SYLLABUS

Spring 2014
American Government
POS2041 Section 0014 – T Th 1:30 – 2:45 pm MP 360
3 credits
Ms. Michaela Fazecas

Office Hrs:	Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 am – 10:30 am 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. 5th ed. 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
Project	4 class projects, topics assigned in class, 5% points/each*	20%
Quiz	5 in class quizzes, 4% points/each**	20%
Assignment	Analyze various topics/issues, 3 papers 5 % points/each***	15%
Exam I	Foundation and American Political Culture	15%
Exam II	Structure, Bureaucracy and Balance of Power	15%
FINAL	Elections, the Public and 21st Century Media	15%
	Total:	100%

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

***Class Project:** Are not announced ahead of time, so it is important to come to class. If you miss a class project, you will not be given a make up, except as per UCF policy. Class will be split into 4 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.

****Quizzes** 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, except as per UCF policy.

I do not take attendance; however, if you miss a class project 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.

*****Assignment**: instructions available on Canvas; due dates listed in Schedule

Exams: administered online

No extra credit. Grades are based on criteria described above – no exceptions.

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 what was covered in class.**

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, NOT SO SMART PHONES ETC. – MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS AND MAY NOT BE USED OR VISIBLE IN ANY WAY DURING CLASSTIME AND EXAM. NO RECORDINGS OR PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOM.

Grading and evaluation

SEE ABOVE

Exams

No make-up exams or early final exams allowed, except as specified by UCF official policy: **P**articipating in an official UCF event which must be documented by official Athletics Office written notification at the beginning of the semester (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. All of these must be documented in writing.

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

Exams are administered online – no make up exams.

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 Monday	ASSIGNMENTS/READING*
January 6	**I. Introduction** Foundation and American Political Culture America in the 21st Century
January 13	The Constitution
January 20	Federalism
January 27	Civil Liberties and Rights
February 3	Civil Liberties and Rights **PAPER #1** DUE FRIDAY 2/7 by 9pm via Assignment Drop Box
February 10	**EXAM 1:** **Open online between 6:00 A.M. Monday February 10 through Wednesday February 12 at 9:00 P.M.** **(Exam closes at 9:00 P.M. 2/12)** **II. Structure, Bureaucracy and the Balance of Power** Congress and Domestic Policy
February 17	Congress and Domestic Policy cont'd
February 24	The Bureaucracy
March 3	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

March 10	The Presidency and Foreign Policy **PAPER #2** DUE FRIDAY 3/14 by 9pm via Assignment Drop Box
March 17	The Judiciary **EXAM 2:** **Open online between 6:00 A.M. Wednesday March 19 through Friday March 21 at 9:00 P.M.** **(Exam closes at 9:00 P.M. 3/21)**
March 24	**III. Elections, the Public and 21st Century Media** Political Parties and Interest Groups
March 31	Voting, Elections and Campaigns
April 7	Public Opinion and the News Media
April 14	**Review** **Paper #3** DUE FRIDAY 4/18 by 9pm via Assignment Drop Box
April 21	Final Exam Week: APRIL 23 – 29, 2014 FINAL EXAM TIME TBA

***Assignment due dates, exam dates and material covered is subject to change – updates posted online on WebCourses**