POL 010-020 - AMERICAN GOVERNMENT - 3.0 credit hours
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Fall 2014 – MWF: 10:00-10:50 A.M. – AF 200

Professor                  Dr. Glenn W. Richardson Jr.
Office                    304 Old Main A Wing
Office Hours          11:00 M-F; hours subject to change as announced
Phone                      610-683-4450
e-mail                   richards@kutztown.edu
Class homepage     http://faculty.kutztown.edu/richards/010/010.html

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to introduce students to the essential elements of government and political life in the United States. We will be focused on the institutions, processes, people, and ideas upon which American politics is based, and will consider many of the challenges and opportunities faced by a free and self-governing people. Our journey will include past, present and future explorations, as we seek to engage our political heritage, our current environment, and our legacy to generations yet unborn. Class meetings will include lectures, discussions, and various activities. Assignments include three mid-term examinations and a final. Additional points may be available for completion of a range of in-class exercises and take-home projects, as announced in class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

• Provide students with a factual knowledge of the intellectual origins, key features and ongoing evolution of the institutions and processes of politics in the United States (such as the separate branches of the federal government, federalism, campaigns and elections, political parties, interest groups and the mass media) as demonstrated by proficiency in fixed-response examination.

• Help students learn fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories pertaining to American government and politics, and to apply them to the current political environment, as it unfolds during the Fall of 2014, as demonstrated by proficiency in fixed-response examination and in-class assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to complete three mid-term examinations, a final examination, and assignments and quizzes as announced in class.

GRADING:

Points will be awarded on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Points Available</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class assignments</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>Friday, September 19</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
<td>Friday, October 17</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam III</td>
<td>Friday, November 14</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Monday, December 8</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>August 25-December 8</td>
<td>100</td>
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Students who have shown improvement over the course of the semester, and those who have participated in class discussions may be given the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases. “Plus” and “minus” grades may also be used to the benefit of the student (a score of 78 might earn a “C+” or “B-,” for example, but a score of 80 or 81 would not be lowered to a “B-“).  

ASSIGNMENTS:

Examinations

There are four examinations scheduled during the course of the semester (three midterms and a final). The exams will emphasize multiple-choice questions, but may also include short answer and essay questions (students will be notified ahead of time if this is the case). Examinations will be administered online via D2L using the Respondus Lockdown Browser. You need to download the browser to your computer. It is located at <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=678442371>.

Exam material will be drawn directly from the class readings, discussions, lectures and headlines from the New York Times pertaining to Congress, the president, the Supreme Court. A limited number of free copies of the newspaper are available on campus; discount print and electronic subscriptions are available to KU students.

The textbook website <http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/0073379069/student_view0/index.html> offers a number of resources that you may find helpful in your preparations for examinations, including chapter summaries with key terms, flashcards and practice quizzes.

Midterm examinations are scheduled for September 19, October 17, and November 14. The final exam is scheduled for December 8.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:

This course uses Desire 2 Learn. A D2L student tutorial is available online at <http://www.kutztown.edu/academics/lt/ltc/KU_D2L_Student_Orientation/index.html>.

Routine class related communication should be posted to the “Questions or Comments?” Discussion Board for the class on D2L. If you wish to send a message to me personally, you must address it to my e-mail address (richards@kutztown.edu). Please include a recognizable subject line. Doing so allows me to instantly recognize your message as important and distinguishes it from the many messages from strange e-mail addresses that arrive on a daily basis, and facilitates a prompt response from me. If you send me an e-mail message and do not receive a prompt response, please do not hesitate to send a follow-up. You might want to try a different subject line in case the previous subject tripped the spam filter. While I try to answer each e-mail, it can be easy
to accidentally overlook any particular message, and on occasion messages may be improperly
cleaned by spam filters, etc.

A separate web page has also been set up for this class. Important course information
will be posted there along with links to other relevant web sites. The URL is:

<http://faculty.kutztown.edu/richards/010/010.html>.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students are responsible for class attendance, and for all materials discussed and
assigned during class. There will be no make-up assignments for unexcused absences. Excused
absences include but are not limited to illness, scheduled university-related activities, death in
the family, jury duty, and impassable roads.

You must notify the instructor (in person, by phone, or via e-mail) before an absence.
Excuses must also be submitted to the instructor in writing before make-up assignments will be
accepted.

Students who are unable to complete an assignment for legitimate reasons that do not
qualify as excused under university guidelines, and who notify the instructor before the
assignment is due, may, at the discretion of the instructor, turn in late assignments for partial
credit.

In addition, at the instructor's discretion, students may be given the opportunity to
complete a supplemental assignment. Typically, the amount of work involved in supplemental
assignments would be disproportionate to the credit that can be earned (these policies are
designed to discourage late assignments). If you have any doubt at all about your ability to
complete an assignment you should notify the instructor in advance "just in case." Failure to do
this will assure that you will not receive credit for missed assignments.

NOTE: Make-up tests and assignments are allowed only at the sole discretion of the instructor
and may not be scored and returned before the end of the semester. Make-up tests and
assignments may differ from those given in class in terms of both content and form. Make-up
examinations will be administered at 11:00 A.M. on Thursday, September 25, at 11:00 A.M. on
Thursday, October 23, and on Thursday, November 20. Signed, written requests for make-up
exams must be submitted to the instructor before taking a make-up examination or submitting a
late assignment. Late penalties for failure to notify the instructor of a missed exam or assignment
will apply as described below.

LATE ASSIGNMENT PENALTIES:

Assignments turned in on the day they are due but after assignments were collected in
class will face a five-percent penalty. Each additional late day will accrue an additional ten
percent deduction. Electronic submission of assignments will not be accepted except at the
discretion of and by the invitation of the instructor.

NOTE: If a student misses an exam or assignment due date, late assignment penalties apply for
each day the student fails to notify the instructor and discuss a make-up exam or submission of
late work.
CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Students are expected to observe all rules of proper classroom conduct. In order to insure an appropriate environment conducive to learning there are two rules governing behavior in the classroom that you must be aware of:

- Use of electronic devices of any kind in class without the instructor's permission is prohibited. Students with special needs should discuss accommodations with the instructor. Students who distract others or the instructor by “surfing,” “tweeting,” “texting,” “sexting,” “facebooking” or otherwise engaging in electronic communication of any kind may be penalized by having points deducted from the total number of points they have earned in the course.

- Please refrain from talking, eating, leaving your cell phone ringers on, or other disruptive activity during class. Even one or two conversations quickly create distractions for other students and the instructor.

- Please do not leave class early. If you must do so, tell the instructor before hand and arrange to sit near the door so your exit will be less noticeable.

Serious violations of these rules may result in a request that the offending individual(s) leave the classroom. Additional grading penalties (up to a half-letter grade for first-time offenders and a full letter-grade for recidivists) may be imposed at the discretion of the instructor.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

If you have already disclosed a disability to the Disability Services Office (215 Stratton Administration Building) and are seeking accommodations, please feel free to speak with me privately so that I may assist you. If you have an injury sustained during military service including PTSD or TBI, you are also eligible for accommodations under the ADA and should contact the Disability Services Office.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC ETHICS AND HONESTY:

If a student has plagiarized or cheated in a course, the instructor may impose sanctions upon the student up to and including the penalty of failure in the course with a grade of “F”.

Plagiarism is stealing and passing off (the ideas, words, work, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, computer programs or other products of another) as one’s own. In short, it is using a created production without crediting the source. The surest way to avoid plagiarism is to provide proper citation to all works quoted directly or otherwise indirectly borrowed from. Proper citations include the title, date, and author of the work. If you are not familiar with the formatting of bibliographic citations, please consult a writer’s style guide or manual. An excellent online guide to citation can be found on the internet at:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Cheating includes (but is not limited to) providing or receiving unauthorized assistance during exams, an attempt by one or more students to use unauthorized information in the taking of an exam; or to knowingly assist another student in obtaining or using unauthorized materials. Further specific delineation of academically dishonest behavior and Kutztown University’s academic dishonesty policies can be found in the student handbook The Key 2014-2015 (pp. 52-53)
available online at http://thekey.kutztown.edu/. If you have any doubts as to whether particular behavior would amount to cheating, please ask the instructor for clarification. Ignorance of the rules is not a valid defense.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

Class meetings will be comprised of introductory and concluding comments from the instructor, lectures, questions, discussions, and activities involving the whole class. For the class to be most successful, each student must come to each class prepared. That involves reading, studying, analyzing and often re-reading and re-analyzing materials before class. Much of what is said in the class, both by students and by the instructor, will make little sense to the unprepared student.

You must also try to resist the temptation to discount the comments of your fellow students. The course is designed to give students the opportunity to articulate key concepts and criticisms. Many of the important statements in the class will be made by students. It is essential that you give the utmost respect to your classmates.

Also, keep in mind that in no case should any of the comments in the class be taken or directed personally. A college classroom is perhaps the singular place in our society where people gather for the purpose of giving deliberate and reasoned consideration to a wide range of views, including many of great controversy. Indeed, I encourage you to present views you may not necessarily agree with in order to explore and develop relevant themes or issues.

TEXTBOOKS:

There is one (1) required textbook:


The textbook is available at the KU Bookstore in the David E. McFarland Student Union Building. An e-book is available for purchase from the publisher at:


You may choose to either “rent” online access to the book for a limited period of time or purchase as downloadable copy with a lifetime license.

Students are also required to read the *New York Times* for stories pertaining to Congress, the president, the Supreme Court.
READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE:
August 25-29

INTRODUCTION

POL 010 Course Syllabus.

THE INTELLECTUAL ROOTS
OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

“Political Thinking and Political Culture: Becoming a Responsible Citizen.” (Ch. 1 in Patterson).
“The Declaration of Independence” (pp. 606-09 in Patterson) or online at: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>.

WEEK TWO:
September 1-5

LABOR DAY: Monday, September 1
(University Closed)
Calendar Adjustment Day: Follow Monday Schedule Tuesday, September 2.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

“Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self-Government.” (Ch. 2 in Patterson).

WEEK THREE:
September 8-12

Federalist No. 10 by James Madison (pp. 628-32 in Patterson) or online at:
<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp>.
“The Constitution of the United States of America” (pp. 610-27 in Patterson) or online at:

WEEK FOUR:
September 15-19

FEDERALISM

“Federalism: Forging a Nation.” (Ch. 3 in Patterson).
James Madison, Federalist No. 51 (pp. 633-35 in Patterson) or online at
<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed51.asp>.

*** EXAM I: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 ***
WEEK FIVE:
September 22-26

CIVIL LIBERTIES

“Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights.” (Ch. 4 in Patterson).

WEEK SIX:
September 29-October 3

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

“Civil Rights: Struggling Toward Fairness.” (Ch. 5 in Patterson).

WEEK SEVEN:
October 6-10

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH I

“Congress: Balancing National Goals and Local Interests.” (Ch. 11 in Patterson).

WEEK EIGHT:
October 13-17

COLUMBUS DAY: Monday, October 13
(Classes do no meet)

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH II

** ** EXAM II: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17 ** **

WEEK NINE:
October 20-24

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH I

“The Presidency: Leading the Nation.” (Ch. 12 in Patterson)

WEEK TEN:
October 27-31

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH II

“The Federal Bureaucracy: Administering the Government.” (Ch. 13 in Patterson).

THE JUDICIARY


WEEK ELEVEN:
November 3-7
PUBLIC OPINION

“Public Opinion and Political Socialization: Shaping the People’s Voice.” (Ch. 6 in Patterson).

WEEK TWELVE:
November 10-14

THE MEDIA

“The News Media: Communicating Political Images.” (Ch. 10 in Patterson).

* * * EXAM III: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14 * * *

WEEK THIRTEEN:
November 17-21

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

“Political Parties, Candidates and Campaigns: Defining the Voter’s Choice.” (Ch. 8 in Patterson).

WEEK FOURTEEN:
November 24-28

INTEREST GROUPS

“Interest Groups: Organizing for Influence.” (Ch. 9 in Patterson).

THANKSGIVING RECESS
Begin: Tuesday, November 25 at close of classes
Ends: Monday, December 1 at 8:00 AM

WEEK FIFTEEN:
December 1-5

PUBLIC POLICY

“Economic and Environmental Policy: Contributing to Prosperity.” (Ch. 15 in Patterson).
“Welfare and Education Policy: Providing for Personal Security and Need.” (Ch. 16 in Patterson).
“Foreign Policy: Protecting the American Way.” (Ch. 17 in Patterson).

WEEK SIXTEEN:
December 8-12

FINAL EXAMINATION
* * * MONDAY DECEMBER 8: 11:00 A.M. * * *

PLEASE NOTE: If a class examination is scheduled or a class assignment is due on a day when classes are cancelled, the exam will be given or the assignment will be due on the next day classes do meet.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS ANNOUNCED IN CLASS OR ELECTRONICALLY.