 September
Thursday, 13 September – CONSTITUTION EXAM
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 3
► Rourke, Section 2: Arizona’s Identity Checks

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 5 – Civil Liberties

Tuesday, 18 September
Thursday, 20 September
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 15
► Rourke, Section 3: Constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 6 – Civil Rights

Tuesday, 25 September
Thursday, 27 September
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 16
► Rourke, Section 4: Gay Marriage

√ Weekly news quiz due
WEEK 7 – Ideology in American Politics*

Tuesday, 2 October – Film: American Feud
Thursday, 4 October – Film: Obama’s Deal

*Professor Conley will be attending the Southeast Conference on Public Administration (SECoPA), Coral Springs, FL, 3–6 October

WEEK 8 – Public Opinion

Tuesday, 9 October
Thursday, 11 October – MID TERM EXAM
   ► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 5

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 9 – Media

Tuesday, 16 October
Thursday, 18 October
   ► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 6
   ► Rourke, Section 7: Future of Journalism

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 10 – Interest Groups

Tuesday, 23 October
Thursday, 25 October
   ► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 7
   ► Rourke, Section 8: Interest Groups and Elections

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 11 – Political Parties

Tuesday, 30 October
Thursday, 1 November
   ► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 9
   ► Rourke, Section 9: Parties

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 12 – Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Tuesday, 6 November
Thursday, 8 November
   ► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 10
   ► Rourke, Section 10: Voting/Campaigns/Elections

√ Weekly news quiz due
WEEK 13 – Congress

Tuesday, 13 November
Thursday, 15 November
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 11
► Rourke, Section 11: Congress

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 14 – Congress/Presidency/Presidential-Congressional Relations

Tuesday, 20 November
Thursday, 22 November – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 11, 12
► Rourke, Section 12: Presidency/War Powers

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 15 – Presidency

Tuesday, 27 November
Thursday, 29 November
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 12

√ Weekly news quiz due

WEEK 16 – Courts

Tuesday, 4 December
► Greenberg and Page, Chapter 14
► Rourke, Section 14: Courts/The Constitution in Modern Times

FINAL EXAM – Exam Group 10E, Monday, 10 December 2012, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. (L007 Turlington Hall)