

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

POL 201 (SECTION F), SPRING 2010

MWF, 1:25 – 2:15, MM 100

Arthur M. Simon, J.D., Ph.D.

Office: 314-N Jenkins Building (School of Business)

Hours: MW: 2:30 – 3:30 (and by appointment)

Phone: (305) 284-4013; **E-mail:** asimon@miami.edu

SYLLABUS

Course Objectives. The course is designed to provide initial instruction to undergraduate students in various facets of the governmental process and our Constitution. The course examines not only who governs the American national government but also limitations imposed upon the three branches of government and the federal bureaucracy. Issues concerning federalism, individual liberties and civil rights are also covered. Special attention is given to the electoral process, political parties and voter behavior.

Textbook. *The Struggle for Democracy*, 9th Ed. Edward Greenberg and Benjamin Page

Limited portions of this textbook are assigned as required reading. See attached Schedule of Class Assignments. Note: *Students should bring their books to class every day.*

Dimensions of Evaluation. Final grades are determined in accordance with these criteria:

First Midterm Examination	15%
Second Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	45%
Issue Paper (Term Paper)	10%
Class Attendance & Participation	10% (negative)

Examinations. Students may be tested on *anything* covered in required reading assignments (whether or not the material is specifically covered in class lectures). Likewise, students may be tested on *anything* covered in class lectures (whether or not the material is specifically covered in required reading assignments.) The final examination is (somewhat) cumulative.¹ Make-up exams are not offered in this course, *absent a demonstrable showing of a compelling need and a university accepted excuse.*

Course Requirements. Students are expected to regularly *attend class*. Failure to attend class with requisite regularity can lead to a failing grade, if only because material covered in class is likely to be emphasized on examinations. Students are expected to be prepared when they attend class. **As such, students should do all required readings listed in the Schedule of Class Assignments, and be ready to discuss them, before coming to class.** Preparation and participation can contribute materially to a good grade in this course.

Also, it would be advisable to stay informed about current affairs, especially at the national level. As time permits, we will endeavor to discuss topical issues that relate directly to the subject matter of this course.

¹ During the last week of class, your instructor will provide more detailed information about the Final Examination.

Study Guides. At the end of each week (commencing in Week 2) your instructor will post a study guide on the class Blackboard. The study guide is intended to provide students with a convenient tool to review material assigned as reading and covered in class lectures during the week in question. (Therefore each study guide covers one chapter in the textbook). If used properly, these study guides will greatly enable you to focus your thoughts and prepare for upcoming examinations.

It is strongly recommended that students form *study groups* to regularly review together the study guides. This may be the most effective way for students to keep abreast of required course material and become fully prepared for examinations.

Classroom Behavior. Students may use computers in class *solely for purposes of taking notes*. Students may use electronic devices in class to record lectures *upon the express prior approval of the instructor*. All other electronic devices (including cell phones) *are to be turned off*.

Students may not access the Internet for any reason in class. Students may not send or receive emails or instant messages in class.

Students are expected to be fully attentive in class. As such, students may not use class time for personal reading or correspondence, or for any other matter not specifically related to this course.

Any student who violates any of these rules of behavior will be told to immediately leave the classroom. In the event of repeated violations, a student will be told to formally withdraw from the class.

Needless to say, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student violating the University of Miami honor code will receive a grade of "F" for the course and will be reported to the honor council.

Issue Paper. Students are required to prepare and timely submit a paper on any issue pertaining to the subject matter covered by THIS course (American National Government). *Topics for student papers must be approved in advance by your instructor and papers must adhere to a prescribed format*. Each student must submit a written request to the instructor for approval of a research topic on or before Friday, **February 12**, but no later! Papers are due Monday, **April 26**. Timeliness is a virtue. Tardiness is unacceptable.

Detailed INSTRUCTIONS are posted on the class Blackboard. *Students must read these instructions carefully and follow them correctly*. Failure to adhere to instructions will result in a substantial reduction in grade. A few SAMPLE ISSUE PAPERS (written by former POL 211 students) are also posted on the Blackboard for your convenience and edification. The sample papers concern the following issue: *Whether capital punishment should be abolished in the United States?* Consequently, students in this class may *not* select this particular topic for their issue papers. Certain other topics are also disallowed. They are specified in the issue paper instructions.

Note: Your instructor does *not* review drafts of issue papers in this course. Please be advised that these papers do *not* qualify for UM writing credit. Students who feel especially challenged by writing assignments should consider making an appointment for counseling at the UM Writing Center. <http://www.as.miami.edu/writingcenter/>

SCHEDULE OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is subject to revision upon the instructor's sole discretion.

TEXTBOOK: *The Struggle for Democracy*, Edward Greenberg and Benjamin Page

WEEK 1	1/20-22	WED: Review Syllabus; FRI: Introduction to American National Government (No assignment)
WEEK 2	1/25-29	Ch. 1 – Democracy and American Politics
WEEK 3	2/1-5	Ch. 2 – The Constitution
WEEK 4	2/8-12	Ch. 3 – Federalism: States and Nation <u>Note</u> : Proposed topics for student papers are due FRI, 2/12
WEEK 5	2/15-19	MON: FIRST MIDTERM EXAM W&F: Ch. 7 – Interest Groups and Business Corporations
WEEK 6	2/22-26	Ch. 8 – Social Movements
WEEK 7	3/1-5	Ch. 9 – Political Parties**
WEEK 8	3/8-12	M&W: Ch. 10 – Participation, Voting, Elections FRI: TBD
WEEK 9	3/15-19	SPRING RECESS
WEEK 10	3/22-26	Ch. 11 – Congress
WEEK 11	3/29-4/2	MON: SECOND MIDTERM EXAM W&F: Ch. 12 – Presidency
WEEK 12	4/5-9	Ch. 12 – Presidency (cont'd)
WEEK 13	4/12-16	Ch. 13 – Federal Bureaucracy Ch. 14 – Federal Courts
WEEK 14	4/19-23	Ch. 15 – Freedom: The Struggle for Civil Liberties**
WEEK 15	4/26-30	Ch. 15 – Civil Liberties (cont'd)? Ch. 16 – Civil Rights: The Struggle for Political Equality <u>Note</u> : Student papers are due MON, 4/26.
	5/10	MON: FINAL EXAMINATION (11:00 – 1:30)

** Students should be forewarned that Chapters 9 and 15 are especially challenging.

