Course Outline for Introduction to American Government (POSC 100)

California State University Fullerton, Spring 2014 Semester (January 22-May 16)

Time: M, W, F 10:00-10:50 am
Place: Mihaylo Hall, 1502

Professor William Julius, PhD

Office# University Hall, UH 547

Office Hours:
M, W, F 11:30 am-1:15 pm.

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Course Summary

Introduction to American Government and Politics is a survey course with three main goals. First, basic principles of politics and government, prerequisite to thinking clearly and critically about politics and government should be mastered. Second, the student should become familiar with, and gain an appreciation for, the purposes and institutions of American government. Third; with these tools in hand, the student can begin to study and analyze and discuss public policy and policymaking, the primary function of government. Upon completion of the course, students should have a basic understanding of the major institutions and functions of the United States national government and California State government.

Required Texts:


3. Daily subscription to the Los Angeles Times (Strongly recommended).¹

¹ The Los Angeles Times is probably the most convenient source to monitor current events, at both the national and state levels. There are other good newspapers & on-line sources that can be substituted. The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall-Street Journal and CNN.com are all good sources to keep track of major national events in the political & policymaking processes. Local newspapers, local newscasts, the Orange County Register, FOX news & Salon.com are not good sources to monitor current events.
Grading:

1. Mid-term exam: 30% of grade
2. Participation & attendance in the Townhall Meeting Project: 30% of grade
3. Final exam: 30% of grade
4. Classroom attendance & participation: 10% of grade.

*I will use the plus/minus grading option in assigning grades*

Reading Assignments: ALL reading assignments must be complete prior to the week when the material will be discussed in class (e.g., Chapters three and four of *America’s-New Democracy*, by Morris Fiorina, Paul Peterson et al., plus the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution must be read prior to class on Monday, January 27th). READING A RECOMMENDED DAILY NEWS SOURCE (i.e., *the New York Times*, *the Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, either on paper or on-line, or CNN.com/politics) is a class requirement. YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON MAJOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS. Failure to demonstrate familiarity with major national and international current events will result in a penalty of two participation/attendance points. Moreover, you will be tested on major current events that occur over the course of the semester.

Testing:

The mid-term and final examinations for Introduction to American Government will consist of twenty-five short-answer questions and two essay questions (approximately four paragraphs each). Assimilation of raw information and the ability to integrate information and think clearly and critically about government and politics are tested. One large Blue or Green Book should be sufficient to complete the exam, which will be drawn equally from the readings and lectures. *Note*: progressive grade improvement (e.g. mid-term: D; Policymaking Paper: B; Final: A) will be taken into account for final grades. Constant, progressive grade improvement will be rewarded with a one-half letter grade boost. Failure to progressively improve will *not* be penalized. An unexcused absence on the day of an exam will result in an automatic zero credit for that exam.

***If you are a student who requires testing assistance through the Office of Disabled Students Services*, you must submit your DSS paper to me at least ten days prior to your mid-term exam. Friendly e-mail reminders to submit your exam to DSS are also appreciated.
The American democracy Project: Townhall Meeting

This semester, instead of a traditional term paper project, this section of POSC 100 (M,W,F, 10 am) will participate in the American Democracy Project Townhall Meeting event. This will be a fairly new experiment in political science education, designed to encourage public policy discourse and civic engagement among students. Participation in this crucial event is mandatory and will comprise 30% of your grade. The student’s involvement shall include submitting an Annotated List of Research-Sources (directions for which will be posted on Titanium), and attendance at the Townhall Meeting (both the plenary session and break-out group discussions (from 1-4 pm on Friday April 25. All students are required to sign in to the Townhall prior to 1:15 pm and must sign out no earlier than 4:00 pm on April 25 in order to receive credit for this course. The Townhall meeting will take place at the Residence Life Space (near the new student dormitories, and nearby classrooms. We will discuss this project further in class.

Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism and cheating on mid-term and final exams are serious academic offences and compromise the integrity of the course. Therefore, these violations will be dealt with harshly. Cheating on exams and verbatim plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for further disciplinary actions.  

Stress Management

Doing serious, university academic work can be very stressful. The most important measure you can take to reduce stress is to engage in disciplined, realistic time-management. If you get to a point in the semester, where you are overwhelmed, there are helpful resources on campus to ensure your mental health needs are met. Please notify your instructor if you are in this situation. Please also contact the Counseling and Psychological Services Office on campus at (657) 278-3040 to receive help in this regard. California State University, Fullerton is committed to providing a healthy learning environment for our students

Emergency Procedures

Occasionally, there are campus emergencies that arise. It is important to be aware of your surroundings, and understand what to do in the case of an emergency. Most importantly be aware of the nearest emergency exit to your usual seat. In case a fire

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2 Minor errors in research documentation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will normally result in a lower grade on the Policy-making Paper.
alarm sounds, exit the room using stairs only and proceed to the nearest emergency evacuation area at least ten yards from the building. In case of an active shooter, we will be required to shelter in place, in our classroom, until notified to exit. In case of an earthquake, we will wait for notification and then exit the building. Be sure also to promptly comply with any emergency preparedness drills that occur throughout the semester.

**Rules of Classroom Conduct.**

The primary rules of classroom conduct are:

- Wait to be called upon before speaking
- All electronic devices should be turned off during class, with the exception of laptop computers, **which may be used only for note-taking.**

**Disability Accommodations Policy**

If you are a student with a disability, requiring special test-taking accommodations, I should have your paperwork from the Office of Disability Support-Services **ten days prior to any exam you are going to take through the Office of Disability Support Services.** Remember the disability evaluation process can take as much as one month, so be sure to plan ahead.

**Course Schedule**

I. The United States Political System

**Week One** (January 22-24): **Fundamental Concepts in American government & politics**

*Reading:* Fiorina & Peterson et al. chapters 1 & 2.

**Week Two** (January 27-31): **The Founding of the Republic**

*Reading:* Fiorina & Peterson: chapters 3 & 4; the Declaration of Independence (Fiorina & Peterson, Appendix I); and The U.S. Constitution (Fiorina & Peterson, Appendix II).

**Week Three** (February 3-7): **Representation**
II. America's Core Government Institutions

**Week Four** (February 10-14): **American Governmental Institutions**


**Reading:** Fiorina & Peterson chapters 2 & 3 (review).

**No class on Presidents Day: Monday, February 17.**

**Week Five** (February 19-21): **Branches of Government & begin Congress**

**Reading:** Fiorina & Peterson, chapters 2 (review) & 10.

**Week Six** (February 24-28) **Congress cont.**

**Reading:** chapter 10 (review)

**Week Seven** (March 3-7): **Congress cont.**

***Mid-Term Exam: Wednesday, March 5***

***Bring Blue Book & a blue or black pen***

**Reading:** Fiorina & Peterson, chapter 10 (review).

**Week Eight** (March 10-14) **the U.S. Presidency**

**Reading:** Fiorina & Peterson, chapter 11.

**Week Nine** (March 17-21): **The Executive Bureaucracy**

**Reading:** Fiorina & Peterson, chapter 12.

**Week Ten:** (March 24-28): **The U.S. Legal System and Judiciary**

**Reading:** Fiorina & Peterson, chapters 13 & 14

**Spring Recess:** (March 31-April 4).
Townhall Meeting Policy Research Annotated List of Sources due Monday, April 7. I must receive a paper copy of your Annotated List of Sources prior to the end of class on Monday, April 7. I will post instructions regarding what is required in your Annotated List of Sources.

Week Twelve (April 7-11): Civil Liberties and the Judiciary Cont.
Reading: Fiorina & Peterson, chapters 13 & 14 (review).

III. Political Institutions

Week Thirteen (April 14-18): Political Parties and Elections
Reading: Fiorina & Peterson, chapters 8 & 9.

***Townhall Meeting: Friday, April 25, 1-4 pm in the Student Residence Life Space (Quad of the new student dormitories): Attendance is mandatory (ALL STUDENTS MUST SIGN IN NO LATER THAN 1:15 PM & SIGN OUT NO EARLIER THAN 4:00 PM IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE.

Week Fourteen (April 21-25): Interest Groups
Reading: Fiorina & Peterson chapter 9 (review, especially pp 217-231).

Week Fifteen (April 28-May 2) Mass Communications Media
Reading: Fiorina & Peterson, chapter 6.

IV. California Government

Week Fifteen (May 5-9) California State and Local Government

***Final Exam: Friday, May 16, 9:30-11:20 am.