

## **POL 201 – Introduction to American National Government Spring 2010**

**Class Time:** MWF 8-9:15  
**Classroom:** MM 100  
**Section:** N

**Professor:** Dr. Christopher Mann  
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**Office Location:** Jenkins 314-L  
**Office Hours:** Tu & Th 9:30 to 10:30, and by appointment.

**Course Description:** The primary goal of this course is to provide an overview of politics in the United States for political science majors and non-majors with an interest in understanding American political institutions; elections, campaigns, and voting; public opinion; and political behavior.

The material for this course will be presented in lecture, readings, and discussion. The readings provide an in depth look at important aspects of American politics. You are expected to complete the readings prior to class. Attendance and participation are required. You will be graded on your preparation and contributions.

My goal is to engage you in the many fascinating aspects of American politics. We cannot cover everything on this broad and important topic in lecture, discussion, and the readings, so office hours are the appropriate time to discuss additional ideas and materials that may interest you. Of course, office hours are a valuable resource if you have questions about lecture, readings, assignments, or exams.

**Required Textbook:** The required textbook for this course is *The Struggle for Democracy*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition by Edward Greenberg & Benjamin I. Page. (Referred to as "GP" in the assigned readings below). The remaining assigned readings will be available on the class Blackboard website.

In addition to the assigned readings below, you should read a journalistic news publication which covers national politics on a daily basis. This may be your hometown newspaper or a national/regional newspaper (for example, *The Miami Herald*, *The Politico*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Boston Globe*, etc). We will discuss current events in American politics in class and you will be responsible for information about current political events on exams.

**Course Website:** All students officially registered for the course can access the course's Blackboard website at: [www.miami.edu/blackboard](http://www.miami.edu/blackboard). Your Blackboard User Name is your UM Email Alias (you can find your UM Email Alias on MyUM at [www.miami.edu/myum](http://www.miami.edu/myum)) and your initial password is your birth date. The Blackboard site includes a course syllabus, announcements, readings, assignments, and any other relevant course information.

**Class Decorum:** In addition to learning about American politics, you are preparing for 'real life' after graduation. As such, you are expected to comport yourself in class just as you would as a professional in the 'real world'. You are expected to be on time, pay attention, refrain from talking in class or other interruptions, or engage in other distractions (text messaging, surfing the web on your computer, etc).

Eating and gum chewing are not allowed in class. You may bring water or other non-alcoholic beverages in a spill resistant container for consumption during class.

*Cell phones must be turned off and put away prior to class* (along with any other electronic device that will ring, buzz, or make other noises/flash lights/etc).

Failure to behave with proper decorum in class may result in grade penalties.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty in any form is not tolerated. By submitting materials to meet course requirements you assert that the work is your own.

This policy is required to encourage consistent ethical behavior among students and to foster a climate of fair competition. Personal integrity is a quality that is expected and respected at the University of Miami. Consequently, the Undergraduate Student Honor Code in is force at all times. Students are responsible for reading, understanding, and upholding the Honor Code which is available from the Office of the Dean of Students.

All work submitted in this class must be original work and cannot be submitted to more than one class. Your grade in the class and student status may be affected by any violations. In addition to grade penalties – including failing the course – violations of academic integrity will be referred to the Honor Council for further action.

Students may not work together on graded assignments without express permission or unless explicitly indicated on the course syllabus.

**Email:** Email is the most reliable way to reach me. Although I try to respond quickly, I do not check email constantly so expect delays of up to 12-24 hours during the week and occasionally no response between Friday afternoon and Monday morning. If you need to reach me, please plan ahead. When sending an email message, please include your full name and the course number.

For class related communication, I will use the email address you have listed in Blackboard (the one you registered through MyUM) to contact you, including any important announcements, so it is important to make sure that your email account listed with MyUM is up-to-date.

**Accessibility Resources:** Reasonable accommodations will be provided by the instructor or through Accessibility Resources (AR) for students who have a documented disability and are registered with AR. Please contact me by e-mail or during office hours during the first two weeks of school if you will be working with AR to arrange alternative accommodations. Students may speak with the instructor or contact Accessibility Resources at (305) 284-2374 or for more information about receiving classroom accommodations.

**Exam Make-up Policy:** No make-up exams will be given during the terms except for extraordinary situations. If you have a valid reason (documented illness or major family circumstances) for missing an exam, arrangements may be made for a make-up exam or your cumulative final exam will be weighted more heavily. If you are going to miss an exam, you must contact me BY E-MAIL prior to the exam and as soon as you are aware that you will miss the exam to avoid receiving a zero for the exam.

**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.

*Special Note on class cancellation: My wife is due to give birth on March 21<sup>st</sup>, however the baby may arrive early or late. If any class is cancelled due to the birth, I will amend the syllabus accordingly. I will try to notify you in advance if class will be cancelled, but please understand that this may not be possible.*

**Grading:** The class will be graded based upon participation and three exams. The first mid-term exam will cover material up to that point in the course. The second mid-term exam will cover material from the first mid-term to the second mid-term. The mid-term exam will cover material from the second mid-term to the third mid-term. The 3<sup>rd</sup> mid-term exam is scheduled for the 'final' exam timeslot for this course: Tuesday, May 11 at 8 am.

The exams are not cumulative, but I may ask questions on the later exams that assume you have knowledge from earlier in the course. Each exam will have a similar format, including true-false questions, definition-importance items, and brief essays.

The value of each exam in your grade is roughly proportional to the amount of material covered by each exam. This structure provides an opportunity for you to learn what I expect on exams and, if necessary, it provides a great opportunity to improve over the course of the semester.

I will offer a review session during the class meeting prior to each mid-term exam and an optional review session during reading period. Review sessions are not a summary of the entire course. I strongly recommend studying in advance of the review sessions so that you and your classmates get the most out of this time.

Mid-term exam #1	14%
Mid-term exam #2	28%
Mid-term exam #3	42%
Participation	16%

I am willing to review the assignment of a grade you believe to be incorrect, but a request to review a grade means that I will fully reconsider the grade assigned. Therefore, the assigned grade may go *up* or *down* based on my review.

### **Format of Lectures**

Since this course covers a large amount of information, the powerpoints used during lecture use a color scheme to help highlight which material is most important. The items in **green** are topics/ideas/facts which you may be tested on directly. The items in **orange** are topics/ideas/facts which are included to help you understand broader topics: usually they are more detailed explanations, political history, or examples.

Beware! If you ignore the items in orange, you will have difficulty understanding the course and performing well on the exams. Rather than copying these items verbatim from the slides, you should be listening carefully to be sure that you can integrate these ideas into the central concepts (presented in green).

I will not post powerpoints or outlines on Blackboard, so please do not ask.

### Course Outline & Readings

Tuesday, January 19, 2010	<b>Review of Syllabus</b>
Thursday, January 21, 2010	<b>Evaluating Politics</b> - GP Chapter 1: Democracy & American Politics
Tuesday, January 26, 2010	<b>The Founding</b> - GP Chapter 2: The Constitution - <i>The Constitution (in GP Appendix)</i> - <i>The Declaration of Independence (in GP Appendix)</i>
Thursday, January 28, 2010	<b>The Constitution</b> - GP Chapter 3: Federalism - <i>The Federalist Papers, #51 (in GP Appendix)</i>
Tuesday, February 02, 2010	<b>Who Are "We the People" today?</b> - GP Chapter 4: Structural Foundations of American Government and Politics - Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America", <i>American Political Science Review</i>
Thursday, February 04, 2010	Mid-term Review Session
Tuesday, February 09, 2010	<b>1st MID-TERM</b>
Thursday, February 11, 2010 Tuesday, February 16, 2010	<b>Congress</b> - GP Chapter 11: Congress - Anthony King, "Running Scared" (On-line @ <a href="http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97jan/scared/scared.htm">http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97jan/scared/scared.htm</a> ) - Joe Uscinski, et al, "Congress and Foreign Policy: Congressional Action on the Darfur Genocide", PS: Political Science - Greg Koger, "Position Taking & Co-Sponsorship", <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i>
Thursday, February 18, 2010 Tuesday, February 23, 2010	<b>Presidency</b> - GP Chapter 12: The Presidency - Jon Bond, Richard Flesicher, & Dan Wood, "The Marginal and Time - Varying Effect of Public Approval on Success in Congress", <i>Journal of Politics</i>
Thursday, February 25, 2010	<b>The Executive Branch</b> - GP Chapter 13: The Executive Branch - Mathew McCubbins & Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms", <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> - Bowman & West, "To 'Re-Hatch' Public Employees or Not", <i>Public Administration Review</i>
Tuesday, March 02, 2010	<b>The Judiciary</b> - GP Chapter 14: The Courts
Thursday, March 04, 2010	<b>The Role of the Media in Politics</b> - GP Chapter 6: The News Media

Tuesday, March 09, 2010	Mid-term Review Session
Thursday, March 11, 2010	<b>2nd MID-TERM</b>
Tuesday, March 16, 2010	<b>NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK</b>
Thursday, March 18, 2010	<b>NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK</b>
Tuesday, March 23, 2010	<b>Public Opinion</b>
Thursday, March 25, 2010	- GP Chapter 5: Public Opinion
Tuesday, March 30, 2010	<b>Campaigns &amp; Political Participation</b>
Thursday, April 01, 2010	- GP Chapter 10: Voting, Campaigns & Elections - Casey Klofstad, "Talk Leads to Recruitment: How Discussions of Politics and Current Events Increase Civic Participation", Political Research Quarterly - Eline A. de Rooij, Donald Green & Alan Gerber, "Field Experiments on Political Behavior and Collective Actions", Annual Review of Political Science, 2009
Tuesday, April 06, 2010	<b>Political Parties</b>
	- GP Chapter 9: Political Parties
Thursday, April 08, 2010	<b>Interest Groups</b>
Tuesday, April 13, 2010	- GP Chapter 7: Interest Groups & Business Corporations - Greg Koger & Jennifer Victor "Polarized Agents?: Campaign Contributions by Lobbyists", PS: Political Science - George Gonzalez, "The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan: Environmental or Economic Sustainability", Polity
Thursday, April 15, 2010	<b>Social Movements</b>
	- GP Chapter 8: Social Movements
Tuesday, April 20, 2010	<b>Civil Liberties</b>
	- GP Chapter 15: Civil Liberties
Thursday, April 22, 2010	<b>Civil Rights</b>
	- GP Chapter 16: Civil Rights
Tuesday, April 27, 2010	<b>The Budget &amp; The Economy</b>
	- GP Chapter 17: The Budget and Economic Policies
Thursday, April 29, 2010	<b>Foreign Policy &amp; National Defense</b>
	- GP Chapter 19: Foreign Policy & National Defense
Reading Days (May 1-4)	<u>Optional</u> Mid-term Review Session
Tuesday, May 11, 2010	<b>3rd MID-TERM - 8 AM in MM100</b>

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule and syllabus with notice to the students.*

## Advice For Being Successful in Class

Most of you will know instinctively much or all of what is below. However, experience has taught me that there are one or two people every semester who miss an important point or two.

Therefore, in order to answer (or better yet avoid) as many questions as possible in advance:

- The time to begin caring about your grade is at the beginning of the semester, not the night before an exam or, even worse, the week before the final.
- It is really important to come to class. Lectures expand on the text and other readings, they do not simply repeat it. Occasionally, someone will say that in her other classes, the instructor repeats what is in the text, and studying at home has always allowed her to pass before. This is not that sort of class!
- All the material is important: I wouldn't ask you to read something I thought was trivial, or bother to prepare lectures I didn't think were important. Please don't ask what you should study, since the answer will be all of these things.
- If you use a laptop for your notes, be sure to back up everything. Laptops have an intensely upsetting habit of crashing, often right before exams.
- It is wise to read over your notes after class, and fill in blanks while the material is still fresh in your mind. Things that one thinks one will remember become dimmer in one's mind as time passes.
- Try to study for exams ahead of time. That way, if something doesn't make sense, you have plenty of time to ask for an explanation. Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Exam questions test how well you have absorbed and integrated the information presented in readings and in class, as well as your analytic skills. Do not assume that you can get by with simply giving your opinion on a question, without incorporating what you (should) have learned from the readings and lectures.
- Exam questions require you to *understand* the material, not merely to memorize it. You will need to make connections between different parts of lectures and reading. Answers will require thought, not simply regurgitation of flash cards.
- Some questions have more than one part; be sure you have answered all of them
- Re-read your answers before turning in the blue book. Be sure that you have answered the question actually asked in its entirety. It is also helpful to correct any errors in spelling and grammar.
- Occasionally, an emergency occurs and you will be unable to come to class. Since, by definition, no one plans on an emergency, think ahead. Find a classmate or two, preferably people with neat handwriting and orderly thought processes, to borrow notes from if the need should arise. Exchange telephone numbers and email addresses. In the event you miss class due to an emergency, I will be happy to answer questions during office hours about things that are unclear from the notes you receive – just as I am happy to answer questions about things that are unclear when you attend class. However, I will not summarize or repeat the lecture for you.