

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS and GLOBAL AFFAIRS
Course Data Sheet – Governor’s School for the Humanities
Summer Semester 2012

Course Number: Political Science 210.881

Course Title: American Government & Politics

Term, Level and Credit: AY 2011-12 undergraduate, 3 credit hours

Course Description: A survey of the origins, structure, and functions of the political system in the United States on the national, state, and local levels. POSC 210 specifically addresses the development of American constitutionalism, federalism and intergovernmental relations, parties, interest groups, elections, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Text and Required Material:

Introduction to American Government, 5th ed. by Stephenson, et al. BVT Publishing: Redding, CA, 2009. ISBN 978-60229-392-2.

College Mission Statement:

The College of Business and Global Affairs, consistent with the overall Mission of The University of Tennessee at Martin, develops graduates whose skills, abilities and ethical standards contribute to a diversified and dynamic society. With a primary focus on teaching, the College emphasizes quality undergraduate and graduate instruction and faculty commitment to student and regional development. Programs are delivered in an environment that encourages a broad understanding of the forces shaping global social, political and economic change. The College promotes and supports cooperative alliances with stakeholders and outstanding teaching, research, and service.

Political Science Learning Objectives related to the C.B.G.A. Mission

Students will:

1. Develop an understanding of political structures and processes, including those relating to elections, policy making, and policy implementation.
3. Develop problem solving and analytical skills through an understanding of contemporary methods of political science research and analysis.
4. Develop verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills.

Any student eligible for and requesting academic accommodations due to a disability is required to provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services, Clement 203 (XX7605), within the first two weeks of the semester.

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Class Data Sheet
Political Science 210.881

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UTM's typical POSC 210 course focuses on the structure of the American political system, with an emphasis on the following topics: the development of the American Constitution; our system of federalism and how the national and state governments divide and compete for power; and the struggles between competing political parties, candidates, and interest groups for their share of power in the political system. For GSH 2012, the theme will be "A Government of Laws, or Men? – The Role of the Individual in American Constitutionalism." We will examine the usual 210 topics with an added emphasis on the following theme: The U.S. Constitution is said to be based on a series of principles that reaffirm the equality, intellect, and worth of the common man. But are the all-too-human men and women in our American political community up to the task of providing "government of the people [and] by the people? Are the average men and women who comprise our juries effective truth-seekers, or can they be misled by lawyers' persuasive rhetoric and witness' imperfect memories? Can justice truly be blind when judges in some states take millions in campaign contributions from interest groups? Do American voters truly live up to their responsibility to be informed voters, or are their votes determined by sophisticated media campaigns? We will explore the ethical problems that arise when the pursuit of democratic ideals collides with the realities of human nature.

Course Requirements:

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is expected for this course. Students' success in the course is closely related to regular attendance.

Classroom Conduct: Students are expected to be respectful of other students and the instructor. Students should not engage in any of the following: loud talking; prolonged conversations with classmates; talking on cell phones; text-messaging on cell phones/PDAs; listening to music on any electronic device; use of laptop computers for reasons other than notetaking or 210-related activities. Taping of lectures or other class activities in any electronic medium is not permitted unless specifically approved by the instructor.

During tests, students are not to have books, notes, or other written materials in view. Cell phones, laptops, PDAs and other electronic devices should be "off" and out of view unless approved by the instructor.

Grading Policy: The course grade will be determined by grades on 3 tests and 1 writing assignment.

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|---------------------|-----|
| Exam 1: | 25% |
| Exam 2: | 30% |
| Final Exam: | 30% |
| Writing Assignment: | 15% |

The grade distribution in the course is as follows:

| | |
|----|----------|
| A: | 90-100 |
| B: | 80-89 |
| C: | 70-79 |
| D: | 60-69 |
| F: | below 60 |

Assignment Policy: The writing assignment will attempt to incorporate text and lecture materials with current issues in American politics. The assignment will be graded on content as well as organization and grammatical correctness. Assignments should be typed. Specific details of the assignment will be provided during the semester.

Testing Policy: Any material in the textbooks, lectures, or other materials (e.g., videos, handouts) are subject to inclusion on the exams. While not all lecture material may be included in the text, the instructor uses the lectures primarily to review text material and to focus on the most relevant topics in terms of testing. Tests may be comprised of multiple choice, true/false, and/or short essay questions. Bring two #2 pencils for each test. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor about arrangements for makeups.

The approximate dates of the exams are listed on the schedule on the next page. The final is not comprehensive.

Lecture, Reading, and Testing Schedule

| DATE (Week of ____) | TOPICS | READING (Stevenson) | P.S. Learning Objective(s) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| June 4-8 | Government & the People; the Development of the Constitution; Federalism; begin Participation & Public Opinion | Chs. 1-2, 4-5 | 1,3 |
| June 11-15 | 1st Exam: Tues., June 12 Interest Groups; Parties; Campaigns & Candidates | Chs. 7-8 | 1, 3, 4 1,3 |
| June 18-22 | Campaigns & Candidates, cont. 2nd Exam: Wed., June 20 Media; intro to Supreme Court | Ch. 11 Ch. 6 | 1,3 1, 3, 4 |
| June 25-29 | Civil Liberties; Civil Rights <i>June 26: Writing Assignment Due</i> **Final Exam** | Ch. 3 | 1,3 4 1, 3, 4 |