College of Charleston

Spring 2014

POLI 101.01: American Government

CRN: 21956

3 credit hours

Maybank Hall, Room 316

Mondays and Wednesdays: 2 – 3:15 p.m.

Professor: LaTasha Chaffin, Ph.D.

Office Hours: (114 Wentworth, Room 104) Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Email: chaffinly@cofc.edu (preferred method of contact outside of classroom time/office hours)

Office Phone/Voicemail: 843-953-1036

Course Introduction: This course is an introduction to the foundations, institutions (Congress, Judiciary & the Executive Branch), political systems and processes of the United States National Government. It follows that this course explores Federalism, the principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and Constitutional Protections such as Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Students will also examine how campaigns and elections, political parties, interest groups, and public opinion affect change in a representative democracy. The roles of legislative and judicial policymaking and bureaucratic administration will also be examined. You will be responsible for not only comprehending but thinking critically about the topics discussed.

Course/Learning Goals:

- To understand and discuss the philosophical viewpoints from which the U.S. government was founded
- To comprehend and explain how the three main branches of the U.S. government function and interact under the separation of powers
- To articulate how political systems, groups and individual actors interact in order to influence and create public policy
- Through class discussions, writing assignments and examinations to demonstrate the ability to think critically about complex political ideas and concepts
- To understand and be able to evaluate and articulate how political decisions impact your daily lives through class discussions
- To ascertain and be able to describe ways in which group and individual political participation is a catalyst for change within the U.S. governmental structure
General Education Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students apply a social science concept, model or theory to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions. These outcomes will be assessed in the essay questions assigned in exam one and exam three.

Required Texts & Additional Resources:


Available at the College of Charleston Bookstore (Textbooks are required). **Additional required readings will occasionally be made electronically available through the OAKS system, accessible in MyCharleston.

Course Procedures:

Communication – The primary method of communication from the instructor to the class outside of classroom time and office hours will be to your College of Charleston email. There will also be announcements, readings, lecture slides and assignments posted in OAKS. It is your responsibility to ensure that your accounts are active, and that you are checking them regularly in order to access and receive course updates, assignments and materials.

Behavior – Please be respectful and courteous of all students and the professor. This means being on time to class, using sound judgment by not engaging in conversations with other students during the lecture, and not exhibiting distracting behaviors such as eating, sleeping, surfing the internet and/or reading materials that are not related to the course or the class discussion.

Cell Phones & other Electronic Devices – You are expected to have your cell phones/electronic devices turned off or on silent during class discussions. It is a distraction to the instructor and your classmates if your cell phone and/or electronic device sounds during a lecture. Texting or playing games on your cell phone/electronic device are prohibited during class.

Laptops – Laptops & other electronic devices used to take notes are allowed. However, surfing the internet, including social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, sending emails, text messages or playing computer games are distracting to the class and unacceptable. If inappropriate uses of your laptop and/or other electronic devices are detected during lecture, your privileges to utilize a laptop/electronic devices in class will be revoked.

Academic Honesty - You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the College of Charleston Student Handbook policies including the Honor Code pertaining to Academic Honesty found at: http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/documents-pdfs/handbook.pdf

These policies include the prohibition of cheating, plagiarism and fabrication. They also note the consequences of academic dishonesty at the College of Charleston. Any violation of these guidelines and/or other rules contained within the Honor Code will result in an F for the assignment or exam and/or other appropriate disciplinary action, at the instructor’s discretion. You should consult with the instructor if you are uncertain about an issue regarding academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or an exam.
Disability Services – The College of Charleston will make reasonable accommodations for a student with a documented disability. If you are in need of accommodations for this course due to a disability, please contact the Center for Disability Services at SNAP@cofc.edu or (843) 953-1431. Then, come and talk to me ideally within the first two weeks of class so we can put your accommodations in place within the classroom. This professor is very willing to make any adjustments necessary to address all student needs.

Writing Lab

The Writing Lab, located in the Center for Student Learning on the first floor of Addlestone Library provides free assistance with writing term papers, essays, letters, memos or book reviews from developing ideas and organizing materials to editing final drafts. The walk-in lab opens on January 21st. You may also make an appointment for private tutoring at 843-953-5635.

Counseling

Confidential counseling and substance abuse services are available at the Robert Scott Small Building (located off the Cougar Mall), Suite 300. You may call 843-953-5640 for an appointment.

Course Withdrawal – Please note that dropping a class involves more than just not attending. Please contact the registrar’s office to verify course withdrawal procedures. The contact number for the Office of the Registrar is 843-953-5668 or registrar@cofc.edu. Please consult the registrar’s office before dropping a course.

Course Requirements:

Participation – (In-Class) It is your responsibility to attend lectures and obtain the information and materials disseminated during lecture periods. You are also expected to read all of the assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss these readings during the class period. While attendance is not explicitly part of your grade, participation is. In which case, you will not be able to participate if you are not present. Along the same lines, by being present in lecture does not mean you are participating. Some participation in class discussion is expected. You do not have to say something every time we meet, but please actively speak up as you have a considered opinion or a thoughtful question. In-class participation is assessed at 5% of your final course grade.

Attendance will be taken each class period for recordkeeping, and participation will be tracked. It will be your responsibility to tell me that day of your present attendance, should you arrive late. Please be aware that poor participation (lessened by poor attendance) is a primary reason for students’ receiving poor grades.

(On-campus)– As part of your participation grade, you will be presented with several opportunities to attend events or lectures on campus. Many of these opportunities increase your political knowledge of domestic or international political issues. Attending opportunities for political learning and completing a written summary are assessed at 5% of your final course grade.

Students are required to attend three (3) lectures/events outside of class and to submit a one page (single-spaced) or two-page (double-spaced) response to EACH event/lecture linking the topic of the event/lecture to a class reading/discussion.

- The lecture/event opportunities (subject to instructor approval) will be announced in class
- Papers will be uploaded to the lecture/event dropbox on OAKS and will be scored with the following rubric:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 - excellent</th>
<th>2 - good</th>
<th>1 - barely adequate</th>
<th>0 - inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outline event/lecture</td>
<td>Clearly and briefly describes event</td>
<td>Describes event</td>
<td>Little sense of event/lecture</td>
<td>Unclear on nature of event/lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to class</td>
<td>Uses details and examples to clearly link lecture/event to class reading/discussion</td>
<td>Links lecture/event to class discussion/readings with no example</td>
<td>Brief allusion to class</td>
<td>No discussion of class readings/discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity/writing</td>
<td>Clearly written, well organized, no errors.</td>
<td>One or two errors, clearly written, organized</td>
<td>Multiple errors, lack of clarity.</td>
<td>Multiple errors, disorganized, unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examinations – There will be four exams. The first exam is worth 10% of the final grade. The succeeding 3 exams are worth 15% each. Combined, exams are assessed at a total of 55% of the final grade. The format will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, case scenarios and/or essay questions. **The first three exams will be non-cumulative; the final exam will be cumulative.** Although we will conduct a brief exam review during the session prior to each exam, it is advisable that you attend class regularly, keep up with your weekly readings, study all vocabulary terms and answer post-chapter questions.

Please notify me in advance if there are extenuating circumstances that prevent you from taking an exam during a scheduled exam period. Examinations cannot be taken early unless it is pre-approved by me. Make up exams cannot be taken unless there is an emergency. Written documentation may be required for both scenarios. **Failure to notify me prior to the exam hour about an unexpected absence (or as soon as prudently possible after an emergency) could result in a zero for that grade.** Any exams that I may approve for you to take early or make up after the examination period may not be the same as the exam given during a scheduled exam period; the exam may be an all-essay question exam.

**Discussion Leader/Study Guides –**

1) Students will be required to select a Dye chapter in which they will lead a 10 – 15 minute discussion with the class on the course content for that chapter. Students will also be required to construct a full, one-page (single-spaced) or two-page (double-spaced) minimum study guide that will be circulated to the class on the Dye chapter assigned. These study guides will assist in preparing students for each exam and will help facilitate students’ participation in class discussions.

2) Each discussion leader should also select one question that is related to the chapter they are covering that incorporates a current event that can facilitate group discussion (e.g. Federalism – Colorado ruling on legalized marijuana for recreational purposes – how does this affect other states’ stance on the legalization of marijuana and national drug policy?). **Sign-up sheets will be circulated during the first few class sessions.**

The format of the study guides (please use Microsoft Word, 11 or 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins) is completely up to the student as they will serve as aids in preparing for the exam, but a minimum amount of effort, work and content from the entire chapter is assumed (i.e. you must cover material from every section in the Dye chapter). **Examples of formats include: a summary, true/false, short answer, multiple choice, word puzzle (or a combination). If questions are provided the answers must also be provided in order to receive full credit. A full, one-page minimum (single-spaced) or two-page (double-spaced) study guide is required, but more than one-page (single-spaced) or two-pages (double-spaced) is completely acceptable.**

3) **Your discussion leading will take place during the same class session that you turn in your study guide. The idea is for each student to use their study guide as a tool for leading discussion.** You must be prepared to provide your fellow classmates with hints, or if more assistance is required, with the answers. The study guides (& the discussion leading) will be scored at 100% if they meet the standards.
outlined, 50% or less if only the questions are provided for the guide or if you only complete a portion of the assignment and zero if the assignment is not completed. **Combined, the study guide and discussion leader assignments are worth 10% of your grade.**

The study guides are expected to be complete at the beginning of class on Monday of the week you sign up for and will not be accepted late or via email. This is the expectation even if I do not ask you to lead discussion on Monday – you still must be prepared on Monday. Another student cannot present/submit your assignment for you. Please submit one copy of your study guide to the instructor on the Monday your study guide is due (or before), via OAKS dropbox. Please ensure that you have a copy for yourself, so that you can lead discussion in-class. **I will make the study guides available on OAKS for all students.**

**Writing Assignments** – You will be required to complete two writing assignments. The page length should be a minimum of one-page (single-spaced) or two double-spaced pages and a maximum of two pages (single-spaced) or three double-spaced pages. These assignments are designed to reinforce your chapter readings and lectures. **Each assignment will be assessed according to the grading scale, and the combined assignments are worth 15% of your grade. Instructions will be provided at the time of assignment.** Students must use APA style citations. Please refer to [http://www.calstatela.edu/library/styleman.htm](http://www.calstatela.edu/library/styleman.htm) for assistance with the APA citation style.

Grades will be based on analytical rigor, empirical evidence, and writing skill and will be assessed using the following general guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent; Clear, thorough, and well-supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A−</td>
<td>Very good, with few shortcomings; or Clear, but incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Generally clear, but some gaps; or Good, though somewhat unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Gaps in logic and evidence; or Disordered; or Undeveloped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B−</td>
<td>Multiple gaps and unclear parts; or Containing contradictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Unclear throughout; or Wrong question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Vague and unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C−</td>
<td>Very unclear and confusing; or No argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>Unclear and misunderstood; or Incorrect/missing citations throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D−</td>
<td>Extremely poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Insufficient effort; or Dishonesty</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Late Assignments** – Any assignments submitted late (without prior approval), will receive a 10% penalty, per day, including weekends. Assignments that are later than five (5) days will not be accepted.

**Comprehension Quizzes** – To promote attendance, weekly reading and comprehension of material, and class participation, there will be unannounced comprehension quizzes that will be administered during the lecture sessions and are **worth 10% of your course grade. There are no makeup comprehension quizzes.** Another student cannot submit a comprehension quiz for you. The entire class will receive credit for one (1) “free” or “excused” comprehension quiz (if required).
**Methods of Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (4)</td>
<td>55% (10% - 1st Exam and 15% x 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam One 10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Two 15%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Three 15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam 15%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader/Study Guide</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Writing Assignments (average)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Learning Opportunities 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Percentage Possible:</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 - 92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 - 88</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>81 - 84</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 - 80</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>73 - 76</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>72 - 75</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>68 - 71</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>64 - 67</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 - 63</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 - 59</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 &amp; Below</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Course Assignments:

Week 1: Intro to the Course & Politics (Jan. 8 class; No Class Jan. 6)
Overview of Class and Administration
U.S. Government Knowledge Assessment
Politics: Who Gets What, When and How? Chapter 1, Dye

Week 2: Political Culture & Socialization (Week of Jan. 13th)
Political Culture: Ideas & Conflict Chapter 2, Dye
Constitutional Government... & Second Treatise, Of Civil Government, Locke Woll
Video – A Class Divided (if schedule allows)

Week 3: The Constitution (Jan. 22 class; No Class Jan. 20th - MLK)
The Constitution: Limiting Governmental Power Chapter 3, Dye
The Declaration of Independence Appendix Ch. 3, Dye
The U.S. Constitution End of Chapter 3, Dye
The Anti-Federalist Papers No. 17 Woll
Federalist 44, James Madison Woll

Week 4: The Constitution Continued & Federalism (Week of Jan. 27th)
The Constitution: Limiting Governmental Power Chapter 3, Dye
Video – The Revolution: Declaring Independence (if the schedule allows)
Federalism: Dividing Governmental Power Chapter 4, Dye
What State Actions are Beyond Federal Regulation?... & Gonzales v. Raich Woll
Exam Review

Week 5: Exam 1 & Public Opinion (Week of Feb. 3rd)

*Exam 1 – Monday February 3rd

**Writing Assignment # 1 Assigned (Political Polling) – Handed out on Monday February 3rd

Opinion and Participation: Thinking and Acting in Politics Chapter 5, Dye
Week 6: Public Opinion continued & Political Parties (Week of Feb. 10th)

Opinion and Participation: Thinking and Acting in Politics  Chapter 5, Dye
Political Parties: Organizing Politics  Chapter 7, Dye
Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System, Committee on Parties, APSA  Woll

**Writing Assignment #1 due Wednesday February 12th (Political Polling)**

Week 7: Political Parties continued & Campaigns & Elections (Week of Feb. 17th)

Political Parties: Organizing Politics  Chapter 7, Dye
Campaigns and Elections: Deciding Who Governs  Chapter 8, Dye
Voting Behavior... & Democratic Practice & Democratic Theory, Berelson et al.  Woll
In-class Political Polling

Week 8: Campaigns & Elections Continued, Exam Review & Exam 2 (Week of Feb. 24th)

Campaigns and Elections: Deciding Who Governs  Chapter 8, Dye
Political Campaigns... & The Responsible Electorate, Key Jr.  Woll
Exam Review

*Exam 2 – Wednesday February 26th*

**No Classes March 1 - 9 (Spring Break)**

Week 9 Congress (Week of March 10th):

Congress: Politics on Capitol Hill  Chapter 10, Dye
Home Style & Washington Career, Fenno Jr.  Woll
Video – The West Wing (if schedule allows)

Week 10: The President (Week of March 17th)

The President: White House Politics  Chapter 11, Dye
Presidential Power, Neustadt  Woll
Video – Frontline: Dreams of Obama (if schedule allows)

Week 11: The Judicial Branch (Week of March 24th)

Courts: Judicial Politics  Chapter 13, Dye
Judicial Decision-Making... & How the S. C. Arrives at Decisions, Brennan Jr.  Woll
Exam Review
Week 12: Exam 3 & Civil Liberties (Week of March 31st)

*Exam 3: Monday March 31st*

**Writing Assignment # 2 Assigned (Civil Liberties)**
Politics and Personal Liberty
Chapter 14, Dye

Constitutional Background... & Anti-Federalist Paper No. 84
Woll

Week 13: Civil Liberties Continued and Civil Rights (Week of April 7th)

Politics and Personal Liberty
Chapter 14, Dye

Politics and Civil Rights
Chapter 15, Dye

Affirmative Action... & University of California Regents v. Bakke
Woll

**Writing Assignment # 2 Due Wednesday April 9th (Civil Liberties)**

Week 14: Civil Rights Continued & Economic Policy (Week of April 14th)

Politics and Civil Rights
Chapter 15, Dye

Politics and the Economy
Chapter 16, Dye

Video – Frontline: Inside the Meltdown (if schedule allows)

Week 15: Economic Policy Continued and Final Exam Review (Week of April 21st – Final Week of Classes)

Politics and the Economy
Chapter 16, Dye

Final Exam Review

**Final Exam (Cumulative): Friday May 2, 2014; 12 – 3 p.m.**

**The course schedule is subject to change. Changes will be communicated a minimum of one week prior to any changes**