POLS 1433: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT II

Session: Spring 2012
Instructor: Nara, Suguman
Office Hours: MWF: 11.50 am-12.30 pm
MW evenings: 7.20 pm-9.20 pm
TR: 3.20 pm-5.20 pm
Class Meets in: PY 200
Class Time: MW 6.00-7.20 pm (American Government 1433-270)
TR 2.00-3.20 pm (American Government 1433-206)

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Course Description

This is the second of two parts of the introductory course to the study of American Government. The best way to describe this course is a “salad bowl” course in American politics where all areas of the study of American politics will be covered separately but without losing the connection between them. What does the country owe you? What do you owe her? Do you have a say in what government does? This course examines a wide range of U.S. public policy issues with direct impact upon you as a political science student, citizen, consumer, and individual. Specific topics and cases will be examined to stimulate a greater understanding of the complexity involved in the art and science of politics. This course will also briefly compare American government with governments of other countries. In examining both historic and current policy arenas, some basic questions will be employed:

- Rights and liberties. How much do you compromise? How are we different from other governments? How have the courts decided?
- Are we handling the terrorism issue properly? The struggle for harmony among the 3 branches of government, for e.g. the War Powers Act.
- Why so much of difference between the different Presidential administrations and why some are similar - party politics, environment, foreign power influences, reelection …?
- How are foreign and defense policies formulated? Do you have a say?
- Who is leading whom? What is leading whom? Who is leading what?

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students are required to have a grasp of the above. At the end of the course students are required to be able to identify key concepts and terms in American government. Further, the student should exhibit an ability to apply these in explaining development within the field. In addition, students are also required to understand and analyze political events and trends. Hopefully, what has been learned may give you a better understanding of what happens in your everyday life, for example, when you pay taxes, when you elect representatives, the questions posed by political scientists, etc. The reading assignments should prepare you for higher level courses in political science and government. The writing assignment/term paper is designed to improve both your scholarly writing skills as well as research skills.
Required Texts


Supplementary Texts

There are no supplementary texts for this class. This will be substituted with weekly reading materials which will be announced in class or sent to you via email. The instructor will recommend books, articles, and other reading materials (e.g. court cases) in the course of the semester.

Some Important Expectations

Each member of the class will show due respect for one another. Ideas may be challenged, but individual attacks are unacceptable. I will not tolerate rude and/or abusive language in class. A student who makes fun of the instructor directly or indirectly, for example, in the form of a slang or a jargon will be dealt with seriously. I will also not tolerate any other unacceptable behavior in class, for example, the habit of talking to others when the instructor is talking, or while another student is engaged in a discussion with the instructor. Because there is a long list of negative behaviors, whenever there is a dispute on what constitutes negative behavior, the instructor reserves the right to decide. As college students, you are expected to discriminate between normal and not so normal behavior.

In keeping with the theme of respect, all students must adhere to the code of academic conduct in order to maintain appropriate and acceptable conduct when class is in session. In addition, students are also required to understand the seriousness of plagiarism in the academic world. Failure to do so, as evidenced by plagiarism or other honor violations will result in a failing grade or more serious consequences. Please read “Code of Student Conduct” (Section VI) in the Student Handbook.

No person will be discriminated based on age, race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. (Any student with a disability certified by the University disability office should notify the instructor immediately for proper arrangements to be made)

Course Evaluation

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You are allowed one absence. For every additional absence, 3 percentage points will be deducted from the overall attendance points. Attendance will be taken at random. The instructor reserves the right to deduct attendance points for students who are regularly late for class or regularly enter and leave class while lecture is in session. The number of points
deducted is at the sole discretion of the instructor. It could range from 1 percentage point to the entire 20 percentage points. If you are late, it is your responsibility to find out what announcements you missed. You are at a risk of losing some of your attendance points if you are unable to provide a correct answer when asked in class or if you did not prepare an assignment to be discussed in class. Although I sometimes repeat important announcements, it is solely your responsibility to find out missed information. The instructor is not responsible for repeating announcements already made in class, nor respond to emails about missed announcements.

**Participation**

10% Participation in group case presentation is mandatory. I refer to any form of participation which is negatively distracting, inappropriate, or rude, negative participation. Students who commit negative participation are at risk of losing some or all participation points and face other appropriate actions. Other examples of negative participations are sleeping in class, lying to the instructor, whistling, regular grinning, and regular silent giggles. If you are grinning or giggling when a joke is not cracked, you may be busy conducting negative non-verbal communication with other students, reading/sending text messages, or other undesirable conduct. In any case these behaviors are considered negative participation. Because there is a long list of negative behaviors, whenever there is a dispute on what constitutes negative participation, the instructor reserves the right to decide. You are at a risk of losing some or all of your participation points if you are unable to provide a correct answer when asked in class or if you did not prepare an assignment to be discussed in class.

**Term Paper/Other expectations**

10% A group assignment connected to literature review and bibliography for the writing of a scholarly paper. (Will be discussed in greater detail in class)

**Make-ups**

Make-up exams will only be given if you miss an examination due to official reasons, for
example, a medical emergency, death of an immediate family member, or a court order. Official proof is required. If your excuse does not fall under one of these categories, it is recommended that you produce a copy of a police report or the equivalent to prove the validity of the incident.

**Course Overview**

This serves as a general outline of the course topics and flow. You should expect some modifications. There may be a guest lecture in the middle of the semester. Another guest lecture may be somewhere around the end of the semester.

**Week 1:** Introduction. What is politics? Government and its functions (was also covered in the first part of American Government)

**Week 2:** Forms of Governments and Ideologies. Where are we in the continuum?

**Week 3:** Forms of Governments and Ideologies (cont’d)

**Week 4:** The U.S. Executive- areas not covered in American Government I, for e.g. White House administrative structure; the first 100 days in of a new administration.

**Week 5:** Probable Guest Lecture/US Executive (contd)

**Week 6:** U.S. Judiciary.  
The Patriots Act.

**Week 7:** Texas judicial branch. Similarities and differences with the federal government.

**Week 8:** Court Cases- federal landmark cases relating to civil rights and liberties (Gideon v Wainwright; Kelly v Johnson; Wilson v Arkansas; the BOE case and others)

**Week 9:** **Spring Break**

**Week 10:** Court cases (cont’d)- Bakke v Regents of Univ of CA; Univ of MO v Horowitz; the MI 2003 case; issues relating to discrimination and reverse discrimination and other cases.

**Week 11:** Court Cases (cont’d).

**Week 12:** **Easter Break/Probable Guest Lecture**

**Week 13:** U.S. Defense Policy

**Week 14:** US Foreign Policy

**Week 15:** U.S. Immigration Policy. Immigration issues in the state of Texas

**Week 16:** Review/Evaluation/Officially excused make-up case presentations