

POL 201P/AMS 301P: Introduction to American Politics

Time: Tue./Thur., 11:00 am – 12:15 pm
Location: Stanford Residential College 105
Web: <http://klofstad.weebly.com/>

Professor Casey A. Klofstad
Office: 314-G Jenkins Hall
Office Hours: Wed., 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
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Course Description and Objectives

This course provides students with an overview of the American national government and the operation of its political system. The course is broken into three main parts. We begin by examining who the American people are, what they want, and how they articulate their wishes to the government. The second section of the course addresses how the American government is designed and how it functions. The final third of the course examines the impact that the actions of government have on the citizenry.

Requirements

Participation: 10%

Attending lecture, completion of reading assignments, and active participation in class are required. As part of being an informed student of American politics, students are expected to keep up to date on current events by reading a newspaper each day. I may give quizzes in lecture to assess the progress of the class.

Examination 1: 30% (Tuesday, February 19)

The first midterm will cover all of the material from the Introduction and Part 1 of the course. It will be comprised of a combination of multiple choice questions, short answer essays, and identifications. Students will be responsible for all material covered in lecture and the readings. Make up examinations will only be given in extreme circumstances, and will not be scheduled without prior consent.

Examination 2: 30% (Thursday, April 4)

The second midterm will be structured like the first, and will cover all of the material from Part 2 of the course. Make up examinations will only be given in extreme circumstances, and will not be scheduled without prior consent.

Examination 3: 30% (Thursday, May 2)

The third midterm will be structured like the others, and will cover all of the material from Part 3 of the course. Make up examinations will only be given in extreme circumstances, and will not be scheduled without prior consent.

Experiment: +2 points on final grade (dates/times to be announced)

I may conduct an experiment with students this semester. Your participation is voluntary.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. By submitting materials to meet course requirements you assert that the work is your own. "Minor" infractions, such as failure to adequately cite source materials will lead to an F (0 points) on the assignment. Omission, outright copying of materials, or cheating in any form will lead to an F in the course and referral to the Honor Council.

Class Cancellation

In the event a class is canceled (due to natural disaster, instructor illness, etc.) you are still responsible for having done the work assigned on this syllabus by its due date.

Required Text

Greenberg, Edward S. & Benjamin I. Page. 2011. *The Struggle for Democracy* (10th Edition).

Class Schedule/Readings

Introduction

Tuesday, January 15: Introduction and Course Overview

Thursday, January 17: Democracy and American Politics (Chapter 1)

Tuesday, January 22: NO CLASS TODAY

Thursday, January 24: Foundations and Political Culture (Chapters 1 & 4)

Part 1: The People and Their Ties to American Government

Tuesday, January 29: Public Opinion (Chapter 5)

Thursday, January 31: NO CLASS TODAY

Tuesday, February 5: Electoral Participation (Chapter 10)

Thursday, February 7: Interest Groups (Chapter 7)

Tuesday, February 12: Social Movements (Chapter 8)

Thursday, February 14: The Mass Media (Chapter 6)

Tuesday, February 19: Examination 1

Part 2: Political Institutions and Elected Officials

Thursday, February 21: The American Constitution (Chapters 2 & 4)

Tuesday, February 26: American Federalism (Chapter 3)

Thursday, February 28: The Party System (Chapter 9)

Tuesday, March 5: Electoral Politics (Chapter 10)

Thursday, March 7: NO CLASS TODAY

Sunday, March 9 – Sunday, March 17: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 19: Congress (Chapter 11)

Thursday, March 21: The Presidency (Chapter 12)

Tuesday, March 26: The Bureaucracy (Chapter 13)

Thursday, March 28: NO CLASS TODAY

Tuesday, April 2: The Courts (Chapter 14)

Thursday, April 4: Examination 2

Part 3: Political Outcomes

Tuesday, April 9: Civil Liberties (Chapter 15)

Thursday, April 11: NO CLASS TODAY

Tuesday, April 16: Civil Rights (Chapter 16)

Thursday, April 18: Social Policy (chapter entitled either “Social Safety Nets” or “Domestic Policies”)

Tuesday, April 23: Economic Policy (Chapters 4 & chapter entitled either “The Budget and Economic Politics” or “Domestic Policies”)

Thursday, April 25: Foreign Policy (Chapters 4 & the chapter titled “Foreign Policy and National Defense”)

Thursday, May 2: Examination 3 (11:00 am – 1:30 pm)