POS 3182W Florida Politics
Fall 2015 Syllabus

Contact Information

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Course Description

Florida Politics examines politics in the Sunshine State focusing on foundations, institutions, processes and policy. We look at the changing demographic and economic environment of Florida, the state constitution, political culture and public opinion. We examine participation in state and local politics, the role of interest groups and political parties and the conduct of state and local elections. We explore Florida's governmental institutions including the legislature, executive branch, bureaucracy, and courts. We also investigate the structure, function, governance and challenges facing local government in Florida. Finally we analyze and evaluate state and local policy in the Sunshine State including criminal justice, land use, economic development, growth management, environment, civil rights, education, health, welfare and taxing and spending.

Goals

1. Knowledge: Students will understand the political foundations, institutions, processes, and public policy of Florida.

2. Comparative Approach: Students will look at politics and policy in Florida to see how and why politics operates in our state as contrasted to other states.

3. Knowledge Extension: Students will examine a variety of websites related to Florida politics and policy and describe, analyze and reflect on information that extends beyond the class texts.

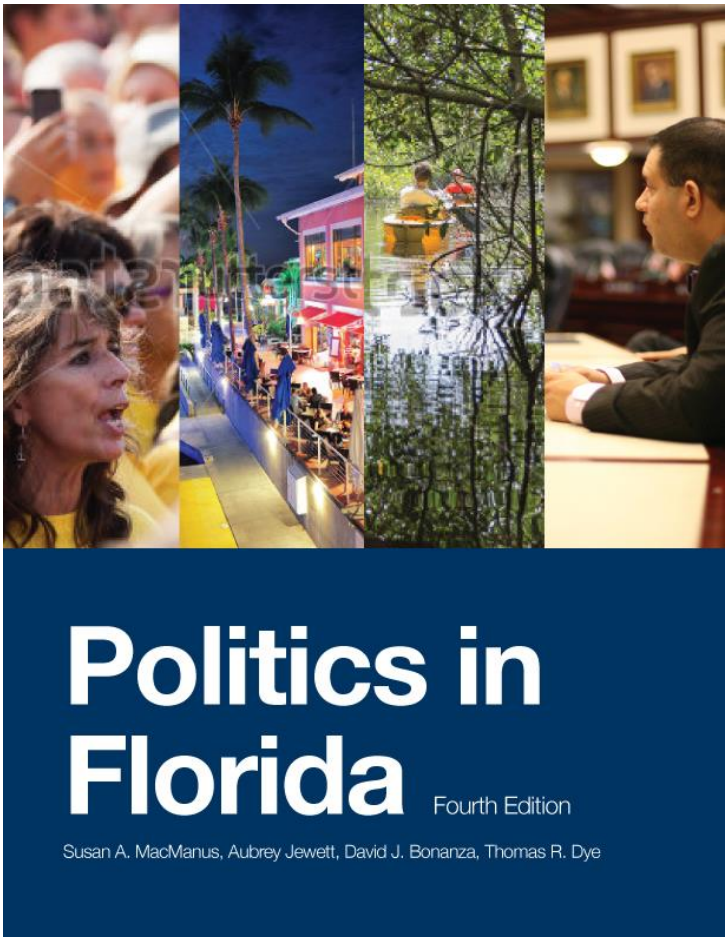
4. Political Geography: Students will analyze Florida to see how politics, policy and political culture vary in different regions, markets and counties.

5. Diversity: Students will explore how diversity impacts Florida politics and policy focusing on contemporary minority American culture as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, social and economic class, age, sexual orientation and physical ability.

6. Current Issues: Students will find, discuss, and express thoughtful opinions about current politics and policy in Florida.

Required Texts

1. Susan MacManus, Aubrey Jewett, Thomas Dye & David Bonanza (MJDB), *Politics in Florida*, 4th ed., Tampa: University of South Florida Institute of Government Press, 2015



We will be using one book for this class. It is a brand new 4th edition of my book *Politics in Florida*. The printing has been slightly delayed and I will let everyone know when it is available for purchase. In addition, each module will contain additional information on the political geography of Florida: the state, 3 regions, 10 media markets and 67 counties.

Evaluation

6 Modules – 76% of your total grade. Each module consists of 2 graded activities: Chapter Quiz and Extend, Update & Discuss. Each module will usually cover 2 chapters from the Politics in Florida text and 2 chapters from the Ten Media Markets text. You will have about two weeks to do each module.

Chapter Quiz – 36% of total grade. Each quiz will usually have 50 questions covering material from the text and the module. You will normally have 60 minutes to take the quiz. You may take the quiz a second time to improve your score. The questions are drawn from a larger quiz bank I have constructed so while a few questions may be the same on a 2nd attempt, most will be different. You should read the chapters and study before starting the quiz as you will not have time to look up every answer. All 6 quizzes count towards your final grade and except for extraordinary circumstances, no late quizzes will be accepted once the quiz closes.

Extend, Update & Discuss – 40% of total grade. I will put you in small groups for the online discussion based on your last name. Extend, Update & Discuss will include several steps. First you will visit several websites tied to the readings and then describe, analyze and reflect on several things you learned about Florida politics and policy from those sites that extends your knowledge beyond what is found in the text (900-1200 words). Next you will update information from the readings by looking up and writing a 350-500 word current event. You will upload this paper (the knowledge extension and current event) using the assignment function and also paste it into your discussion group.

Finally you must engage in discussion with your fellow classmates by responding to their knowledge extension and current event. The discussion will require a minimum of three postings each module: the initial posting of your paper and then at least two postings responding to your fellow students. You should attempt to engage in professional college level discussion with your classmates. Highest grades go to students who exceed my expectations for quantity and quality of their papers and their discussion with classmates. Two additional postings is the minimum to get a C on that part of the assignment. You will need 8 or more (depending on quality and length) additional postings to get the highest possible score on discussing with class mates.

To grade discussion I have developed a rubric (scoring guidelines). Each discussion is worth up to 100 points: 50 points are possible for knowledge extension, 30 points for the current event, and 20 points for discussing things with your classmates. In addition there will be a 10 point penalty for each day the initial posting is late. So 10 points off for one day late and 20 points off for two days late and so on until the module closes. Once the module closes you will not be able to post further and I will not accept your postings.

Florida U.S. Senate Race Analysis - 24% of your total grade. You will write a research paper on the Florida U.S. Senate race to replace Marco Rubio. Your analysis should be 3500 to 5000 words long, double-spaced with Times New Roman font and will have the

following sections: an introduction that puts the race in context and lays out how the paper will proceed; a biographical summary of the main Democratic and Republican candidates; a comparison of the major issue stances of these candidates; a predictive analysis on who will win each party primary based on comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates; a predictive analysis on who will win the general election and become the next U.S. Senator from Florida based on comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates; and a conclusion that summarizes the paper and explains who you would personally like to win and why (regardless of who you think will win). I will post more details soon. You may start the paper while we are working on the modules but will also have two or three weeks to work on the paper after the modules are over if you like. The paper will be due no later than Friday, December 11 at 11:00 p.m. Research papers will be accepted until Sunday, December 13 at 11:00 pm – but will incur a 10 point per day late penalty.

Policies

1. If you have questions about the course of a general nature do not e-mail me initially. Instead post your question in the Discussions section of the web site. Once in Discussions select the topic “Questions for Professor Jewett” and then click in the “Reply” box and type in your question and then hit “Post Reply.” You may have to wait up to 48 hours for a response but I am usually much quicker than that. You should review this section before asking your question as someone else may have already asked it. Of course if your problem is personal (grade related for instance) or involves not being able to get on the site (and hence unable to get to Discussions) feel free to e-mail me at my normal e-mail address.

2. If you would like to seek the help of fellow students go to Discussions and select the topic “Students Seeking Help from Students” and post your question as above. This can be a technical question about computer problems or a subject matter question. I will give extra credit to students who help others!

3. Online courses require students to be self-motivated and do work on a regular basis without being reminded of assignments and due dates. The average student can expect to put in 12-15 hours a module on this course if they want to do well. You will be reading 2 chapters from the main text and additional information on Florida political geography in each module. You can also expect that you will write 2000 words or more each module (counting initial postings and discussions with others) if you want to do well.

4. Late assignments will not be accepted once a quiz, discussion or module closes (as mentioned above I will take your initial paper posting on discussion late with a 10 point per day penalty but once the module closes that will be it). Do not wait until the last minute to do assignments. Computer problems and Internet connection problems will happen. They are not acceptable excuses for missing due dates and deadlines. Due times for graded assignments are usually 11 pm Eastern Standard Time. I give a 59 minute grace period until 11:59 pm before I start assessing the late penalty.

5. I will drop your lowest extend, update & discuss score when I compute your final grade. Since I am not accepting late assignments after a module closes this will provide you a measure of protection should something happen that prevents you from writing a paper (computer glitch, illness, vacation etc.) or should you do poorly on a paper and want to improve. I will not drop any quiz scores, so you must do all 6 quizzes.

6. I follow and enforce the UCF policies pertaining to academic honesty and integrity and expect professional student conduct. See the UCF policies established in the Golden Rule (http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/) if you are unfamiliar (particularly the section on Academic Conduct).

7. Students registered with UCF Disability Services (http://sds.sdes.ucf.edu/) will be given accommodation as determined by UCF Disability Services.

Grading Scale

This class is on a 10 point grading scale with no plus minus grades.

100-90 A (Outstanding or excellent work)

89-80 B (Good, above average work)

79-70 C (Average work)

69-60 D (Below average, poor work)

59-0 F (Unacceptable work or missed assignment)

Assignment Due Dates

Academic Engagement Assignment Required by Federal Government Regulations: Pretest due by Friday 8/28 at 5:00 pm EST.

Faculty members 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 following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes, or as soon as possible after adding the course, but no later than Friday August 28th 5:00 pm EST. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Go to Quizzes and click on “Pretest” and then “Take the Quiz.” You have 1 hour to take the pretest. Please do not study beforehand or look up answers when taking the pretest – if you do not know the answer then just make your best guess. I want to get an honest assessment of how much you know about the course material before we get started (so please do not just take 2 minutes for the whole quiz and randomly hit answers either – actually read the questions and see if you know the answer). Once you answer all the questions hit “Submit Quiz.”

Module 1 Florida's Political Culture and Constitution: Quiz due by Monday 9/7 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 9/8 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 9/10 11:00 pm

PLEASE NOTE: JUST BECAUSE SOME DUE DATES FALLS OVER THE LABOR DAY HOLIDAY DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THEN TO DO THE ASSIGNMENT!

For Module 1 please read:

Politics in Florida chapters 1 Political Culture and 2 Constitution

Module 2 Public Opinion, Parties and Elections: Quiz due by Monday 9/21 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 9/22 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 9/24 11:00 pm

For Module 2 please read:

Politics in Florida chapters 3 Public Opinion and 4 Parties and Elections

Module 3 Interest Groups and the Legislature: Quiz due by Monday 10/5 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 10/6 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 10/8 11:00 pm

For Module 3 please read:

Politics in Florida chapters 5 Interest Groups and 6 Legislature

Module 4 Executive Branch and Courts and Crime: Quiz due by Monday 10/19 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 10/20 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 10/22 11:00 pm

For Module 4 please read:

Politics in Florida chapters 7 Executive Branch and 8 Courts and Crimes

Withdrawal Deadline Monday 11/2 11:59 p.m.

Module 5 Taxing, Spending and Local Government: Quiz due by Monday 11/2 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 11/3 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 11/5 11:00 pm

For Module 5 please read:

Politics in Florida chapters 9 Taxing and Spending and 10 Local Government

Module 6 Education, Welfare and Health and Environment and Growth Management: Quiz due by Monday 11/16 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 11/17 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 11/19 11:00 pm

For Module 6 please read:

Politics in Florida chapters 11 Education, Social Welfare and Health Care and 12 Environment, Growth Management, and Economic Development

Florida U.S. Senate Race Analysis Due by Friday 12/11 at 11pm (Sunday December 13 at 11 pm is the last date to turn in a late research paper)

Fall Term Ends: Tuesday December 15

Getting Started

Go to the home page, go to Quizzes and click on “Pretest” and then “Take the Quiz” (as described above to document your participation in the course). After that, to begin the academic part of the course, click on Modules and then read and follow the instructions for Module 1: Florida’s Political Culture and Constitution.