UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
U.S. GOVERNMENT
POS 2041
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2017
Dr. Bruce Farcau

I. Textbook (Required)

O'Connor, Karen, Sabato, Larry, and Yanus Alixandra, *American Government: Roots and Reform.* 2012 or latest edition.

II. Office hours: MWF 0800-0900, adjunct office, 3rd floor of Phillips Hall, or by appointment. The instructor can also be reached at bfarcau@msn.com.

III. Course Description

POS 2041
U.S. GOVERNMENT
Theory, organization, principles and function of national government, stressing relationships of individual to all levels of government in the political system. This course includes a learning activity designed to ensure competence in the basic use of computers.

IV. Test and Grading Policy

A. There will be three (3) exams, none of which will be comprehensive. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. If a student misses either of the first two exams, a make-up can be arranged, but it should be understood that the make-up will be graded at a much higher standard and will not offer "bonus" points available during the scheduled test. Make-up tests (a take-home version of each test will be available consisting of essay questions only which will be graded at a harder level than in-class) must be turned in within one week of the original test date. There will be NO make-ups given for the final test but a take-home version will still be available. Each in –class exam will consist of a number of multiple choice questions (usually about 25) and one or more essay questions for which the student is expected to construct a coherent, complete answer. The student will have some option as to which essay questions to answer (for example: Select one question out of three provided.) Bonus (extra credit) questions may be offered based on current events for the in-class tests. Tests will be based on the text and explanations of that material provided in lecture. Take-home tests are not to be considered research papers and require no citations but should demonstrate the student's understanding of the basic themes raised by the questions.

B. A term paper of from 8-10 pages of text (typed, double-spaced, with standard margins and Times New Roman 12-point font, with page numbers) besides any

illustrations, bibliography, and footnotes. The paper will be on any subject related to American government and politics, but the topic should be cleared with the instructor no later than **February 24th**. There should be an analysis of the pros and cons of the issue making use of sources on both sides and a discussion of the results of the legislation or decision. The paper should draw on *at least* five sources, including at least one from the internet (but some books as well), but not including the course text or general encyclopedias. As a rule of thumb, sources that do not include an author's name are not acceptable. The idea is to demonstrate that the student has learned something about the topic beyond what is contained in the class text. Direct quotes should be kept to a minimum. The paper will be worth 25% of your grade. The term paper will be due on or before **March 31st** (in hard copy only.) Papers will still be accepted on or before **April 7th** for a 10-point penalty. Late papers will still be accepted by **April 14th**, but will suffer a 25-point penalty, but **no papers will be accepted after that date**.

C. Extra credit: Students will have the opportunity to earn up to 10 point to be added to any test grade by writing a 4-page, typed report on any of the books on the list provided (3 pages summarizing the book, and one page of the student's opinion of it.) Students are welcome to offer additional titles of politically related books for approval as well. This will be due by **April 14th**. No papers will be accepted after that date.

D. Each test (modified for extra credit) and the term paper are all worth the same weight toward the final grade. The percentage grade on each test will be averaged to result in the final grade. The grade scale will be:

59 below = F
60-69 = D
70-79 = C
80-89 = B
90 above = A

V. Competencies

Students will learn to analyze information about the American political system and relate it to current events under discussion. They will be able to argue and explain their conclusions about political events. Students will learn to recognize tactics of persuasion used by politicians and to evaluate their points of view. Students will learn to express their views both in writing and orally and defend their positions when questioned. Students will be able to apply what they have learned in daily life, both when reading about political events and when exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

SCHEDULE
(Subject to Change – Note that specific dates for tests are not given)

WEEK	TOPIC	TEXT CHAPTER
1	Logical Thinking	N/A

2	Theory of Government	1
3	The Constitution	2
4	Federalism	3
5	Civil Liberties	4
6	Civil Rights	5
	FIRST TEST	
7	Congress	6
8	Presidency	7
9	SPRING BREAK	
10	Bureaucracy	8
11	Judiciary	9
	SECOND TEST	
12	Public Opinion Media Interest Groups	10 14 15
13	Political Parties	11
14	Election Campaigns	12-13
15	Political Economy Welfare	17 16
16	Foreign and Defense Policy	18
	THIRD TEST (Finals week)	

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Students are expected to attend every class, barring illness or true emergency. It is unlikely that a good grade can be earned without regular attendance in class. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain lecture notes from another student in case of need.

B. Punctuality: Classes will start promptly as scheduled. If arriving late, please enter as discreetly as possible. Do not leave until class is dismissed.

C. Courtesy: Beepers and cell phones should be turned off during class. There should be no eating or drinking during class. Any questions should be directed to the instructor, and the only other talking should be in response to questions from the instructor or at his direction.

D. Cheating: All written work should be your own. Plagiarizing on term papers or otherwise cheating on tests will result in an automatic F grade for the entire course.

FURTHER READING FOR EXTRA CREDIT PROJECT

Anonymous, *Primary Colors* (novel)
Bork, Robert H., *The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law*
Caro, Robert A., *The Path to Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*
Ceaser, James W., *The Perfect Tie: The True Story of the 2000 Presidential Election*
Coulter, Ann, *Treason, High Crimes and Misdemeanors*
Crichton, Michael, *State of Fear* (novel)
Evans, M. Stanton, *Blacklisted by History*
Goldberg, Bernard, *Bias*
Granger, Bill, *Lords of the Last Machine: The Story of Politics in Chicago*
Greenstein, Fred I., *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Clinton*
Halberstam, David, *The Best and the Brightest*
Hayek, Frederick, *The Road to Serfdom*
Kissinger, Henry, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*
Kurtz, Howard, *Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine*
Levin, Mark, *Men in Black*
Moore, Michael, *Stupid White Men*
McCullough, David, *Truman*
Olson, Barbara, *The Final Days*
O'Rourke, P. J. , *Parliament of Whores, Eat the Rich*
Ravitch, Diane, *Left Back*
Riker, William H., *The Art of Political Manipulation*
Saffire, William, *Scandalmonger* (novel)
Sammon, Bill, *At Any Cost: How Al Gore Tried to Steal the Election*
Schlessinger, Arthur, *The Thousand Days*
Shlaes, Amity, *The Forgotten Man*
Smith, Hedrick, *The Power Game*
Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America* (either volume)
Woodward, Robert, *All the President's Men, Plan of Attack, The Choice, The Brethren*