Introduction to American Government
Fall 2007
9:30-10:45

Professor Christopher Witko
Office Hours: 1-2:30 Tuesday and Thursday, and by appointment
E-mail: cwitko@slu.edu

Course Objectives: After completing this course you should be 1) familiar with the basic American political institutions and processes 2) able to critically analyze the institutions and processes 3) able to more effectively and intelligently participate in the political process 4) prepared for the more advanced study of American politics.

Required Books and Readings:


Electronic Sources: Many weeks of the course require you to read materials available on the web or from electronic databases available through the library’s website, usually the Pius Library e-journal portal unless otherwise noted. Where possible I have provided an exact url to the readings. Any difficulty locating these readings should be brought to my attention well before the class period in which the readings will be discussed.

Assignments
Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam.
Papers: Students are required to write a 10-12 page paper analyzing an electoral contest of your choosing.
In Class Presentation: You will present your paper to the class.
Attendance and Participation: Attendance is mandatory and participation from students is necessary to have an enjoyable, productive class. All classes will include student discussion and many classes will consist entirely of discussion. Thus, you are expected to come to class prepared and able to discuss assigned readings or material from a previous class if called upon to do so. In addition, we will begin each class with a discussion of recent political events as covered in the Washington Post. Excessive absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

****Note: I do not accept e-mailed or late assignments unless such arrangements have been made well in advance of the due date of the assignment.********

Grading
For each of the above assignments you will be given a letter grade, corresponding with a number from 0 (F) to 4 (A). These grades will be averaged using the percentages below to calculate your final course grade:

Midterm Exam – 25%
Final Exam – 25%
Paper – 25%
Presentation -5%
Participation – 20%
Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-70</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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Academic Integrity

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 me and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts & Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. (See http://www.slu.edu.colleges/AS/academichonesty.html)

Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities need to make arrangements with the Disabilities Coordinator, 977-8885, DuBourg, Room 36.

Tentative Course Outline (subject to change by instructor – changes will be announced in class and/or via e-mail. If you miss class it is your responsibility to check with other students and/or instructor about possible changes).

Week 1. Course Introduction and Thinking about American Politics
8/26: Course Introduction

Week 2. The Constitution and Institutional Structure
9/2: 1) Hudson Chapter 1 2) Federalist #10 and #51 (Federalist papers available at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/help/constRedir.html)

Week 3. Civil Liberties
9/9: Read the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence (available on-line).

Week 4. Civil Rights
(http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/fd_clearinghousereview.pdf)
(http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/09/opinion/09wed2.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin)

Week 5. American Political Culture and Public Opinion
9/23: Hudson Chapter 3

Week 6. October 2-4 – Political Participation and Elections
9/30: Hudson Chapter 4
10/2: Hudson Chapter 5

Week 7. Political Parties

Week 8: Interest Groups
10/14: Hudson Chapter 6
10/16: Midterm Exam

Week 9: The Courts
10/21: No Class – Fall Break
10/23: Hudson Chapter 2, Federalist #50 (Federalist papers available at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/help/constRedir.html)

Week 10: Congress

Week 11: The Presidency
11/6: We will discuss the election results so be sure to read articles in the Washington Post.

Week 12: Domestic Policy
11/11: Hudson Chapter 7

Week 13: Foreign and National Security Policy
11/20: Hudson Chapter 8

Week 14:
11/25: Student Presentations begin

**Papers DUE**

11/27: No Class – Happy Thanksgiving

Week 15:
12/2: Student Presentations
12/4: Student Presentations

Final Exam – Tuesday December 16, 8-9:50