

THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

Fall 2009

POLS 101.002

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00-1:50 pm

Maybank Hall Room 111

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Office Hour: Wednesday
3-4 pm at Library Coffee Shop

INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a participatory sport.

Unlike the Super Bowl or the Olympics, however, this "game" will have a direct impact on your life, your health and your income for years to come. War and peace really do hang in the balance. AMERICANS YOUR AGE ARE FIGHTING AND DYING AROUND THE GLOBE AT THIS MOMENT AS A RESULT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY. This "game" is for keeps.

This introductory course is designed to help YOU to participate in this process. By the end of this semester you will know the rules of the "game" and who the players are. News headlines and government reports will actually start to make some sense. Insiders such as Jim Clyburn and Rahm Emanuel will become your best new friends...well, at least you'll know who they are and why their views might impact your life.

This Fall is an especially exciting time to take this course. The first African American President is pushing hard for Health Care Reform, a topic that was first introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt nearly eighty years ago. Radio Talk Show Hosts and FOX News, however, are doing everything in their power to defeat it. Since the Democrats currently control both the House and the Senate, they will ultimately have no one to blame if they fail to reach that goal. Will some Republican legislators support real Health Care Reform despite the recent Town Hall shouting matches? Will "Blue Dog" Democrats sink their own Party? Will politics triumph over public policy once again as it did in the 1990s?

Thomas Jefferson firmly believed that educated and involved citizens were essential to the survival of a democracy. That is the goal of this course. The stakes are far too high to remain on the sidelines. Instead of just waving the Flag, it's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work.

DEMOCRACY IS A PARTICIPATORY SPORT !

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
(2009 Edition)
O'Connor & Sabato
(NOT the abridged edition)

THE AUDACITY OF HOPE
President Barack Obama
Crown Publishers

COURSE ORIENTATION

This course will consist of five major components in addition to class lectures:

- Daily Quizzes
- Five Tests
- A Personal Political Profile
- An Analysis of President Obama's book: THE AUDACITY OF HOPE
- Three Student Debates

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Regular class attendance and careful preparation for each class are required. Students must read the assigned chapters prior to each class. As an "incentive," most classes will begin with a 5 minute quiz based exclusively on those chapters.

Classes that do not begin with a Daily Quiz will start with a sign-in sheet.

Since teachers are "academic coaches," students are expected to show up for class just as athletes are expected to show up for practice.

ONLY THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL BE PERMITTED FOR THE SEMESTER. After that, one point will be deducted from the student's final grade for each additional absence.

Students must perform the assignments outlined in this syllabus and submit the required reports ON TIME. Ten points will be deducted from assignments that are late.

If absent, a Student is still responsible for everything covered during that class. Small study groups and good class notes are invaluable. No "extra credit" work will be offered. Students should concentrate on doing their best on the assignments outlined in this syllabus.

Students must demonstrate respect for the teacher and their fellow classmates during class. Disturbances of any kind (e.g., private conversations, cell phones, text messaging, etc.) will NOT be permitted. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, it will be recorded as an absence.

Laptop computers are permitted for taking notes but any other use (e.g., watching the "big game" or corresponding with friends) will result in that student's computer being prohibited.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If a student requires any type of SNAP accommodations, please make the appropriate notifications and arrangements with the Center for Students with Disabilities during the first week of classes. Alternatively, if a student has a physical impairment of any kind that will require special arrangements for exams or papers--or, if a student must travel due to membership in any approved athletic, club or organizational program--please notify the teacher during the first week of classes. The information will be kept confidential.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The regular office hour for this course will be on Wednesday, between 3:00-4:00 pm at the Coffee Shop at our Library. Students may also request a meeting at another time or place by using my PERSONAL email (zebracove@aol.com) or my cell phone (843-822-3254).

My PERSONAL email will be checked daily during the semester: zebracove@aol.com. Please use my personal email only. Do NOT use my edisto account.

Questions, comments or concerns pertaining to this course may also be placed via my cell phone (843-822-3254) between the hours of 10 am - Midnight, seven days a week. Calls placed before 10 am will earn a grade of "X." (I only talk to my dog before 10 am.)

DAILY QUIZZES...20%

The Daily Quiz will focus exclusively on that day's reading assignment. It will be given at the start of each class at 1:00 pm sharp and will consist of 10 objective questions (10 points each). At the end of the semester, the two lowest quiz grades will be eliminated and the remaining quiz grades will be averaged. That average will represent 20% of the student's final grade for this Course.

If a student is absent from class or arrives after the quiz period has ended, the quiz grade for that class will be zero. There will be no make-up quizzes.

STUDENT DEBATES

Students who volunteer or are selected to participate in Student Debates will have the option of replacing their lowest Quiz grade with their Debate grade. Students not debating must prepare and submit two questions pertaining to the Debate topic. Failure to attend a Debate will result in the loss of one point from the Final Grade for the Course. A Sign-In Sheet will be provided.

LETTER TO CONGRESS

Following a week's discussion of Health Care reform, each student will be required to write a letter to a member of the US House or Senate, expressing that student's position on the Health Care debate. The letter must be submitted in class on Sept. 9, prior to being mailed.

TESTS...50%

There will be a total of five Tests throughout the semester. Each Test will be comprehensive (i.e., it will cover EVERYTHING read, reviewed or discussed during that period of the Course) and will consist of 25 objective questions (2 points each) and five essay questions (10 points each) plus a five point bonus question. Each Test will be one class period in length and will begin at 1:00 pm sharp.

An answer sheet will be distributed at the completion of each Test. The next phase of the Course will begin after the Test and review. Each Test will cover only the material contained in that phase of the course. Each of the five Tests will represent 10% of the final grade for this course for a total of 50%.

If a student is absent from class on Test day, that Test must be made up by appointment at the earliest opportunity and a 10 point penalty will be applied to the Test grade.

PERSONAL POLITICAL PROFILE...10%

The most important thing you can do during your years of undergraduate college is to THINK.

This is the perfect time in your life to reevaluate everything you've been taught or told during your childhood and adolescence. Now's the time to dig deeper to understand what you truly believe...and WHY.

Your final assignment in this political science course will be to create a PERSONAL POLITICAL PROFILE which outlines who you are TODAY and what you hope to become tomorrow. To do this, you will prepare a one page typed, double-spaced response to each of the following four questions for a total of four pages:

- 1) How would you describe your political orientation today...liberal, moderate, conservative, libertarian, radical, socialist, anarchist ?
- 2) What does it mean to you to be an American in the world today ?
- 3) What would you do if the draft was reinstated and you were ordered to fight ?
- 4) Would YOU ever consider seeking public or elective office ? Why or why not ?

This PERSONAL POLITICAL PROFILE is due on Monday, November 23 at 1:00 pm. Ten points will be subtracted from the Report grade if it is late. The PERSONAL POLITICAL PROFILE will represent 10% of the student's final grade for this Course.

THE AUDACITY OF HOPE ...20%

While serving as a US Senator from Illinois, Barack Obama wrote THE AUDACITY OF HOPE. He describes it as his "thoughts on reclaiming the American Dream." It provides a remarkable insight into our new President's political philosophy.

Each student will read President Obama's book and then prepare a one page ANALYSIS (i. e., what do YOU think) of EACH chapter.

Chapters 1 through 5 will be due on Monday, September 28 at 1 pm.

Chapters 6 through 9 will be due on Friday, November 6 at 1 pm.

Ten points will be subtracted from the Report grade if it is late. This assignment will represent 20% of the student's final grade for this Course.

GRADES

Grades are based on a straight scale:

A	= 93 - 100	C	= 73 - 77
A-	= 90 - 92	C-	= 70 - 72
B+	= 88 - 89	D+	= 68 - 69
B	= 83 - 87	D	= 63 - 67
B-	= 80 - 82	D-	= 60 - 62
C+	= 78 - 79	F	= 59 and below

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Personal integrity is extremely important in college and throughout life.

When you enrolled in The College of Charleston, you signed an Honor Code. You are expected to live up to that code.

If you cheat on an exam or plagiarize any portion of your reports, you will fail this course and your case will be turned over to the Honor Board for further disciplinary action. If you have any questions or are unsure what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, ASK. Ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

Wednesday, August 26

- Sample Quiz
- Introduction to the Course
- Overview of assignments

Friday, August 28

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 1: The Political Landscape

Week 2

Monday, August 31

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 17: Health Care (596-614 & 622-26)
- New York Times Article re: Health Care Reform

Wednesday, September 2

- Town Hall Discussion: Health Care Reform
- The Liberal Perspective

Friday, September 4

- Town Hall Discussion: Health Care Reform
- The Conservative Perspective

Week 3

Monday, September 7

- Labor Day (No Class)
- Take Home Assignment:
Letter to Congress re: Health Care Reform

Wednesday, September 9

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 2: The Constitution
- Assignment Due: Letter to Congress

Friday, September 11

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 3: Federalism

Week 4

Monday, September 14

- Test #1
 - Review Test
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Wednesday, September 16

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 12: Political Parties

Friday, September 18

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 16: Interest Groups

Week 5

Monday, September 21

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 7: Congress (234-246)

Wednesday, September 23

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 7: Congress (246-258)

Friday, September 25

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 7: Congress (258 -271)

Week 6

Monday, September 28

- Assignment Due:
AUDACITY OF HOPE (Chapters 1-5)
- Class Discussion

Wednesday, September 30

- Student Debate:
• Marijuana Should NOT Be Legalized

Friday, October 2

- Test #2
 - Review Test
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Week 7

Monday, October 5

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 8: The Presidency (272-287)

Wednesday, October 7

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 8: The Presidency (288-305)

Friday, October 9

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 9: The Bureaucracy

Week 8

Monday, October 12

- FALL BREAK
- No Class

Wednesday, October 14

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 19: Foreign Policy (670-685)

Friday, October 16

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 19: Foreign Policy (685-705)

Week 9

Monday, October 19

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 18: Economic Policy (636-652)

Wednesday, October 21

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 18: Economic Policy (652-669)

Friday, October 23

- Student Debate
- THE DRAFT SHOULD BE REINSTATED

Week 10

Monday, October 26

- Test #3
 - Review Test
-

Wednesday, October 28

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 4: State & Local Government

Friday, October 30

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 13: Voting & Elections

Week 11

Monday, November 2

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 14: The Campaign Process

Wednesday, November 4

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 15: The Media

Friday, November 6

- Assignment Due:
AUDACITY OF HOPE (Chapters 6-9)
- Class Discussion

Week 12

Monday, November 9

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 10: The Judiciary (334-355)

Wednesday, November 11

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 10: The Judiciary (356-375)

Friday, November 13

- Daily Quiz
- Supreme Court Cases (716-723)

Week 13

Monday, November 16

- Test #4
 - Review Test
-

Wednesday, November 18

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 5: Civil Liberties (152-172)
- Video: Women's Suffrage Movement, Part 1

Friday, November 20

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 5: Civil Liberties (172-191)
- Video: Women's Suffrage Movement, Part 2

Week 14

Monday, November 23

- Assignment Due:
- PERSONAL POLITICAL PROFILE

Wednesday, November 25

- Thanksgiving Holiday
- No Class

Friday, November 27

- Thanksgiving Holiday
- No Class

Week 15

Monday, November 30

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 6: Civil Rights (192-210)
- Video: Women's Suffrage Movement, Part 3

Wednesday, December 2

- Daily Quiz
- Chapter 6: Civil Rights (211-233)
- Video: Women's Suffrage Movement, Part 4

Friday, December 4

- Student Debate:
- Gay Marriage Should NOT Be Legalized

Week 16

Monday, December 7

- Test #5
- Review Test

Tuesday, December 8

- Reading Day

Wednesday, December 9

- Final Exams Begin



Political Science Internships

Fall 2009

Why Intern?

- Gain real world experience
- Explore possible career options
- Network and make contacts

What are the requirements for credit?

- An unpaid field internship, including:
 - 10-15 hours a week (140 hours/ semester)
- Attend POLS 402 class on Tuesdays from 5:30-6:45pm
- Complete a journal and a research paper

Am I eligible?

- Junior or senior standing
- 18 POLS credit hours
- Completed POLS 251
- Normally a 2.8 POLS GPA
- At least a 2.5 overall GPA

Where do I begin?

1. Contact Erin Blevins at 953-5724 or blevinse@cofc.edu to schedule an appointment
2. Research potential internships online at <http://polisci.cofc.edu/localinternships.html>

The Road to Success Starts with an Internship