POL 010-012 - AMERICAN GOVERNMENT - 3.0 credit hours
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Summer II 2008 – MTWH: 4:30-6:35 PM – Graduate Center 2

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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 two 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 an awareness of the 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 develop critical reasoning, reading, analysis, and communication skills and to apply them to the current political environment, as it unfolds during the summer of 2008, as demonstrated by proficiency in fixed-response examination.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to complete two midterm 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>Exam I</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 16</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 29</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Thursday, August 7</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>July 7-August 7</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>F</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.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Examinations**

There are three in-class examinations scheduled during the course of the semester (two midterms and a final). Exams will emphasize multiple-choice questions, but may also include short answer and essay questions. Multiple choice items will be graded by optical scan. You must bring your own scantron forms to class. Failure to do so will result in a 10-point penalty and your exam will not be returned before the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to correct any erroneously scored items or improperly recorded scores with correct values; under no circumstances will any misscored items be counted as correct if any erasure marks appear on the item in question after scantrons have been returned to students. Exam material will be drawn directly from the class readings, discussions, lectures and current events. (You are also responsible for monitoring major stories in the mainstream media pertaining to Congress, the president, and the Supreme Court.)

The textbook website [http://wps.ablongman.com/long_oconnor_ag_8/0,10638,2174624-00.html](http://wps.ablongman.com/long_oconnor_ag_8/0,10638,2174624-00.html) offers a number of resources that you may find helpful in your preparations for examinations, including pre-tests, post-tests, chapter summaries and chapter exams.

Midterm examinations are scheduled for July 16 and July 29. The final exam is scheduled for Thursday, August 7. **Use of electronic devices during examinations is strictly prohibited.** Any such use may result in a failing grade for the examination. All hats and other headgear must be taken off during examination. Failure to do so upon request may result in a failing grade for the examination.

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:**

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 screened by spam filters, etc. **Please note that electronic submission of assignments is not acceptable except at the discretion of the instructor.**

A 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>.

This course uses Blackboard. A link to a “Quick Start Guide for Students” is included on the course homepage.
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 will not be 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. The instructor reserves the right to schedule any and all make-up exams during the final examination period.

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 is not permitted in class. Students with special needs should discuss accommodations with the instructor.

- 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. 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.
POLICY ON ACADEMIC ETHICS AND HONESTY:

If a student has plagiarized or cheated in a course, the instructor may (in consultation with the Department Chairperson and the Dean) impose sanctions upon the student up to and including dismissal from the course with a grade of “F”. The student forfeits all privileges of withdrawal from the course.

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.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html

Guides for citing online materials specifically can be found on the web at:

http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/online.htm

or

http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite6.html

Cheating includes (but is not limited to) an attempt by one or more students to use unauthorized information in the taking of an exam; or knowingly to assist another student in obtaining or using unauthorized materials. Further specific delineation of academically dishonest behavior can be found in The Key: Student Handbook 2002-2003 (p. 52). 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 if not most 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.
Students are also required to read national news sources (available online) for stories pertaining to American government. Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for being familiar with major stories pertaining to Congress, the president, and the Supreme Court.

**READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

**WEEK ONE:**

**July 7-10**

**INTRODUCTION**

POL 010-012 Course Syllabus.

**THE INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC**

“The Political Landscape.” (Ch. 1 in O'Connor and Sabato).
“The Declaration of Independence” (in O’Connor and Sabato).

**THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

“The Constitution” (Ch. 2 in O’Connor and Sabato).
_Federalist No. 10_ by James Madison (in O’Connor and Sabato).

**FEDERALISM**

“Federalism.” (Ch. 3 in O’Connor and Sabato).
James Madison, _Federalist No. 51_ (p. 555 in O’Connor and Sabato or online at <www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed51.htm>).

**WEEK TWO:**

**July 14-17**

**LIMITED GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL LIBERTIES**

“Civil Liberties.” (Ch. 4 in O’Connor and Sabato).

**CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUALITY**

“Civil Rights.” (Ch. 5 in O’Connor and Sabato).

*** EXAM I: WEDNESDAY, JULY 16 ***

**THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

“Congress.” (Ch. 6 in O’Connor and Sabato).

**WEEK THREE:**

**July 21-25**

**THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH I**

“The Presidency.” (Ch. 7 in O’Connor and Sabato).
THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH II

“The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy.” (Ch. 8 in O’Connor and Sabato).

WEEK FOUR:
July 28-31

THE JUDICIARY

“The Judiciary.” (Ch. 9 in O’Connor and Sabato).

*** EXAM II: TUESDAY, JULY 29 ***

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MEDIA

“Public Opinion and the News Media.” (Ch. 10 in O’Connor and Sabato).

POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

“Political Parties and Interest Groups.” (Ch. 11 in O’Connor and Sabato).

WEEK FIVE:
August 4-7

CAMPAIGNS, ELECTIONS, AND VOTING

“Campaigns, Elections, and Voting.” (Ch. 12 in O’Connor and Sabato).

PUBLIC POLICY

“Social and Economic Policy.” (Ch. 13 in O’Connor and Sabato).

*** FINAL EXAMINATION: THURSDAY, AUGUST 7 ***

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.