Saint Louis University

POL S 110-02 – Introduction to American Politics
Instructor – Joseph L. Davis
Term Dates: Fall 2014
Phone: 314 422-4929
Meeting Times: MWF 10:00 - 10:50
Office Hours: By Appointment
Site: Beracha Hall 121

Course Requirements: No Prerequisites
Textbooks & Other Materials: Government By the People, by Magelsby, et. al., 2013 brief edition

Course Description: This course introduces the student to the basic principles of American politics and government, emphasizing the philosophic, historical, economic, and cultural foundations of the United States; role of the citizen, the institutions that link the citizen to government; the institutions of national government; and the policymaking process. Specific topics include constitutional principles, political culture, public opinion, political participation, interest groups, party structure and systems, nominations and elections, social movements, the media, the presidency, Congress, the courts, the bureaucracy, and foreign, economic, and social welfare policies. This course provides the framework for understanding how government, politics, and society are deeply and systematically intertwined. The student will be encouraged to think critically about the nature and quality of the American system of government. Finally, this course provides the student with solid grounding in the discipline of government and in related fields of study.

Goals of the Course: The goal of this course is to understand the fundamental principles and theories of government, to become familiar with the historical development of current political events, and to develop an understanding of the structures and processes of American politics and government. The student will learn to think critically about ideas and traditions and be able to discuss political questions in the larger context of individual, societal, and global development. The student will acquire skills needed to make political decisions and understand the role that citizens and institutions play in decisionmaking. Upon completion of the course the student will be able to formulate personal, but well-based, judgments regarding the political problems in this country and to develop some facility in expressing these judgments clearly and succinctly. Students will be prepared to develop and defend their own political beliefs and attitudes and apply these skills in a larger world context.

Learning Objectives:
1. Identify basic political principles, structures, processes, and theories of government.
2. Understand the American political system and the debates about how it might be revitalized.
3. Understand the institutions and the political forces that have shaped the United States’ political and constitutional systems.
4. Identify important political figures and movements and analyze their contributions to the program and policies of the U.S.
5. Explain how key developments in the history of the U.S. affect the present direction of our public and private institutions.
6. Describe the philosophy and programming by which public officials attempt to meet the needs of special interests.
7. Identify the major political issues involved in a multi-cultural society and analyze how they impact the individual, personally and professionally.
8. Understand government and politics on the state and local level and examine their relationship with the national level.
9. Identify the basic institutions of our national government and how they relate to the U.S. Constitution and each other.
10. Compare and contrast stated purposes of American foreign and domestic policy with the realities of such policies.
11. Identify and summarize recent trends in American elections and voting behavior.
12. Describe the appropriate role of the citizen in our country.

Learning Methodologies: Learning will be reinforced through lecture, class discussion, and video presentations, written assignments, field projects, and student presentations. Critical reading and thinking skills will be fostered through written assignments and class discussions. Practical exercises and simulations will be used to promote application of course content in and outside of the classroom. Students will be encouraged to formulate and express opinions about contemporary political issues through various exercises, assignments, and presentations. Oral and written communications skills will be refined through written assignments, class presentations and the research-based paper.

Attendance/Tardiness and Other Classroom Policies:

Attendance Policy:
Your success in this course will heavily depend on your attendance and participation in the classroom. You are expected to be present for every meeting of the course. If you are unable to attend a class or will be late for a class, you must notify the instructor in advance of the absence. The instructor reserves the right to make judgment on accepting and/or making-up assignments missed because of class absence. Unexcused absences may result in failure of the course.

Courtesy Expectations: Students will treat their classroom obligations as they would treat any serious professional engagement. That includes:
1. Preparing thoroughly for each session in accordance with the instructor's request;
2. Arriving promptly and remaining until the end of each class meeting;
3. Participating fully and constructively in all classroom activities and discussions;
4. Displaying appropriate courtesy to all involved in the class sessions. Courteous behavior specifically entails communicating in a manner that respects, and is sensitive to the cultural, religious, sexual, and other individual differences in the SLU community.
5. Adhering to deadlines and timetables established by the instructor;
6. Providing constructive feedback to faculty members regarding their performance.

SLU Policy on Academic Integrity: The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students, but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of
students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of faculty member or administrator.

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance is expected.
2. Three (3) tests, including the final that will be on information drawn from the text, class discussion, and lectures.
3. Two (2) research projects on approved topics that will either involve library research or actual fieldwork (simulations).
4. Class participation in both dialogue and small group discussions.

Class Meeting and Examination Schedule
Date and times of all topics, assignments and examination schedule. This schedule is to be used as a guide. Adjustment will be made as needed. Examinations will be held as scheduled.

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<th>Course Outline and Reading Assignments</th>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Making a Republic, and</td>
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<td>29, Sep 3</td>
<td>The Living Constitution</td>
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<td>Sep</td>
<td>5, 8, 10</td>
<td>Congress</td>
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<td>12, 15, 17</td>
<td>Presidency</td>
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<td>19, 22, 24</td>
<td>Courts, Federalism</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>REVIEW</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>FIRST EXAM</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Our Freedoms/Return Exams</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3, 6</td>
<td>Political Parties/Elections</td>
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<td>8, 10, 13</td>
<td>Public Opinions</td>
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<td>15, 17, 20</td>
<td>Pressure Groups</td>
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<td>22, 24, 27</td>
<td>Political Behavior</td>
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<td>SECOND EXAM</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
<td>3, 5, 7</td>
<td>Foreign Policy/Return Exams</td>
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<td>10, 12, 14, 17</td>
<td>Management and Money</td>
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<td>19, 21, 24</td>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>State/Local Politics</td>
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<td>5, 8</td>
<td>REVIEW</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM – Monday – 12:00 - 1:50 p.m.</td>
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Grading Policy
Grades will be based on three (3) objective exams, (25% each), two (2) written reports or optional simulation projects (20% for both), and class participation (5%)
Academic Integrity and Honesty

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to your course instructor, who will investigate and adjudicate them according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion by the University.

Other Honesty statements may also be used. The statement below is adopted primarily from the Academic Integrity statement on page 58 of the 2005-2007 Undergraduate Catalog.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed online at http://www.siu.edu/colleges/AS/ under “Quicklinks for Students” or in hard copy form in the Arts and Sciences Policy Binder in each departmental or College office.

Students with Special Needs - Disability Services

Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course - as outlined in the syllabus - due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action. Please telephone the office at 314-977-8885, or visit DuBourg Hall Room 36. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

The statement above, which is recommended by the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action, may be customized, edited or individualized as appropriate. If you have any questions, please contact Adam Meyer (meyerah@slu.edu), Counselor for Disabilities Services, at 314-977-8885, DuBourg Hall, room 36.

Revised 8/24/06