

PLS 1153 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Spring 2009

Professor: Dr. Barbara L. Poole

Office Hours: MTWF: 10:00-10:50 or by appointment

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COURSE OBJECTIVE:

- The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the fundamental concepts of the American political system. This course is designed in such a manner so as to provide the student with a basic knowledge of the institutions and procedures of American politics. Contemporary political events will be used from time to time in order to illuminate topics which will be covered in class.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

- Please turn off **all** cell phones before entering the classroom.
- Arrive to class on time. Habitual lateness is rude, and will make me grumpy!
- You may and should question the opinions of others in the class (including the professor), but do so in a respectful way.

DISABILITIES

- Students with a disability that requires special arrangements should notify me during the first week of the course. I will do my best to accommodate your needs.

TEXTBOOKS

- Lasco, Joseph, and Baker, Ralph. 2008. *AMGOV*. New York: McGraw Hill.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- The student is responsible for all reading assignments as well as all lecture and class discussion materials. In addition, students should be aware of current political events and issues. Students will also be expected to actively participate in class discussions.

EXAMS (300 POINTS)

- There will be three examinations. Each exam will count as 100 points. Each test will cover assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. Each test will consist of multiple choice and identifications (definitions). Study guides will be given to you to help you prepare for the exams.
- The third exam will not be comprehensive.
- Make up exams will only be given in accordance with University policy. **I retain the right to modify both the content and format of all make-up exams.**

TENTATIVE EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

- Exam I – February 13
- Exam II – March 27
- Exam III – Final exam week

- **I reserve the right to change the dates of the first two exams.**

CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENTS (30 POINTS EACH FOR ASSIGNMENT #1 AND #2; 40 POINTS FOR ASSIGNMENT #3)

- You will be required to complete three homework assignments. Each assignment will consist of a few questions that may require you to do outside research. For example, you may be required to look up information on your congressional representative or an interest group. Or you may be asked to analyze your own political vies. You will be given each assignment at least 2 weeks before it is due. Additional information will be given in class. One grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late.

GRADING: Grades will be based on three exams (100 points each) and three critical thinking assignments (30 points each for the first two; 40 points for the third assignment)

360-400 =A

320 –359 =B

280 – 319 =C

240 – 279 =D

239 and below =F

READING OUTLINE

| Day | TOPIC | Losco and Baker |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Jan 12 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Jan 19 | CONSTITUTION/FEDERALISM | 2,3 |
| Jan 26 | CIVIL LIBERTIES | 4 |
| Feb 2 | CIVIL LIBERTIES | 4 |
| Feb 9 | CIVIL RIGHTS | 5 |
| Feb 16 | PUB. OP. & POL SOC | 6 |
| Feb 23 | POLITICAL PARTICIPATION | 7 |
| Mar 2 | INTEREST GROUPS | 8 |
| Mar 9 | PARTIES AND CAMPAIGNS | 9 |
| Mar 16 | SPRING BREAK!!! | |
| Mar 23 | MEDIA | 10 |
| Mar 30 | CONGRESS | 11 |
| April 6 | PRESIDENCY | 12 |
| April 13 | BUREAUCRACY | 13 |
| April 20 | COURTS | 14 |
| April 27 | PUBLIC POLICY | 15 |

ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE BE MADE IN CLASS REGARDING CHANGES IN READING OUTLINE OR DUE DATES FOR EXAMINATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS!