

POSC 020
Introduction to American Politics
Dr. McGee Young
Department of Political Science
Tuesday/Thursday - 9:35-10:50
Engineering 198
Spring 2008

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11-2
Office: 407 Wehr Physics
Phone: 414-288-3296
e-mail: mcgee.young@marquette.edu

This course is meant to introduce you to the primary institutions, processes, and ideas that comprise the American political system. The study of American politics is the study of the development of the laws and institutions of government, the organization and mobilization of citizens, and the debates that have breathed life into our shared understanding of what a democracy entails. This course approaches the American political system from a developmental perspective, recognizing that politics is fluid, that both continuities and discontinuities across time are important, and that ultimately the search for power lies at the heart of political action.

The pedagogical aims of this course are twofold. First, it is designed to teach you about American politics. By the end of the semester you should be conversant in politics, able to derive your own opinions, and make sense of policy alternatives and their implications. Second, it is designed to develop your critical learning skills. You will improve your reasoning, your critical thinking, your writing, and your study habits.

Recognizing that students express their achievements in different ways, I will assess your progress using a variety of techniques. First, we will have three exams - two midterms and a final exam - that will test your ability to

synthesize course readings and lectures. Second, we will have writing assignments that utilize the D2L software that will require you to demonstrate research skills, writing skills, and analytical skills. Finally, there will be an expectation of class participation that will allow you to demonstrate your ability to express your ideas verbally.

As part of the Core of Common Studies at Marquette, this course will contribute to students' attainment of the three learning objectives associated with the Social and Behavioral Sciences portion of the Core. These read: "At the completion of core studies, the student will be able to (1) Understand central concepts, theories, and methods used to explain individual and social behavior in one of the social and cultural disciplines. (2) Use knowledge of social scientific methods to analyze examples of individual and social behavior. (3) Evaluate the applicability of social scientific knowledge for understanding individual and social behavior in particular contexts.

American Politics and Citizenship: I will not grade you on your citizenship, but I do expect all students to recognize the fundamental mission of Marquette University and to find ways outside of class to become a better, more engaged citizen. I especially encourage volunteer efforts in the local Milwaukee community. In the past students have worked as tutors, mentors, organizers, foreign language instructors, etc., and I encourage you to figure out what you may bring to the effort to improve our community.

Very Special Note about Academic Dishonesty: I am vigilant and unsparing when it comes to cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of the academic contract. Infractions will be dealt with swiftly and without mercy. If you are going to miss class or an assignment, the only way that I will be lenient is if you inform me ahead of time. There are no after the fact reprieves.

Grades

Midterm Exams - 15% each

Final Exam - 30%

Writing Assignments - 30%

Class Participation - 10%

Readings

Daily: New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, The Hill, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, McClatchy

Weekly: National Journal, Congressional Quarterly, The Economist, The New Yorker

Blogs: Political Wire (www.politicalwire.com), Talking Points Memo (Dem)(www.talkingpointsmemo.com), Andrew Sullivan (Rep) (andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com), Daily Kos (Dem) (www.dailykos.com), Drudge Report (Rep) (www.drudgereport.com), Huffington Post (Dem) (www.huffingtonpost.com).

Textbook: Marc Landy and Sidney Milkis, American Government: Balancing Democracy and Rights, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) available at Bookmarq and Sweeney's.

Course Schedule

- ñ January 15 (Michigan GOP Primary) - Introduction to Course, Landy and Milkis Chapter 1
- ñ January 17 - Political Culture - What does it mean to be American? Landy and Milkis Chapter 2, read the Declaration of Independence
- ñ (January 19, Nevada Caucus, SC GOP Primary)

- ñ January 22 - The Constitutional Debate, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 3, p. 77-109, Federalist Papers #10, 51
- ñ January 24 - The Constitution - Landy and Milkis, Chapter 3, p. 109-122,

and read the Constitution

- ñ (January 26 - South Carolina DEM Primary)

- ñ January 29 (FL Primary) - Political Parties and Elections - Origins and 19th Century, Landy and Milkis Chapter 11, p. 564-593
- ñ January 31 - Political Parties and Elections - 20th Century and beyond, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 11, p. 593-629.

- ñ February 5 (Tsunami Tuesday) - Political Participation, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 12, p. 630-661
- ñ February 7 - Rights Consciousness and Public Opinion, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 12, p. 661-684

- ñ February 12 - Political Change and Public Policy, the strange case of No Child Left Behind, Landy and Milkis, p. 686-692
- ñ February 14 - First Midterm Exam

- ñ February 19 - (WIS Primary) - American Political Development, 19th Century and Progressive Era, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 4, p. 126-158
- ñ February 21 - American Political Development, 20th Century and beyond, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 4, p. 158-180

- ñ February 26 - Federalism in American Politics, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 5, p. 190-238.
- ñ February 28 - Political Economy in the 19th Century and Progressive Era, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 5, p. 243-271

- ñ March 4 - Political Economy in the New Deal and beyond, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 5, p. 271-297
- ñ March 6 - Hurricane Katrina: Can the United States respond to crisis? Landy and Milkis, p. 300-304.

- ñ March 11 - Second Midterm Exam
- ñ March 13 - Spring Break

- ñ March 18 - Spring Break
- ñ March 20 - Spring Break

- ñ March 25 - The Origins and Development of Congress, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 7, p. 306-328
- ñ March 27 - The Professionalization of Congress, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 7, p. 328-349

- ñ April 1 - The Modern Congress, Landy and Milkis, p. 349-366
- ñ April 3 - The Origins and Development of the Presidency, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 8, p. 373-397

- ñ April 8 - The Modern Presidency, Landy and Milkis, p. 397-415
- ñ April 10 - The Presidency Reconsidered, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 8, p. 415-433

- ñ April 15 - The Origins and Development of the Judiciary, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 9, p. 439-464
- ñ April 17 - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 9, p. 464-496

- ñ April 22 - The Origins and Development of Bureaucracy in the United States, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 10, p. 501-528
- ñ April 24 - The Modern Bureaucracy, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 10, p. 528-551

- ñ April 29 - GWOT: Empire of Liberty or Merely Empire? Landy and Milkis,

p. 556-562

¶ May 1 - Wrap up and Conclusion, Landy and Milkis, Chapter 13.

¶ May 6 - Final Exam Scheduled, 1-3 pm.