

PLS 1153: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION
Section 003 (MWF, 11- 11:50 p.m.)
Eastern Illinois University
Spring, 2009

Instructor: Richard D. Caldwell

Phone: 581-2217 (office), E-mail: rdcaldwell2@eiu.edu

Office: Coleman Hall 2335

Office Hours: M, W: 1:30 - 2:30 p.m., T, TH: 2 - 3 p.m., and by appointment

DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course which examines the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution and political system. In addition to learning in detail about the conception of the Constitution and the document's relevance on today's society, this course will also focus on the three branches of government, civil rights and civil liberties, government institutions, political parties, the media, political behavior, and the electoral process. Students are expected to keep current with contemporary political events.

REQUIRED TEXT

Larry Berman and Bruce Allen Murphy Approaching Democracy, 6th Edition

POLICIES

1. All papers are to be turned in to me personally in class or placed in my mailbox. No papers will be accepted through E-mail.
2. All assignments should be handed in on time. If you are unable to hand in an assignment on time, you should inform me as soon as possible as to why said assignment is not being handed in on time. With the exception of medical emergencies, all papers handed in more than one week after the due date will not be accepted. The **late penalty** for all papers unexcused will be one letter grade. If you are missing class due to an excused academic or athletic commitment, you must turn in your work early in order for the late policy to not apply.
3. If you miss an exam or quiz due to a documented excuse, you must reschedule a make-up exam no later than the first day you return to class (with appropriate documentation for all days missed). The make-up exams/quizzes may differ in content and format from the regular exams/quizzes.
4. Turn off ALL electronic devices in class!!!
5. Students are expected to arrive to class in a timely fashion and be prepared by the time class starts. Habitual lateness is rude to the instructor as well as your classmates, and will not be tolerated.

DISABILITIES

Students with a disability documented through the campus disability services office should notify the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will do his best to accommodate your needs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to comply with the University's STUDENT CONDUCT CODE in ALL facets of the course. Any student who cheats and/or plagiarizes on an exam or quiz will receive an F grade (in the form of a 0 score) for that portion of the course along with formal written notification to the Judicial Affairs Office. Keep in mind that a student cannot drop a course with an academic misconduct allegation unresolved.

EVALUATION FORMAT

Your final grade is based on the following evaluation format:

Exams: There will be three exams (worth 100 points each) which will cover both lecture and reading assignments. All exams will include 50 multiple choice questions.

- (Note: Your best exam score will be doubled)

Writing Assignment: Political Socialization Paper (worth 50 points)

- Write a three to four page informative paper where you **analyze** the various agents of political socialization on your own beliefs.
- Which agents' of political socialization have had the most impact on your political beliefs? In what ways?
- What specific circumstances/ instances/ experiences have shaped your political (or lack of political) views?
- Students should use a **minimum of three scholarly** sources to supplement and guide responses (*The textbook cannot be used as a main source*).
- **Be sure to include a title page (with a title), proper transitions, an introduction, and a conclusion. Your grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and organization will affect your final grade. Don't forget to proofread your papers! Use any consistent citation style for references, but make sure to attach a bibliography.**
- This assignment is due at the beginning of class on **Friday, April 10th**

Unannounced Quizzes: There will be six unannounced quizzes given during the semester (worth ten points each) covering material in the readings. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Exams = 400 points
Writing Assignment = 50 points
Unannounced Quizzes = 50 points

Total = 500 points

A= 90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=Below 60%

COURSE OUTLINE

- **Topic 1: Foundations of American Democracy**

Approaching Democracy

Chapter 1: p.2-25

Appendix 1: Introducing the Concept of Approaching Democracy p.597-598

The Founding and the Constitution

Chapter 2: p.26-73

The Constitution of the United States: p.74-93

Appendix 4: *The Declaration of Independence*: p.603-604

Appendix 6: *The Federalist No.51, James Madison*: p.609-610

Federalism

Chapter 3: p.94-131

Civil Liberties

Chapter 13: p.444-491

First Examination: Friday, February 20th

Civil Rights and Political Equality

Chapter 14: p.492-531

- **Topic 2: Linkage Institutions**

Public Opinion

Chapter 8: p.278-309

The Media

Chapter 12: p. 418-443

Political Parties

Chapter 9: p. 310-347

Participation, Voting, and Election

Chapter 10: p. 348-379

Second Examination: Friday, April 3rd

Interest Groups

Chapter 11: 380-417

Appendix 5: *The Federalist No.10, James Madison*: p.605-608

- **Topic 3: Political Institutions**

Congress

Chapter 4: p. 130-177

The Presidency

Chapter 5: p. 178-209

The Judiciary

Chapter 6: p. 210-249

The Bureaucracy

Chapter 7: p. 250-277

Important dates to remember: January 19th (M.L. King's Birthday Observed), February 13th (Lincoln's Birthday Observed), March 16-20th (Spring Break), April 3rd (Last day to Drop class with a W), May 1st (Last day of class).

Final Examination: Thursday, May 7th @ 10:15 a.m. -12:15 p.m.