The College of Charleston  
Fall 2018  

POLI 101.01 – American Government  
TU/TH 9:25 – 10:40 A.M.  
Maybank Hall 207  

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Course Description and Objectives  
As Americans we live under a constitutional form of government as defined by the U.S. Constitution. The legislative enactments, executive decisions and judicial rulings made by the three branches of our federal government have broad implications for how we define, experience and express our roles as citizens in a democracy.  
Our constitutional form of government provides for distinct roles for both the federal government and the 50 states under the concept of federalism. States, in turn, through their Legislatures, influence the affairs of 97,000 local governments. All of these inter-related government activities seek to “form a more perfect union” for 32 million Americans.  
As major shifts and changes occur in the geographic, demographic, political and social landscapes of America we look to our federal government for rational solutions to major challenges including immigration, education, the environment, voting rights, civil rights, mass shootings and global conflicts. At the same time, our government appears so polarized by party preferences and political ideology that it is unable to function.  
This class – POLI 101.01 – counts towards the College’s General Education Social Science requirement. At the end of the semester students should be able to (a) apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions; (b) identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures and decision-making processes of the American political system; (c) evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas; (d) relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates and outcomes in the United States and (e) develop an analytical, social scientific disposition toward American politics. These learning outcomes will be assessed using the grading procedures outlined below with the indicated percentages for each requirement.  

Course Requirements  

A. Regular class attendance is expected of all students and will constitute 5% of your final grade. Attendance will be recorded on a daily sign-in sheet. Absences will be excused only if they are officially validated.  
B. Expectations for class participation includes reading assignments prior to class, joining in class discussions, respecting the opinions of others and turning in assignments on time. Late assignments will incur severe grade penalties.  
C. The use of electronic devices for personal use during class is prohibited. Personal computers may be used for taking notes – verification may be required at any time. Cell phone use in class is not permitted.
D. Students who are receiving services through the Center for Disability Services, are scheduled to travel with an athletic team or participate in a student government related or other official off-campus activity during the semester must present a letter of verification signed by the appropriate college official.

E. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the services of The Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants are available to assist with overall development of papers, sentence structure, source documentation, etc.

F. Students who plan personal (i.e., non-emergency) off-campus trips prior to a scheduled exam (ex. Mid-Term or Final) will not receive excused absences nor the opportunity to make up the exam.

G. The College Honor Code is in effect at all times throughout the semester. Academic dishonesty (lying, cheating, attempted cheating and plagiarism) are violations of the Honor Code that, when identified, are reported to the Office of the Dean of Students, investigated and may result in sanctions, including dismissal from the College. Willful violation during class, including repeated, unauthorized use of cell phones in the classroom, is a violation of the Honor Code and may result in expulsion from the class.

H. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize office hours and/or schedule appointments to discuss assignments or readings.

Grading
Grades will be based on a four part required research paper that examines a current political issue, a Midterm Examination, a Final Examination and class participation as follows:

A. Research paper, part 1 15%
B. Research paper, part 2 15%
C. Research paper, part 3 15%
D. Research paper, part 4 15%
E. Midterm Examination 15%
F. Final Examination 20%
G. Class attendance 5%

Required Reading
There is not an assigned textbook. Students are required to become familiar with the United States Constitution that you can purchase at any bookstore. The recommended version is:

You will receive handouts on specific topics as defined by the instructor. You are also strongly encouraged to keep abreast of contemporary political and social issues, many of which may be topics of class discussion. Several national newspapers including The New York Times, Washington Post and Wall Street Journal are available on-line at no charge. Local state and political news is reported in the Charleston Post ad Courier and Columbia’s State Newspaper.

Course Outline
August 2018
Tu 21 Introductions and semester overview
Th 23 Discussion: Who are “We The People?”
Tu 28 The Historic Foundations of U.S. Government - Handout
Th 30 The Historic Foundations of U.S. Government – Discussion

September 2018
Tu 4 The United States Constitution
Th 6 The United States Constitution
Tu 11 Federalism (handout)
Assignment # 1 Due
The purpose of the required assignment is to study a current political issue with the potential for major impact on the lives of Americans - including our social and political views, the American economy and the changing demographics of our nation.

The focus this semester is **Immigration**. With the exception of Native Americans all persons living in the U.S. are descendants from immigrants or from slaves who were brought to this country against their will. The country is
often referred to as a “nation of immigrants.” Following the Civil War several states passed immigration laws. In response the U.S. Supreme Court in 1875 declared the regulation of immigration to be a federal responsibility.

You will be required to understand the U.S. government’s historic, evolving and current analysis of this issue as reflected in the federal laws that direct the solutions and implementation of immigration policy.

You will research this topic and write four papers on federal immigration law. At the end of the semester you should be able to:

1. Define and explain the significant elements of immigration policy established in each law.
2. Explain the “vocabulary” of immigration: legal immigrant; illegal immigrant; refugee; asylee; family-based immigration; employment-based immigration, etc.
3. Explain the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – (DACA) policy.

You should also be able to make an informed assessment of the effectiveness of current immigrant laws and policies in creating and maintaining a coherent system.

Papers 1-3 will require you to examine 5 immigration laws in each one. For each paper you will provide the following information for each of the 5 laws in the group. You will be given a template that explains how the scoring for each paper will be calculated.

A. The stated immigration problem or issue the law was enacted to solve.
B. Specify if a specific nationality (or immigrant group) was the focus of the law.
C. State whether the law was initiated by the Congress, the President or the Supreme Court –
D. Identify the U.S. President who signed the law into effect. –
E. Identify the specific provisions of each law –
F. Identify the federal cabinet, agency or department assigned the responsibility for implementing the law.

In writing your paper you are to provide all of the information required for each law before moving to the next one. Do not submit your answers in essay form!

Paper # 1 – Provide the information required above for each of the following laws:
1. The 1790 Naturalization Act
3. The Immigration Act of 1875
4. The Immigration Act of 1882
5. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

Paper # 2-
1. The 1917 Immigration Act
2. The Immigration Act of 1924
3. The Displaced Persons Act of 1948
4. The 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act
5. The Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962

Paper # 3-
1. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act
2. The Refugee Act of 1980
3. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
4. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996
5. The 2002 Homeland Security Act
Paper # 4 will require you to review the previous three papers and answer the following questions:

1. Describe the mission and overall organization of the Department of Homeland Security
2. Describe the specific functions of the following DHS agencies:
   a. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
   b. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
   c. U.S. Customs and Border Protection
3. Explain the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program

Recommended initial references:

1. The Migration Policy Institute – Major US Immigration Laws, 1790-present
4. Center For Immigration Studies” Historical Overview of Immigration Policy
5. The U.S. Depart of Homeland Security
6. Executive Order: Deferred Admissions for Childhood Arrivals