PLSC 1000: Introduction to American Politics
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Lyons
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Office: Sturm 473
Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 11-12, Wednesday 10-12.
Time: 4-5:50
Location: Sturm 454

The focus of this class will be to provide an introduction to the foundations, institutions, actors, and outcomes produced by the American political system. We begin by looking at foundations. These are the ideas that led to the birth of our nation, our Constitution, and the American approach to governance. Next we explore the institutions that form the inner-workings of our federal governmental structure, with an eye to how these institutions operate to produce democratically desirable outcomes, or not. Finally, we will take up the electorate, and the ways in which they engage in democratic governance. We will focus on how capable the citizenry is of making decisions, holding elected officials accountable, and engaging in our representative democracy.

Books:


Grading:

Your grade for this class is comprised of the following components:

Attendance/Participation (10%)- Being present in class and participating regularly is essential for success in this class. It is important that you share your ideas and ask any questions that you may have. Doing so will result in better understanding of the course material and subsequently, higher grades.

Exam 1 (30%)- Exam 1 will be on January 22nd.

Exam 2 (30%)- Exam 2 will be on February 17th.

Exam 3 (30%)- Exam 3 will be on March 13th.
Final Grades will be based on the following distribution, though please note that I reserve the right to curve point totals should I decide that is necessary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A: Designates student performance of an extraordinarily high level, indicates a comprehensive understanding of course material, and reflects original insight and thought.

B: Designates student performance of a high level, indicates a thorough understanding of course material, and reflects solid insight and well-considered thought.

C: Designates student performance that completely fulfills the basic requirements of the course, indicates a basic understanding of course material, and reflects basic insights and a surface-level understanding of concepts.

D: Designates student performance that mostly fulfills the basic requirements of the course, indicates a basic or weak understanding of course material, and reflects poor, basic, or weak insights and a poor understanding of concepts.

F: Designates student performance that fails to fulfill the basic requirements of the course, indicates a weak or inaccurate understanding of course material, and reflects poor or misinformed insights and a lack of understanding of concepts.

**Administrative Policies**

Late Work: Late assignments will not be accepted.

E-Mail and Web Communication: An email list has been setup to contact you with class updates, additional readings, and questions you might consider while reading. It is critical that you regularly check your DU email account and Canvass for updates. Students will be held accountable for assignments and syllabus changes communicated via email. I will always give you reasonable notice for any changes or additions to the syllabus.
The Classroom Environment: Tardiness, early departures, ringing phones, etc. detract from the learning environment. Therefore, I ask that students arrive on time and remain in class for the duration of the period. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices when you enter the classroom. While the use of a computer for note-taking is certainly encouraged, web surfing, text-messaging, emailing, etc. not only reduces your engagement and comprehension of the material during class, but is highly distracting for the students around you. Please do not participate in these activities during class.

Academic Integrity: I take issues of academic integrity very seriously. Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All work is expected to be original, and not previously or simultaneously turned in for credit in another course. All forms of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course.

Disability Services: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please contact me about this during the first week of the class so that I can prepare to make accommodations ahead of time.

Religious Accommodations: University policy grants students excused absences from class or other organized activities or observance of religious holy days, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship. Faculty are asked to be responsive to requests when students contact them in advance to request such an excused absence. Students are responsible for completing assignments given during their absence, but should be given an opportunity to make up work missed because of religious observance. Once a student has registered for a class, the student is expected to examine the course syllabus for potential conflicts with holy days and to notify the instructor by the end of the first week of classes of any conflicts that may require an absence (including any required additional preparation/travel time). The student is also expected to remind the faculty member in advance of the missed class, and to make arrangements in advance (with the faculty member) to make up any missed work or in-class material within a reasonable amount of time.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.
Term Schedule

Week 1

1/6: Introduction/Syllabus/Beginning of Ch.1

TAPS: Ch. 1 Introduction and Fundamentals
Readings: 1.2-Mancur Olson
Readings: 1.3-Garrett Hardin

1/8: The Constitution

TAPS: Ch. 2 The Constitution
Readings: 2.1-James Madison
Readings: 2.2-James Madison
Readings: 2.4-Robert Dahl

Week 2

1/13: Federalism

TAPS: Ch. 3 Federalism
Readings: 3.1-James Madison
Readings: 3.2-William Riker
Readings: 3.3-United States v. Lopez (1995)
Readings: 3.4-Walters and Kettl

1/15: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

TAPS: Ch. 4 Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Week 3

1/20: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights continued

Readings: 4.1-Michael Dawson

1/22: Exam 1

Week 4

1/27: Congress
TAPS: Ch. 5 Congress

1/29: Congress continued

Readings: 5.1-David Mayhew
Readings: 5.2-Richard F. Fenno

Week 5

2/3: The Presidency

TAPS: Ch. 6 The Presidency
Readings: 6.1-Richard Neustadt
Readings: 6.4-William Howell
Readings: 6.5-Samual Kernell

2/5: The Bureaucracy

TAPS: Ch. 7 The Bureaucracy
Readings: 7.1-James Q. Wilson
Readings: 7.2-Mathew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz

Week 6

2/10: The Judiciary

TAPS: Ch. 8 The Judiciary
Readings: 8.2-Marbury v. Madison (1801)

2/12: Interest Groups

TAPS: Ch. 11 Interest Groups
Readings: 11.2-Ken Kollman

Week 7

2/17: Exam 2

2/19: Public Opinion

TAPS: Ch. 9 Public Opinion
Week 8

2/24: Public Opinion continued

Readings: 9.1-Arthur Lupia and Mathew McCubbins
Readings: 9.2-John Zaller

2/26: Participation

TAPS: Ch. 10 Participation
Readings: 10.1-Steven Rosenstone and John Hansen
Readings: 10.3-Robert Putnam

Week 9

3/3: Political Parties

TAPS: Ch. 12 Political Parties
Readings: 12.2-Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes

3/5: The Media

TAPS: Ch. 14- The Media
Readings: 14.1-Matthew Baum
Readings: 14.2-Shanto Iyengar

Week 10

3/10: Campaigns and Elections

TAPS: Ch. 13 Elections

3/12: Campaigns and Elections continued

Readings: 13.1-Ansolobehere and Snyder

3/13: Exam 3