

PLS 1153G

American Government and the Constitution

Spring 2009

Instructor: John Morris

Office: Coleman 2110

Office Hours: 11 - 12 MWF; 1 - 2 M or by appointment.

Office Phone: 581-5989/2523

E-mail: jsmorris@eiu.edu

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 to provide the student with a basic knowledge of the institutions and procedures of American politics.

Disabilities:

Students with a disability that requires special arrangements should notify me during the first week of the course.

Textbook:

Berman & Murphy, *Approaching Democracy*, 6th Edition.

Course Requirements:

The student is responsible for all reading assignments as well as lecture and class discussion materials. The student will be expected to be aware of current political events and issues.

Exams:

There will be four examinations. Each test will cover assigned readings, lectures and class discussions. Each test will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. 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.

Critical Thinking Assignments:

There will be two in class critical thinking writing assignments. Each assignment will be worth 50 points. Further instructions will be given in class.

Grading:

Grading will be based on four exams(100 points each), two critical thinking assignments(50 points each).

A= 450-500

B= 400-449

C= 350-399

D= 300-349

F= 348- Below

Make-up exams/late papers will be allowed only for excused absences. Failure to meet this obligation will result in a lower grade.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, or helping another student to cheat on any class assignment or exam, as well as plagiarism. It is the instructor's obligation to report all instances of academic dishonesty and the student will receive a zero for that assignment.

Extra-Curricular Activity:

If there is a conflict due to extra-curricular activities, please bring me a copy of your schedule.

Course Outline:

Introduction

Chapter 1- Approaching Democracy

Chapter 2- The Founding & The Constitution

Chapter 3- Federalism

Exam I

Chapter 4- Congress

Chapter 5- The Presidency

Chapter 6- The Judiciary
Chapter 7- The Bureaucracy

Exam II

Chapter 8- Public Opinion

Chapter 9- Political Parties

Chapter 10- Participation, Voting, & Elections

Exam III

Chapter 13- Civil Liberties

Chapter 14- Civil Rights & Political Equality

Chapter 15- Domestic & Economic Policy

Chapter 16- Foreign Policy

Final Exam

***please note this schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion!!!**