SYLLABUS
Fall 2014
American Government
POS2041 Section 0009 – T Th 4:30 pm – 5:45 pm MP 360
3 credits
Ms. Michaela Fazecas

Office Hrs:	Tuesday 2:00 pm – 3:00 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. 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. 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 ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION:

As of Fall 2014, all faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the **"Civic Test"** by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course, **but no later than August 27th**. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

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	5 class projects, topics assigned in class, 4% 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	100 – 90%
B	< 90 – 80%
C	< 80 – 70%
D	< 70 – 60%
F	< 60 – 0%

***Class Project:** 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, however, I will drop the lowest project grade. Class will be split into 4 - 5 students/team during our first class meeting, and instructions on how to complete this in-class project will be delivered at that time.

****Quiz:** Not announced ahead of time, so it is important to come to class and always BRING SCANTRON (pink with Pegasus logo). 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, however, I do drop the lowest quiz grade.

I do not take attendance; however, ***if you miss a class project or a quiz, it may 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/WebCourses; due dates listed in Schedule at the end of syllabus as well as on your WebCourses Syllabus.

Exams: administered online – NO MAKE UP

No extra credit. Grades are based on criteria described above – no exceptions, so 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 to obtain notes and/or lecture information; **do not email me and ask me to send you notes or to cover what was lectured 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.

Exception: Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services.

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:
Participating 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 documented funeral of a close friend or relative, as well as hospitalization requiring your assistance. 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**.

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.

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*
Aug 18	**I. Course introduction** Read: Chp 1 America in the 21st Century
Aug 25	Read: Chp 2 The Constitution
Sept 1	Read: Chp 3 Federalism
Sept 8	Read: Chp 4 and 5 Civil Liberties and Rights
Sept 15	Cont'd Civil Liberties and Rights Assignment: Paper #1 due 9/19/2014 by 9 pm submit online
Sept 22	**II. Structure, Bureaucracy and the Balance of Power** Read: Chp 11 and 15 Congress and Domestic Policy Exam 1: **Due 9/24/2014 by 9pm** – available Monday 9/22 to Wednesday 9/24
Sept 29	Cont'd Congress and Domestic Policy
Oct 6	Read: Chp 13 The Bureaucracy

Oct 13	Read: Chp 12 and Chp 16 The Presidency and Foreign Policy
Oct 20	Read: Chp 14 The Judiciary Assignment: Paper #2 due 10/24/2014 by 9 pm submit online
Oct 27	**III. Elections, the Public and 21st Century Media** Read: Chp 6 and 7 Political Parties and Interest Groups Exam 2: **Due 10/29/2014 by 9pm** – available Monday 10/27 to Wednesday 10/29
Nov 3	Cont'd Political Parties and Interest Groups Read: Chp 8 (voting) and 9 Voting, Elections and Campaigns
Nov 10	Cont'd Voting, Elections and Campaigns **Veterans' Day Tuesday, November 11 NO CLASS**
Nov 17	Read: Chp 8 (public opinion), 9 and 10 Public Opinion, Politics and the Media Assignment: Paper #3 due 11/21/2014 by 9 pm submit online
Nov 24	Cont'd Public Opinion, Politics and the Media **Thanksgiving Thursday, November 27 NO CLASS**
Dec 1	FINAL EXAM WEEK DECEMBER 3 – 9, 2014
Dec 8	FINAL EXAM WEEK DECEMBER 3 – 9, 2014

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