DEMOCRACY IS A PARTICIPATORY SPORT!!

Unlike the Super Bowl or the Olympics, this “game” is for keeps. It 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 STILL FIGHTING AND DYING IN AFGHANISTAN AT THIS MOMENT AS A RESULT OF US GOVERNMENT POLICY.

This introductory course is designed to help YOU to understand and influence 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 Tim Scott will become your best new friends...well, at least you’ll know who they are and why their views might impact your life.

This spring is an especially exciting time to take this course. In only a few days, President Barack Obama will celebrate his second Inauguration. In the Senate, the first open Lesbian—Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)—was sworn in on January 3. Our former Congressman, Tim Scott (R-SC), is now the first African American Republican Senator since 1979. The new Members of Congress also include the first Buddhist and the first Hindu ever to serve there.

Despite this increased diversity, the last Congress adjourned on January 2, 2013 with the lowest approval rating ever recorded. The budget battles ahead are not likely to improve that record. This is the mess that YOU and your generation will inherit all too soon. If you love your country, it’s time to get serious about the task before you.

Even if patriotism strikes you as silly, then your own self-interest should motivate you. There are very few things you will study in College that have a more profound impact on your life and your future. This game is for real.

DEMOCRACY IS A PARTICIPATORY SPORT!!
REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: ROOTS & REFORM
O’Connor, Sabato & Janus
2011 EDITION
(NOT the abridged edition)

COURSE ORIENTATION:

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

- Daily Quizzes
- Five Tests
- One Student Debate
- One Research Report on Mass Murder in the US
- Class Presentations Based On The Research Report

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

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 that day’s reading assignment.

Since teachers are “academic coaches,” students are expected to show up for class just as athletes are expected to show up for practice. 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. Any assignment still missing at the end of the Semester will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

If absent, a Student is still responsible for everything covered during that class. GET THE NOTES.

Small STUDY GROUPS are strongly encouraged. 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 (for example: 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 only permitted for taking notes. Any other use (such as watching the basketball playoffs during March Madness) will result in that student’s computer being banned for the remainder of the semester.
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. This information will be kept confidential.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The regular Office Hour for this class will be Friday between 2:30-3:30 pm at the Starbuck Coffee Shop across from Maybank Hall. 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. Do NOT use my college 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 to Midnight, seven days a week. Calls placed before 10 am will result in a grade of “X” and the student should leave the state immediately.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Personal integrity is extremely important in college as it is 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 or assignments, 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.

STUDENT DEBATE:

During this semester students will either volunteer or be selected at random to participate in a Debate on the legalization of marijuana, a topic that has finally reached the ballot box.

Two students will argue for the Affirmative and two students will argue for the Opposition. Each student will speak for approximately 10 minutes total. The Debate will include questions from the rest of the members of the class.

Each student’s Debate grade will replace that student’s lowest Quiz grade.

Members of the class will vote on each team’s performance, but the final grade for the Debate will be determined by the professor.
DAILY QUIZZES...20%

Most classes will begin with a 5 minute Daily Quiz that will focus exclusively on that day’s reading assignment. It will be given at the start of the class and will consist of 10 objective questions worth 10 points each. At the end of the semester, the 3 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.

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.

RESEARCH REPORT ON MASS MURDER IN THE UNITED STATES...30%

Mass murders at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Virginia Tech, a Colorado Cinema, a Congresswoman’s speech in an Arizona Shopping Mall and far too many more to even count have finally forced the President and Congress to address the critical issue of gun violence in America. But, because of the tremendous political power of the NRA and the most recent Supreme Court ruling on the Second Amendment, will any meaningful legislation survive in this deeply polarized political environment?

This Issue will be divided into four distinct topics: 1) Violent Video Games & Movies; 2) The Mental Health System; 3) More Police & Armed Citizens [The NRA position]; and, 4) Common Sense Gun Control.

Each student will select and research one of these four topics and will then prepare an 8-10 page Research Report on that specific aspect of the problem. Each Student must work independently on the Report. After the Report has been submitted, however, the students who studied the same topic must then work together to make a 50-minute Class Presentation on that topic for the benefit of the rest of the class. The final grade for this assignment will include both the written report as well as the oral presentation.

The written Report should be 8-10 double-spaced FULL pages plus a COVER SHEET.

Each student’s Research Report should list and answer the following five questions:

1) How does this specific topic relate to the crisis of Mass Murder in the United States?
2) What specific steps should be taken pertaining to this topic to ease the crisis?
3) Why haven’t these solutions already been implemented?
4) Has researching this topic changed your earlier position, if at all?
5) How hopeful are YOU that these proposed solutions will be implemented?

This Research Report on Mass Murder in the United States is due at the start of class on Friday, March 22. Ten points will be subtracted if it is late. This Report will represent 30% of each student’s final grade.
TESTS... 50%

There will be a total of 5 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 5 essay questions (10 points each) plus a 5 point bonus question. Each Test will be 50 minutes in length. An answer sheet will be distributed at the end of the Test.

Each Test will cover only the material contained in that phase of the course. Each Test will represent 10% of the student's final grade for this course. 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 that Test grade.

GRADES

Grades in this class are based on a straight scale:

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

Week 1

Wednesday, January 9
• Sample Quiz
  • Introduction to the Course
  • Overview of Assignments

Friday, January 11
• Special Topic:
  • The First American Republic (1774-1789)

Week 2

Monday, January 14
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 2: The Constitution

Wednesday, January 16
• Daily Quiz
  • The US Constitution (pp. 62-89)

Friday, January 18
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 3: Federalism

Week 3

Monday, January 21
• MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY (No Class)
  • President Obama’s Second Inauguration Celebration

Wednesday, January 23
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 4: State & Local Government

Friday, January 25
• Test 1
  • Review Test

Week 4

Monday, January 28
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 12: Political Parties

Wednesday, January 30
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 16: Interest Groups

Friday, February 1
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 7: Congress (pp. 226-243)

Week 5

Monday, February 4
• Daily Quiz
  • Chapter 7: Congress (pp. 243-263)
Wednesday, February 6
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 7: How A Bill Becomes A Law (p. 245)

Friday, February 8
• Test 2
• Review Test

Week 6

Monday, February 11
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 8: The Presidency (pp. 264-277)

Wednesday, February 13
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 8: The Presidency (pp. 278-295)

Friday, February 15
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 9: The Bureaucracy

Week 7

Monday, February 18
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 19: Foreign Policy

Wednesday, February 20
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 11: Public Opinion

Friday, February 22
• Student Debate
• MARIJUANA SHOULD NOT BE LEGALIZED

Week 8

Monday, February 25
• Test 3
• Review Test

Wednesday, February 27
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 18: Economic Policy (pp. 657-674)

Friday, March 1
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 18: Economic Policy (pp. 674-690)

Week 9

Monday, March 4
• SPRING BREAK

Wednesday, March 6
• SPRING BREAK

Friday, March 8
• SPRING BREAK
Week 10

Monday, March 11  • Daily Quiz
                 • Chapter 13: Elections & Voting

Wednesday, March 13 • Daily Quiz
                      • Chapter 14: The Campaign Process

Friday, March 15  • Daily Quiz
                  • Chapter 15: The Media

Week 11

Monday, March 18  • Daily Quiz
                   • Chapter 17: Domestic Policy

Wednesday, March 20 • Test 4
                    • Review Test

Friday, March 22  • Assignment Due
                   • RESEARCH REPORT ON MASS MURDERS

Week 12

Monday, March 25  • Daily Quiz
                   • Chapter 10: The Judiciary (pp. 347-369)

Wednesday, March 27 • Daily Quiz
                     • Chapter 10: The Judiciary (pp. 369-387)

Friday, March 29  • Class Presentation 1:
                   • VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES & MOVIES

Week 13

Monday, April 1   • Daily Quiz
                  • Chapter 5: Civil Liberties (pp. 157-176)

Wednesday, April 3 • Daily Quiz
                     • Chapter 5: Civil Liberties (pp. 176-195)

Friday, April 5   • Class Presentation 2:
                   • THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM
Week 14

Monday, April 8
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 6: Civil Rights (pp. 197-218)

Wednesday, April 10
• Daily Quiz
• Chapter 6: Civil Rights (pp. 218-236)

Friday, April 12
• Class Presentation 3:
• MORE POLICE & MORE ARMED CITIZENS

Week 15

Monday, April 15
• Video & Discussion
• THE WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT, Part 1

Wednesday, April 17
• Video & Discussion
• THE WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT, Part 2

Friday, April 19
• Video & Discussion
• THE WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT, Part 3

Week 16

Monday, April 22
• Class Presentation 4:
• GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

Wednesday, April 24
• Test 5
• Review Test

Thursday, April 25
• Reading Day

Friday, April 26
• Final Exams Begin
Congressional Internship Opportunities

The Senate

Lindsey Graham, U.S. Senator for S.C.
- Offers full-time, unpaid internships (responsible for own housing) from September – December, January – May, and Summer (three four-week sessions available).
- Application Deadlines: Spring Semester: November 1
  Summer Sessions: March 15
  Fall Semester: July 15

Tim Scott, U.S. Congressman for S.C. First District (Charleston, Myrtle Beach)
- D.C.: internships run throughout the fall, spring and summer semesters for college students. The hours are flexible to accommodate students' hectic course schedules, but generally run 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. when Congress is in session, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. when not in session.
- S.C.: interns may be asked to do a variety of things, including day-to-day office work such as answering phones, writing letters and assisting with media clips. In addition, interns may be assigned to assist in various constituent case work or work on district-based projects of importance.
Contact Tim Scott's office for more details or to apply: (843) 852-2222 (Charleston Office); D.C. (202) 225-3176; (843) 445-6459 (Myrtle Beach); or email directly from the website http://timscott.house.gov/

The House of Representatives

Visit http://www.house.gov/representatives/ for the most up-to-date Directory of all U.S. Reps.

James Clyburn, U.S. Congressman for S.C. Sixth District (Columbia, N. Charleston, Florence)
- Opportunities are available in the spring, summer, and fall. Congressional Internships/Fellows are very similar to the former Congressional Page Program.
- Interns have the opportunity to work directly with our staff to see the interworking of Congress and how we work to represent the 6th Congressional District of South Carolina by assisting with daily legislative duties, making deliveries within the congressional complex, answering phones, and attending committee hearings, while enjoying a "Washington Experience." Offices located in Columbia, Florence, and Santee, S.C. and in D.C.
Visit http://clyburn.house.gov/our-district for more info; if you are interested in applying for an internship in our office, please fax your cover letter and resume to our Intern Coordinator, Willie Lyles III, at (202) 225-2313.