READINGS


COURSE OBJECTIVES

To provide the student with basic knowledge of the theories, institutions, and processes of American government.

To develop the student’s writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills through testing, in-class discussion, and research projects and reports.

To encourage the student to actively monitor, critique and participate in the American political system.

ASSIGNMENTS

Required text and readings as assigned
Extra Credit Quizzes (10) -
Two exams
Final exam

GRADING

Exam 1 25%
Exam 2 25%
Final Exam 30%
Quizzes 20%
100%

QUIZZES ARE BASED ON THE PREVIOUS WEEK'S READINGS/NOTES. THERE ARE NO QUIZ MAKEUPS. YOUR NEXT QUIZ WILL COUNT TWICE. NOTE: SOME QUIZ QUESTIONS MAY RETURN ON THE EXAM!
COURSE OUTLINE

I  Introduction to Political Theory
   A. Basic Definitions and Theories
      1. What is politics?
      2. Defining Power: Who is in control?
   READINGS: Chapter 1 pp. 1-10, Chapter 4

   B. Roots of the Republic
      1. Brief history of the founding of the American political system
      2. History and interpretation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights
   READINGS: Chapter 2

      3. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties - Case Study: The Civil Rights Movement
   READINGS: Chapter 16 and Chapter 17

EXAM #1

II Institutions and the Constitution
   A. Federalism
      1. Historical development of US federalism
      2. Recent developments/court cases in state/federal relations
   READINGS: Chapter 3

   B. Presidency
      1. Constitutional powers
      2. The realities of Presidential power
         a. Presidential management of the bureaucracy and public opinion
         b. Presidential character
   READINGS: Chapter 10 and Chapter 13

   C. Bureaucracy
      1. Historical development
      2. Bureaucratic power and policy making
      3. Interest Groups in American Government
   READINGS: Chapter 14 and Chapter 7

EXAM #2

   B. Congress
      1. Constitutional powers and duties
      2. The legislative process
      3. The budget process
   READINGS: Chapter 11 and Chapter 12

   C. Judiciary
1. American theory of justice
2. Federal court system
3. The Supreme Court - guarding the Constitution, making policy

READINGS: Chapter 15

III Process
   A. Elections and political parties
      1. Historical trends
      2. Role of political parties today
   READINGS: Chapter 8
   B. The electoral process
      1. Voting behavior
      2. Political campaigning
         a. power of the media
         b. campaign finance
   READINGS: Chapter 9

FINAL EXAM