

American Government -1560
Youngstown State University
Department of Political Science

Dr. Cryshanna A. Jackson
Office: DeBartolo Hall - Rm. 444A
Phone: (330) 941-2114
Email: cjackson@ysu.edu
Office Hours: T/TH 12:30-2:00 PM
 W 2:00-4:00 PM

Class Time: T/TH 9:30-10:45AM
Fall Semester 2009
3 credits
Course Code 40366

This course is an introduction to the American political system. This course is designed to instruct students in regard to the American constitutional system (legislative, executive, and judicial branches) of government as well as the various means of access to that system such as voting and political parties.

Course Objectives:

- A. Students will have a solid understanding of the basics of American politics.
- B. Students will learn about the American political system and stay up on current events
- C. Students will be encouraged to enhance their perspective in regards to the relationship of the political system, government, and voting.

Required Text: Greenberg, E. & Page, B. (2009) *America's Democratic Republic 3rd Ed.* Pearson Longman: New York.

General Education Program Information: Political Science 1560 is an approved course under the Societies and Institutions domain.

Academic integrity:

Academic honesty is essential to the educational process and serves to protect the integrity of the University community. Therefore, all members of the University community have a responsibility of maintaining high standards of honesty and ethical practice. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty constitute a serious violation of University conduct regulations. Students who engage in dishonesty in any form on examinations, papers, and course assignments, or who illegally possess examinations shall be charged with academic dishonesty. Furthermore, students shall not submit the work of someone else as their own or utilize ideas taken from other sources without properly citing the source. In addition, work completed in one course that is submitted in another course may constitute academic dishonesty. Students should consult with the faculty member if they are not sure what may constitute academic dishonesty.

Source: Article IX, Section A, of The Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct.

Disability services for students:

Americans with Disabilities Act: "Anyone requiring special adaptations or accommodations should inform the instructor as soon as possible. In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services (phone: 330-941-1372) in the Center for Student Progress at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Disability Services."

Course Requirements:

1. Class participation is important. Although attendance is not required, students who are absent will miss any assignments given in class that day. These assignments cannot be made up. You are either in class to participate or you are not.
2. Students are responsible for all information covered in lectures, the text and any outside reading assignments. You **must** check your YSU email account you will receive assignments via email.
3. Students are responsible for taking all exams and quizzes and turning in all assignments as scheduled. Students must notify the professor BEFORE athletic contests or other school-sponsored events in order to reschedule missed exams or quizzes.

Classroom Rules

1. Come to class! Class participation is very important you must be in class to participate.
2. Please turn off cell phones and all other electronic devices (I-pods, blackberries, etc.) It is very important that I have your full attention for class. I will not tolerate disturbing the class.
3. No sleeping in class if you are too tired to come to class and participate then don't come. If you are sleeping in class you will be asked to leave and will not receive points for that day.
4. Do not be afraid to contact me. I am here to help. If there is something you do not understand or would like to discuss more you can come to my office hours, email me, talk with me before/after class, or call me. I always have time for my students!

Evaluation/Grading scale:

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|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Homework/class activities | 100 points |
| 2 Quizzes | 50 points |
| Midterm | 100 points |
| Final Exam | <u>200 points</u> |
| TOTAL | 450 points |

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|------------|
| A= 450-405 |
| B= 404-360 |
| C=359-315 |
| D=314-270 |
| F=313-0 |

CLASS EVALUATION

Homework/Class Activities- There will be various homework and class assignments throughout the semester. You will be required to turn these in as assigned in order to be awarded the points. If you are absent and miss an assignment it CANNOT be made up without consent from me.

Quizzes- There will be two in class quizzes given. The quizzes will cover the topics discussed in class, lecture notes, supplemental materials, along with textbook material.

Midterm-The midterm will cover all topics discussed the first half of class. It will be worth 100 points of your final grade.

Final-The final exam will cover all the topics discussed in this class. I will hand out a review sheet for the final. This exam is worth 200 points of your final grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week of:

Aug. 25 (T/TH-Introduction; Ch. 1, The American Democratic Republic)

Key Concepts Ch. 1: basic principles of the republican and democratic tradition; ways the republican and democratic principles complement and conflict with one another; the standards to use when determining how democratic a political system is.

Sep. 1 (T/TH Ch. 2, The Constitution)

Key Concepts Ch. 2: basic features of Articles of Confederation; why the AOC failed; the Constitutional Convention; basic features of the Constitution; ratifying the Constitution; how the Constitution adapts to current times

Sep. 8 (T/TH Ch. 3, Federalism)

Key Concepts Ch. 3: Federalism as compared to other systems; difference between states' rights and national rights; the importance of the Civil War

Sep. 15 (T/TH Ch. 4, Civil Liberties)

Key Concepts Ch. 4: protection of individual liberty's; provisions of the Constitution used to prevent the infringing on people's rights; importance of the First & Fourteenth Amendments

Sep. 22 (T/TH Ch.5 Civil Rights)

Sep.22 Quiz 1

Key Concepts Ch. 5: distinction between de jure and de facto segregation; why the Constitution contains no references to equality, why civil rights was not a major issue through much of the nineteenth century

Sep. 29 T/TH Ch.6, Public Opinion and Political Learning)

Key Concepts Ch.6: basic principles of public opinion polling; the concept of political socialization, collective public opinion & political culture

Oct. 6 (T/TH Ch. 7, The News Media)

Key Concepts Ch. 7: the role played by the media in a democratic political system; how the media has changed over the course of the nation's history; the major types of media

Oct.13 (T Ch. 8, Interest Groups)

Oct. 15 Exam

Key Concepts Ch. 8 what pluralists see as the beneficial functions served by interest groups; why the US has so many interest groups; various ways interest groups go about trying to influence government policy

Oct. 20 (T/TH Ch. 9, Political Parties)

Key Concepts Ch.9: basic differences between political interest groups and political parties; changes in campaign finance rules; the functions that parties perform; how the party system has evolved over the nation's history; the advantages and disadvantages of two-party and multi-party systems

Oct. 27 (T/TH Ch. 10, Elections and Citizen Participation)

Key Concepts Ch.10: different ways that elections can provide citizens governmental control; how the United States evolved from a system where voting rights were very limited to one of near universal suffrage; voter turnout in the US compared to other western democracies

Nov. 3 (T/TH Ch. 11, Congress)

Key Concepts Ch. 11: different types of powers given to Congress by the Constitution; trustee and delegate theories of representation; the concept of descriptive representation the politics of legislative districting, why Congress organizes itself along party lines

Nov. 10 (T/TH Ch. 12, The Presidency)

Nov.12 Quiz 2

Key Concepts Ch. 12: how the presidential office became much more powerful; the contributions individual presidents have made to the development of the presidency; what the various roles are that contemporary presidents are expected to play

Nov. 17 (T/TH Ch. 13, The Federal Bureaucracy)

Key Concepts Ch. 13: how the bureaucracy developed over the course of the nation's history; federal agencies and their role in government; bureaucrats and how they are selected; the concept of descriptive representation as it applies to the bureaucracy

Nov. 24 (T Ch. 14, The Courts)

Nov. 26 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Key Concepts Ch. 14: distinction between the federal court system and the state court system; what the Constitution says about the judicial branch of government; the origins of the Court's power of judicial review; the structure of the federal court system

Dec. 1 (T/TH Ch.15, Domestic Policy,)

Dec. 3 Review

Key Concepts Ch. 15: the government and the economy; distinction between fiscal and monetary policies; the debate over the proper role of the government; the major objects of expenditure

**FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY DEC.10, 2009
8AM-10AM**