SYLLABUS

Spring 2013
American Government
POS2041 Section 0014 – Wednesday, 3 credits
Ms. Michaela Fazecas

Office Hrs:	Wednesday 5 pm – 6 pm and by appointment
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WebCt help page	**http://techrangers.cdws.ucf.edu/support/**
Canvas	**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 to read the assigned chapter prior to each class meeting. Your course schedule is your guide pertaining to 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 Canvas; 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. You must remain with your team during the entire semester.

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, or can be purchased at the bookstore. 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 DISCUSSION, please do not ask me.

Grade Disputes/questions

I post grades and other relevant course information on Canvas, 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.

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.

Canvas

Syllabus and Assignment instructions are all available to download as pdf documents online on your Canvas. 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. If you miss a class, please contact your classmates via Canvas/eCommunity to obtain notes and/or lecture information; **do not email me and ask me to send you notes or tell you what was covered in class.**

Laptop Usage

NO LAPTOPS, CELLPHONES OF ANY TYPE, iPADS, iPODS, 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/electronic devices

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

Grading and evaluation

SEE ABOVE

Exams

You must bring UCF Student ID in order to be allowed to take an exam in my class; student ID will be requested at the time when you are finished and turn in your exam to the instructor.

No make-up exams or early final exams allowed, except as specified by UCF official policy.

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.

Class participation enhances your understanding of the subject covered; when students and the instructor interact regarding a topic/material, you should pay attention, take notes, and you are encouraged to contribute to the conversation.

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 http://registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/ 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, and **a minimum of one (1) month prior to final exams.**

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 or make up exams:

1. Because you want to leave town earlier
2. Excessive birthday celebrations (yours or someone else's)
3. Because you promised to take your boyfriend/girlfriend to the prom
4. Because your friend/boyfriend/girlfriend surprised you with concert tickets
5. Because you are done with finals and don't want to be here
6. 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 of	ASSIGNMENTS/READING
Jan 7	**I. Introduction** Foundation and American Political Culture America in the 21st Century Chp 1
Jan 14	The Constitution Chp 2
Jan 21	Federalism Chp 3
Jan 28	Civil Liberties Chp 4
Feb 4	Civil Rights Chp 5 **PAPER #1** DUE Wednesday 2/6 by 6pm via Assignment Drop Box
Feb 11	**EXAM 1 – Wednesday February 13**
Feb 18	**II. Structure, Bureaucracy and the Balance of Power** Congress and Domestic Policy Chp 11 and Chp 15
Feb 25	The Bureaucracy Chp 13
March 4	SPRING BREAK March 4 to March 9, 2013
March 11	The Presidency and Foreign Policy Chp 12 and Chp 16
March 18	The Judiciary Chp 14 **PAPER #2** DUE Wednesday 3/20 by 6pm via Assignment Drop Box
March 25	**EXAM 2 – Wednesday March 27**
April 1	**III. Elections, the Public and 21st Century Media** Political Parties and Interest Groups Chp 6 and 7
April 8	Voting, Elections and Campaigns Ch 8 and Chp 9
April 15	Public Opinion and the News Media Chp 8 and Chp 10 **PAPER #3** DUE Wednesday 4/17 by 6pm via Assignment Drop Box
April 22	**FINAL EXAM TBA** at http://registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/ Final Exam Week: April 24 – 30, 2013 Final exams are scheduled by the Registrar's office, not by your instructor; you must check this website for the time and date of your final