American Politics  
POSC 2201-101  
Marquette University - Fall 2011  
MWF 11:00 – 11:50 am

Instructor: Dr. Karen Hoffman  
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Phone: 288-6842  
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Office hours: MWF 12:00-1:00, T 10:30-1:00

Description

The purpose of this class is to develop both an understanding of the problem of politics – how to create and maintain a just political community – and the fundamental concepts relevant to American politics and government. We begin the course by examining the principles and documents at the foundation of American governance. We extend our focus by evaluating the institutions that constitute the federal system. This section will emphasize the separation of powers, the three federal branches (the presidency, Congress, and the judiciary), the bureaucracy, and political parties. We then examine political behavior including voting, elections, interest group development, the media, and public opinion. In addition, students will gain a better understanding of current political controversies, the process by which these problems can be addressed by the American governmental system, and the citizens’ role in the process.

Books


Other readings posted on D2L

Course Requirements

3 exams 60%  
3 issue response essays 35%  
Attendance/participation 5%

Exams

There will be 3 exams. They will be non-cumulative. They will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Missed quizzes cannot be made up unless you have made arrangements PRIOR to the exam date – no exceptions. Missed exams will receive a 0.
Issue Response Essays

It is difficult to fully understand the concepts of the American political process without applying them to real-life problems and issues. Students are encouraged to follow political events by whatever means they choose. Current events will be discussed in class and students will be required to write three short essays on topics discussed in class. Specific guidelines will be distributed in class. Also, in addition to the hard copy of the essay that is turned in to the instructor, students are required to electronically submit their essays to turnitin.com. To access the site, go to turnitin.com. If you haven’t used it before you will need to create an account – the website will prompt you through the process. For those whose last names start with A-M, the class ID is 4216309. For last names N – Z, the class ID is 4216310. The password is America for everyone. Essays are marked down one letter grade for every day they are late.

Attendance/Participation

There is a direct correlation between attendance and grades – students who attend class almost always earn higher grades. Attendance is expected at each class, and a sign-in sheet will be provided at each class meeting. Do NOT sign in for classmates if they are absent. Signing someone else’s name in their absence will be treated as academic dishonesty. Since this is a large lecture class, it is not feasible to expect regular course participation; however, active participation when appropriate will be noted by the professor and factored into the final course grade.

The Marquette University Undergraduate Attendance Policy (revised in June 2011) states the following:

“Students are responsible for attending all class meetings for courses in which they are registered. Any absence, regardless of the reason, prevents students from getting the full benefit of the course and as such, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences, with the following exceptions:

1. Absences resulting from legal obligations (such as jury duty).
2. Absences resulting from university sanctioned activities and related travel.”

The Policy also states “the Marquette University Student Health Service does not provide documentation of illness, or of a visit to the Student Health Service. Likewise, college and other university offices (e.g., Office of the Dean, Counseling Center and Student Affairs) do not provide documentation of an absence on behalf of the student.”

In cases of excessive absences, the Marquette Undergraduate Attendance Policy will be followed. “For courses in which attendance is regularly taken, an instructor or college office may withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences and assign a grade of WA (Withdrawn-Excessive Absences)…Students who miss more than 6 classes in a 3 credit course that meets 50 minutes, 3 times per week, will be considered to have excessive absences and may be assigned a WA.”

Grades for attendance and participation are as follows:

| 0 to 1 absences: | 100% |
| 2 to 3 absences: | 95% |
| 3 to 4 absences: | 90% |
| 5-6 absences:    | 85% |
| 7 or more:       | WA  |
While the attendance/participation portion of the class grade is very small (5%), the consequences of missing 6 or more classes are enormous — you will receive a WA. Those who are involved in university sanctioned activities should submit a schedule of anticipated absences within the first 2 weeks of class, and also come talk to the instructor well in advance of any university sanctioned activity that will result in a missed assignment/quiz/exam.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Any incidents of academic dishonesty, such as cheating on tests or plagiarizing papers, will be punished to the fullest extent allowed by Marquette University policy.

**Grading Scale**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>88-92</td>
<td>A/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-87</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>78-82</td>
<td>B/C</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-77</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>69-72</td>
<td>C/D</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-68</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Course Schedule**

Mon., Aug. 29 - Introduction

**DO WE NEED GOVERNMENT?**

Wed., Aug. 31 – The Role of Government in our Time
   “In New York City, Trans Fat Ban is Working,” ABC News, John Stossel, 12/06/2006 (D2L)
   “Trans Fat Ban is ‘Nanny State’ Intrusion,” *Austin American Statesman*, 2009 (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 2 – The Purpose of Government
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 1

Mon., Sept. 5 – NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

**THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION**

Wed., Sept. 7 – The Founding
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 2
   The Declaration of Independence, Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 2, pp. 709-711
   The Articles of Confederation, Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 1, pp. 705-708

Fri., Sept. 9 – The Constitution and Separation of Powers
   *The Federalist* #51, Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 5, pp. 726-728

Mon., Sept. 12 – The Constitution and Conflict of Interests
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 2
   *The Federalist* #10, Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 4, pp. 722-725
POLITICAL CULTURE

Fri., Sept. 16 – Equality and Liberty
“Social Condition of the Anglo-Americans,” Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville, Vol. I, Ch. 3 (D2L)
“In Finland’s Footsteps” (D2L)
“Paradise for Families?” (D2L)

Mon. Sept. 19 – Individualism
“Of Individualism in Democratic Countries,” Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, Section 2, Chs. 2-4 (D2L)

Wed., Sept. 21 – One Theory of Liberty – the “Harm Principle”
From On Liberty, John Stuart Mill, 1859 (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 23 – NO CLASS, PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

Mon., Sept. 26 – The Public Good
“Tragedy of the Commons,” Garrett Hardin, 1968 (D2L)

Wed., Sept. 28 – Another Perspective on America’s Liberal Tradition
“Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America,” American Political Science Review, Rogers Smith, 1993 (D2L)

Fri., Sept. 30 – TEST #1

Mon., Oct. 3 – Thank You for Not Smoking - movie

Wed., Oct. 5 – Thank You for Not Smoking - movie

Fri., Oct. 7 – Thank You for Not Smoking – movie discussion

INSTITUTIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Mon., Oct. 10 – Congress - Overview
Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 6
U.S. Constitution, Article I, Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 3, pp. 712-714

Wed., Oct. 12 – Congress – The Electoral Connection
From “The Electoral Connection,” David Mayhew, 1974 (D2L)

Fri., Oct. 14 – Political Representation
“Speech to the Electors of Bristol,” Edmund Burke, 1774 (D2L)
Mon., Oct. 17 – Presidency
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 7
   U.S. Constitution, Article II, Kernell/Jacobson, Appendix 3, pp. 714-716

ESSAY #2 DUE

Wed., Oct. 19 – Presidential Power
   From Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents, Richard Neustadt, 1991 (D2L)
   Signing Statement to H.R. 2863 (D2L)

OCTOBER 20 – 23 – NO CLASS FALL BREAK

Mon., Oct. 24 – The Bureaucracy
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 8
   “Trump Reports Large Profit from Wollman Rink,” on D2L
   Bill O’Reilly on the FDA – video in class

Wed., Oct. 26 – The Judiciary
   Article III of the U.S. Constitution
   Federalist #78 (D2L)

Fri., Oct. 28 – The Courts and Policy
   Guest Lecture – Dr. Paul Nolette, Marquette University

Mon., Oct. 31 – TEST 2

AMERICAN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Wed., Nov. 2 – Public Opinion
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 10

Fri., Nov. 4 – Voting and Elections
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 11
   “Why Great Men are not Chosen Presidents,” James Bryce, The Commonwealth, 1888 (D2L)

Mon., Nov. 7 – Political Parties
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 12
   “The Tea Party: A State of Mind” (D2L)

Wed., Nov. 9 – Interest Groups
   Guest Lecture – Dr. McGee Young, Marquette University
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 13

Fri., Nov. 11 - The Media and Public Discourse
   Kernell/Jacobs, Chapter 14

Mon., Nov. 14 – The Media and Campaigns
   Campaign videos – in class

Wed., Nov. 16 – The Media and Campaign Finance
   “Transparent Elections after Citizens United,” Brennan Center for Justice, 2011 (D2L)
PUBLIC POLICY

Fri., Nov. 18 – Civil Rights
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 4
   Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896 (D2L)
   Brown v. Board of Education, 1954 (D2L)

ESSAY #3 DUE

Mon., Nov. 21 – Civil Rights
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 5
   Griswold v. Connecticut (D2L)
   Loving v. Virginia (D2L)

NOVEMBER 23 – 27 – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK

Mon., Nov. 28 – Constructing Policy
   Kernell/Jacobson, Chapter 15

Wed., Nov. 30 - Storming Heaven – Chs. 1-4

Fri., Dec. 2 – Storming Heaven – Chs. 5-9

Mon., Dec. 5 - Finish Storming Heaven

Wed., Dec. 7 - Majority Rule
   “The Unlimited Power of the Majority in the United States and its Consequences,” from Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville, Volume I, Ch. 15, 1835 (D2L)

Fri., Dec. 9 - Catch-up and Review