**POL 101 020**

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**SPRING 2024**

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30-10:45

Gordy C/CR

Tarpley 208

Phone: 770-720-5977

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**OFFICE HOURS**

Tuesday, Thursday: 2-5

**And by appointment**

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is a survey of topics in American government and politics. The objective is to establish a foundation upon which students can build an understanding of why our political structure, system, and values are as they are. With this foundation students can also begin to critically analyze political processes, issues and outcomes in the United States, and bring a basis of knowledge to future courses in the social sciences.

The course is composed of six main parts. Part I investigates the reasons for the existence of government, the nature of American politics, and the role the Constitution plays in shaping each. Part II focuses on the foundations of the American political system, namely the Constitution and the federal system it created. Part III is dedicated to the role that the people and groups play in the American political and governing process. Part IV examines the institutional arrangements of the three branches of government and analyzes how those arrangements make certain political outcomes more likely than others. Part V looks at the long and difficult process of balancing freedom, equality and order through the protection of civil liberties and the advancement of civil rights.

**COURSE CONDUCT**

Regretfully, we must discuss basic courtesy and professionalism in the workplace. In class you are expected to behave in ways that do not distract others, especially refrain from talking to one another, reading the newspaper or doing work for another class, using a laptop to check e-mail or search the internet. All of these activities are considered disruptive behavior. **Any student that engages in consistent disruptive behavior will be removed from the course and given an F**.

**Cell Phones**. Cell phones ***must be turned off and put away*** before a student enters class. I do not want to see ANY cell phones in my classroom, and do not think yourself clever to hide it in the pocket of a hoodie, or in a bag by your feet, I see all and know all. Ringing cell phones, texting or checking your cell phone during class are considered disruptive behaviors**. If I see a student using a cell phone, I will immediately give a pop quiz TO THE WHOLE CLASS. This will occur EACH AND EVERY time I see someone using a cell phone.**

**Laptops**. Students are expected to take notes by hand, and may only use a laptop if they have a documented disability that is on file with the Academic Support Office. The reason for this is studies show that you are more likely to remember information if you write it down. So if you are using a laptop, you eliminate an important part of the memorization process.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Cases of academic dishonesty are viewed as a serious violation of the Honor Code. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

* Cheating on quizzes or exams including sharing answers with students in other sections of the course.
* Including information in written assignments without proper citations.
* Copying homework assignments.

Any incidents of any type of academic dishonesty will result FIRST in a student receiving a ZERO for the assignment. Further incidents will result in a student receiving an F for the course.

**Academic Support Services**

“The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a documented disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Academic Support Office (ASO).

Reinhardt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Therefore, if you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Academic Support Office (ASO). ASO is located in the basement of Lawson Building. Phone is 7707205567. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper ASO letters/forms.”

**REQUIRED TEXT**

***The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics*, 15th Edition** Kenneth Janda, Jeffrey M. Berry and Jerry Goldman. (Referred to as Democracy on Course Schedule). New York: Wadsworth/Cengage. 2022. Digital editions or rentals are fine. Authors have a companion website: uspolitics.org

**GRADED REQUIREMENTS**

**(1) Exams**. There are three (3) exams scheduled throughout the semester including the final. The third exam will be given during finals week, but it IS NOT cumulative. The exact dates of the exams are on the course schedule (see below). The dates of the exams will not change, even if we fall behind in the schedule.

**(2)** **Reading Quizzes**. On certain days, laid out in the course schedule below there will be a *multiple choice quiz* on the reading for that week will be conducted in class. The *lowest quiz grade will be dropped*, if you miss a quiz due to an absence, that score will be dropped first. You quiz grade will include the grade for all cell phone use induced pop quizzes.

**(3) Formal Debates**. Students will be divided into groups and will be responsible for presenting one side of a current controversial issue. Each student will take part in one debate. The initial reading for the debates are on Eagle Web.

*Group Size*: The size of the groups will depend on the class size but will consist of at least two individuals per side.

 *Debate Format*: Each group will have ten (10) minutes to present its argument and then five (5) minutes to respond to the other sides’ argument. The rest of the class will then be given a chance to ask questions and make comments to each group.

*Additional Sources*: In preparing for the debate, you must cite at least **five** (5) sources in addition to the issue reading.

*Debate PowerPoint:* Each group must have a PowerPoint Presentation that they email to me on the day of the debate.

*Debate Tips*: Your goal is to persuade the class to side with your position. Whether or not they do will depend on the strength of your argument, the strength of your criticisms of the opposing argument, and how well you present your argument. The clarity of your presentation, how well you speak, and how confident and comfortable you look while speaking are all important. All members of the groups are not required to speak, perhaps the group decides it is best to have a single spokesperson, ultimately the choice is up to the group. Either way the WHOLE group will be graded, in part, on the strength of the presentation style of whoever presents.

If anyone in your group reads directly from a prepared statement your group will automatically receive a failing grade for the presentation. In short, **DO NOT READ!**

**(5) Debate Questions.** On the days that we have debates each student who is not participating in the debate must come to class with one TYPED question on the debate topic. The student is not required to ask the question but is encouraged to do so. Since the purpose of the debate questions is to foster lively and relevant class discussion which requires students to have read and thought about the issue, ***late debate questions will also not be accepted***. For the same reason*, untyped questions will not be accepted.*

**(6) Attendance and Participation.** Since this is an introductory course, some of the class sessions will be lecture driven. However, there will be ample opportunity for participation. Each student is expected to read and be prepared to discuss each class day’s reading thoughtfully and in depth. Although some lecturing is necessary, our collective interaction is the best way for all of us to learn. **Students will be graded on their contributions to class discussions, and their responses to questions posed to them**. Attendance is required and excessive absences can result in a failing grade. Obviously, if you miss class, you cannot participate, so any missed class will probably affect your final grade negatively. In fact the single best predictor of a student’s grade in any course is the number of classes attended. Despite this, each student is given three absences, no questions asked, without penalizing the final grade, beyond that documentation must be provided for an absence to be considered excused. Arriving late is a disruption to the entire class and undermines our goal of learning. Therefore TWO tardy attendances equals ONE unexcused absence from class.

**BASIS FOR FINAL GRADE**

Exams (3) 45%

Reading Quizzes 20%

Formal Debate 15%

Debate Questions 10%

Attendance and Participation 10%

### GRADING SCALE

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

65-69 = D

64 or less = F

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Tuesday Jan. 9: Course Introduction

 Reading: none

Thursday Jan. 11: Why We Have Government

Reading: *Democracy chapter 1*

 **Reading Quiz 1 Distributed (first one is a take home, rest are in class)**

Tuesday Jan 16: Freedom, Order and Equality

Reading: None

 **READING QUIZ 1 (Take home due)**

Thursday Jan 18: Majoritarian versus Pluralist Democracy

Reading: *Democracy chapter 2*

Tuesday Jan 23: The Constitution

 Reading: *Democracy chapter 3*

 **READING QUIZ 2 (Democracy chapter 3)**

Thursday Jan. 25: The Constitution II

 Reading: none

Tuesday Jan.30: Federalism

Reading: *Democracy ch 4*

Thursday Feb. 1: **Exam One Review Jeopardy Game**

 Reading: none

Tuesday Feb 6: Public Opinion and Political Socialization

 Reading: Ch 5 (NOT ON FIRST EXAM)

Thursday Feb. 8: **EXAM ONE**

Tuesday Feb 13: Public Opinion and Political Socialization II

Reading: Democracy chapter 5

Thursday Feb. 15: The Media

 Reading*: Democracy chapter 6*

Tuesday Feb. 20: Participation and Voting I

Reading: *Democracy chapter 7*

Thursday Feb 22: Participation and Voting II

Reading: *none*

**READING QUIZ 3 (chapter 7)**

Tuesday Feb 27: **Debate 1: Should the U.S. have more gun control laws?**

 Reading: Resources on Canvas

Thursday Feb 29: Political Parties

 Reading: *Democracy chapter 8*

 **READING QUIZ 4**

**SPRING BREAK FROM MONDAY MARCH 4 TO FRIDAY MARCH 8**

Tuesday March 12: Campaigns and Elections

 Reading: *Democracy chapter 9*

Thursday March 14: **Debate 2: Should the Electoral College Be Abolished?**

 Reading: ***Check LINKS ON CANVAS***

Tuesday March 19: **Exam Two Review Jeopardy Game**

Thursday March 21: **EXAM TWO**

Tuesday March 26: **Debate 3: Should Recreational Drugs Be Legalized?**

 Reading: *Sources to get you started on Canvas*

Thursday March 28: The Presidency and The Bureaucracy

 Reading: *Democracy chapter 12 AND 13*

Tuesday April 2: The Courts

 Reading: *Democracy chapter 14*

 **READING QUIZ 5**

Tuesday April 9: **Debate 4: Should the Supreme Court Have Term Limits?**

 **Reading: Resources to get started on Canvas**

Thursday April 11: Order and Civil Liberties I

 Reading: *Democracy chapter 15*

Tuesday April 16: Order and Civil Liberties II

 Reading: *none*

**READING QUIZ 6**

Thursday April 18: **Debate 5: Should Abortion Be Restricted?**

Reading: *On Canvas*

Tuesday April 23**:** Exam Three Review Jeopardy

Reading: *none*

**EXAM 3 THURSDAY APRIL 25 at 11:15 AM IN REGULAR CLASSROOM**

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| **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CONNECTION TO PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY LEARNING OUTCOMES** |
| **Course Learning Outcome** | **Assessment Method** | **Program Learning Outcome** | **University Learning Outcome** |
| 1) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for, and purposes of, government.  | Assessed through exams, writing assignments, and class discussion. | Domain I: Substantive knowledge: Students will demonstrate substantive knowledge of basic political concepts and systems. | Domain III Self Society and culture: 1. Knowledge of the traditions of Western Civilization and their global context2. Knowledge of the diversity of societies and cultures |
| 2) Students will demonstrate how the structures, institutions and processes we choose to govern us influence political outcomes.  | Assessed through exams, writing assignments and formal debates. | Domain II: Critical thinking and reading and writing: Students will demonstrate critical thinking of about political concepts and systems using evidence, logic and reasoning. | Domain II; Critical Thinking and Inquiry: 1. Integrative, critical thinking and inquiry-based learning using evidence, logic, reasoning, and calculation.2. Knowledge of various research methodologies |
| 3) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the methods that political scientists use to answer questions about the political world.  | Assessed through exams, writing assignments and class discussion. | Domain II: Critical thinking and reading and writing | Domain II; Critical Thinking and Inquiry: 1. Integrative, critical thinking and inquiry-based learning 2. Knowledge of various research methodologies |
| 4) Students will identify the variables that have influenced, and continue to influence, the dynamic trends in American government and politics.  | Assessed through exams, debates and discussion | DOMAIN III: ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICSStudents will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of active citizenship and an interest in national and global politics. | Domain IV: Values and Ethics: 3. Stewardship and civic engagement, coupled with the ability to work with other others. |