SYLLABUS
Fall 2012
American Government
POS2041 Section 0012 – Monday, 3 credits
Ms. Michaela Fazecas

Office Hrs:	Thursday 9:30 am – 10:30 am and by appointment
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WebCt help page	**http://techrangers.cdws.ucf.edu/support/**
Webcourses	**https://my.ucf.edu/**

Required Text:

GOVT: Sidlow, E. and Beth Henschen. 3rd ed., (2010 or newer)

Course Description:

A study of the dynamics of American national government, including its structure, organization, powers, and procedures.

Course Requirements/Attendance:

You are expected (and it is highly recommended) that you read the assigned chapter prior to each class meeting. Your course schedule below is your guide regarding material that will be covered in class. Do not come to class unprepared and expect me to tell you what the chapter is about. In addition to the required text book, exam questions will also come from class discussions, video clips and/or movies shown in class and other relevant and supplemental sources you will not find in the text book, and which will be lectured on in class. Course attendance is therefore imperative to do well in the class.

I do not post any of my notes on WebCourses, if you miss class, please get notes from a classmate, do not ask me to send you notes or tell you what we discussed in class.

Course Goals:

1. Provide students with a basic understanding of America's political system and its foundation
2. Teach students how the government's institutions/branches work or do not work together
3. Teach students how to critically evaluate information found in the media (opinion vs. fact)
4. Teach students how policies are made and how political interest groups influence/dictate such policies
5. Help students understand that regardless of party affiliation, voting or not voting, government policies affect every aspect of our lives
6. By the end of this course, students should be able to critically evaluate information gleaned from the media, understand the basic functions of government, and ideally become active participants in the American political system

Evaluation Procedures

Grade Categories	Material covered/requirements	Weight toward final grade
Exam I	Foundation and American Political Culture	20%
Exam II	Structure, Bureaucracy and Balance of Power	20%
Exam III	Elections, the Public and 21st Century Media	20%
Discussion	3 class projects, topics assigned in class*	15%
Quiz	5 in class quizzes**	10%
Short essays	Analyze various topics/issues, 3 papers @ 5 points/each***	15%
	Total:	100%

GRADE	%
A	90 +
B	80 +
C	70 +
D	60 +
F	59 and below

***Discussions:** Class will be split into teams (approximately four students/team) during our first class meeting, and instructions on how to complete this in-class project will be delivered at that time.

I do not take attendance; however, if you miss a group discussion or a quiz, it will affect your grade, so it is important that you come to each class in order to receive full credit for these portions of the course grade. It is your responsibility to make sure your name is on the project before turning it in. If your name is missing, you will not receive credit – do not expect your team mates to take responsibility for this; check the project before you hand it in to me.

****Quizzes and discussions are not announced ahead of time, so it is important to come to class and always BRING SCANTRON. Scantrons are offered FREE at the SGA in the Student Union. If you do not bring a scantron to class and a quiz is given, you will be asked to leave the classroom during the quiz.**

NO MAKE UP FOR QUIZZES OR IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS.

Grade Disputes/questions

I post grades and other relevant course information on WebCourses, and it is your responsibility to keep up with this material and to check for updates regularly. If there is a question or discrepancy regarding a grade/credit for a project, you need to notify me within 3 days after it is posted; I will not adjust a grade (if an adjustment is warranted) if you notify me past this deadline.

Assignments

*** PAPER #1 grading criteria for critical thinking paper (total 5 points):

	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point
Pts 1/ each	Locate/identify a current event in a news article – **DO NOT USE: Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, Huffington Post, or blogs, NO EDITORIAL/OPINION PAGES**	Clearly demonstrate understanding of how news/event relates to government policy/issues	Evaluate and integrate information; do not simply narrate the news article	APA style; correct use of citations	Grammar and spelling; presentation

1. PAPER #1

i. Your paper is to be **two to three** pages, typed (double spaced, Times New Roman, black ink, 12 point font, standard margins);

ii. You are required to write a review of a current news article related to material discussed in class and/or government policy/issues in general – this is your opportunity to choose a topic that interests you, as long as you follow the instructions herein.

- **PAPER #1: World News**

  Students are encouraged to use international news sources; nations that speak English outside the US: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and the UK

The review must have the article saved as a pdf and sent with the paper.

Activity Process: "How do I do the assignment?"

1. Choose a news article and make sure you provide source citation
2. Include copy of article and link **(*if you do not attach copy of article, you will lose points*)**
3. Describe briefly what the article is about
4. What is your opinion on the subject/topic discussed in the article and why?
5. How does it relate to government/policies and/or topics discussed in class (if relevant)?

Make sure you put your full name, course and section name at the top of the page.

- Papers are to be delivered electronically via WebCourses (Word document)
- This exercise teaches students to evaluate news information and think about it in a critical way.

CHECK SCHEDULE FOR DUE DATES!

NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED

****** PAPER #2 GRADING CRITERIA FOR CRITICAL THINKING PAPER (TOTAL 5 POINTS):***

	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point
Pts 1/ each	Locate/identify a current event in a news article – **DO NOT USE: Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, Huffington Post, or blogs, NO EDITORIAL/OPINION PAGES**	Clearly demonstrate understanding of how news/event relates to government policy/issues	Evaluate and integrate information; do not simply narrate the news article	APA style; correct use of citations	Grammar and spelling; presentation

2. PAPER #2

iii. Your paper is to be **two to three** pages, typed (double spaced, Times New Roman, black ink, 12 point font, standard margins);

iv. You are required to write a review of a current news article related to material discussed in class and/or government policy/issues in general – this is your opportunity to choose a topic that interests you, as long as you follow the instructions herein.

- **PAPER #2: Domestic/Local News**

The review must have the article saved as pdf and sent with the paper.

Activity Process: "How do I do the assignment?"

1. Choose a news article and make sure you provide source citation
2. Include copy of article and link **(*if you do not attach copy of article, you will lose points*)**
3. Describe briefly what the article is about
4. What is your opinion on the subject/topic discussed in the article and why?
5. How does it relate to government/policies and/or topics discussed in class (if relevant)?

Make sure you put your full name, course and section name at the top of the page.

- Papers are to be delivered electronically via WebCourses (Word document)
- This exercise teaches students to evaluate news information and think about it in a critical way.

CHECK SCHEDULE FOR DUE DATES!

NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED

***GRADING CRITERIA FOR PAPER #3 (TOTAL 5 POINTS):

1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt
Locate/identify diverse sources, **FIVE** minimum; Only TWO online sources (websites/blogs)	Clearly demonstrate understanding of why interest group has stake in topic, and what policy/legislation they target: 1. How does the group influence policy/issue/legislative agenda? 2. Examples of outcomes of that influence? 3. Does it impact you? 4 How?	Evaluate and integrate information; do not simply list items	APA style; correct use of citations; reference page; title page: Name, title, course and section number	Grammar and spelling; presentation

1. Information Literacy - Paper #3

Students will be given a list of topics related to interest groups concerning a political issue, and asked to demonstrate their understanding of the position by the specific interest group chosen. The instructor will require that students utilize a variety of different sources, both online and traditional, in completing the assignment. It is the location, evaluation, and effective use of information from diverse sources that this particular assignment is designed to measure. The paper will be about 2 pages, double-spaced, type-written, Times New Roman, 12 point font, black ink, stapled.

Instructions on how to accomplish this assignment is available to you on WebCourses under "PAPER ASSIGNMENTS"

Since you are given a schedule of assignments and their due dates at the beginning of the course, I seen no reason to turn in papers late - please manage your time accordingly!

NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED; EXCEPT AS PER DOCUMENTED ILLNESS, ACCIDENT, DEATH IN THE FAMILY, OR OTHER DOCUMENTED EMERGENCY.

CHECK SCHEDULE FOR DUE DATES!

NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED

Classroom and Course Policies

Email

Please use: POS 2041 – YOUR LAST NAME and section number in the subject line when you send me email.

While I am very happy to answer any questions and offer clarification on course material, it is your responsibility to read and understand the instructions in this syllabus. If you email me with a question that is already answered in the syllabus, I will refer you back to read the syllabus.

It is reasonable to expect an answer from me within 48 hrs. It is not reasonable, however, to expect answers during weekends, after 6pm, or just before your class meeting.

WebCourses

Syllabus and Assignment instructions are all available to download as pdf documents online on your MyUCF WebCourses. I do not post my powerpoint or notes online. Please make sure you pay attention to the schedule and assigned reading section of the syllabus – it is your responsibility to keep up with the reading and to know when to turn in projects.

Laptop Usage

NO LAPTOPS, CELLPHONES OF ANY TYPE, iPADS, TABLETS, BLACKBERRYS OR ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICE; THESE ELECTRONICS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT SERVE AS A DISTRACTION TO YOU, YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS AND TO THE INSTRUCTOR AND ARE THEREFORE NOT PERMITTED IN THE CLASSROOM.

Other communication devices

NO CELL PHONES/BLACKBERRY/iPHONES ETC. – MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS AND MAY NOT BE USED OR VISIBLE IN ANY WAY DURING EXAM

Grading and evaluation

SEE ABOVE

Attendance and participation

Attendance is important if you want to do well in the course, as exam questions will come from lecture notes, news articles that we may discuss in class, movies/documentaries and other class discussions, in addition to your textbook.

Reading the assigned material prior to each class is important if you want to do well in the course. The textbook serves as your foundation for the material covered in class. You are also encouraged to use the

CourseMate that comes with the textbook, as this will enhance your understanding of the material through repetition and practice of your knowledge as you go through the reading assignments.

Late and make-up work

No make-ups will be given to students who are out of town on personal business/vacation.
Acceptable reasons for leaving town are the following: participating in an official UCF event (e.g. sport's events, field trips); National Guard or Reserve duty, or a funeral of a close friend or relative, as well as hospitalization. Illness that does not require hospitalization must still be documented; students can use the on-campus health center. Be sure to notify me in advance, when possible, and provide appropriate documentation. **No make-up exam without proper documentation.**

Documentation for absence/illness or other as stated above must be **provided at the time you request a make-up exam.** No make-up exam will be scheduled without proper documentation.

FINAL EXAM: The final exam time, date and location is established by the Office of the Registrar and not by the instructor. Should you have a conflict with the time/date of your final exam for this course, you must contact me ASAP to make appropriate arrangements.

Valid reason to make special arrangements for final exam other than the regularly scheduled time include, but is not necessarily limited to UCF make-up exam policy (see above in this syllabus).

NOT VALID reasons to change final exam schedule:

1. Because you want to leave town earlier
2. Because you promised to take your boyfriend/girlfriend to the prom
3. Because your friend/boyfriend/girlfriend surprised you with concert tickets
4. Because you are done with finals and don't want to be here
5. Or any other personal reason that is of non-emergency nature

Academic integrity

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.

Use of any electronics during exam time is strictly prohibited and could result in an "F" on the exam.

Accommodations for students with disabilities (alternate testing opportunities, support for signers, etc.)

Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

SCHEDULE

Week	Dates	ASSIGNMENTS/READING
1	8/20	**I. Introduction** – Foundation and American Political Culture America in the 21st Century Chp 1
2	8/27	The Constitution Chp 2
3	9/3	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
4	9/10	Federalism Chp 3
5	9/17	Civil Liberties Chp 4
6	9/24	Civil Rights Chp 5 **PAPER #1** DUE Monday 9/24
7	10/1	**EXAM 1 – Monday October 1**
8	10/8	**II. Structure, Bureaucracy and the Balance of Power** Congress Chp 11
9	10/15	The Presidency Chp 12
10	10/22	The Judiciary Chp 14
11	10/29	The Executive Branch and The Federal Bureaucracy Chp 13 **PAPER #2** DUE Monday 10/29
12	11/5	**EXAM 2 – Monday November 5**
13	11/12	VETERANS DAY – NO CLASS
14	11/19	**III. Elections, the Public and 21st Century Media** Political Parties and Interest Groups Chp 6 and 7
15	11/26	Voting, Elections and Campaigns Chp 8 (Voting) and 9 **PAPER #3** DUE Monday 11/26
16	12/3	Public Opinion and the News Media Chp 8 (Public Opinion) and 10
17	12/5 through 12/11	FINAL TBA