PL SC 001, Section 001: INTR TO AM NAT GOVERNMENT

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Course: PL SC 001
Section: 001
Location: 236E OLMSTED
Times: Monday, 6-8:45

Required Text

Janda, Berry, and Goldman, The Challenge of Democracy (7th edition)

Course Description

Introduction to development and nature of American political culture, constitutional/structural arrangements, electoral/policy processes; sources of conflict and consensus. This class provides a basic introduction to the world of American politics. Basic issues covered include the nature of the American democracy, the Constitutional foundations of the country, the relationship between people and government, basic government institutions, and the policy process. Throughout, the interplay of different values and their implication for politics is noted.

Course Objectives

Understanding the values underlying American democracy;
Understanding the linkage between the people and their government;
Understanding the nature of basic political institutions;
Understanding the policy making process as well as basic information regarding key policy areas;
To think critically about the American political system.
Tentative Schedule

January 13    Introduction    JBG, Preface, Ch. 1
January 20   Democracy and American Politics    JBG, Ch. 2
January 27  Constitutional Structure    JBG, Chs. 3-4
February 3   The People and Politics: I    JBG, Ch. 5
February 10  The People and Politics: II    JBG, Ch. 6
February 17  The People and Politics: III    JBG, Ch. 7
February 24  The People and Politics: IV    JBG, Chs. 8-9
March 3  The People and Politics: V    JBG, Ch. 10
March 10-14 Have an enjoyable mid-semester break!
March 17 EXAM # 1
March 24 Institutions: I JBG, Chs. 11-12
March 31 Institutions: II JBG, Chs. 13-14
April 7 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights JBG, Chs. 15-16
April 14 Policy-Making: I    JBG, Ch. 17
April 21 Policy-Making: II    JBG, Chs. 18-19
April 28 Policy-Making: III    JBG, Ch. 20
EXAM # 2

Course Requirements

Two exams (students may choose which format they wish to take: take-home exam, in class essay exam, or multiple choice, if enough students select that option). Each exam is worth 100 points. In addition, class participation will be taken into account (25 points). Finally, one issue paper will be counted (25 points). Further information on this paper will be provided later.
Grading Policy

93-100  A
90-92    A-
87-89    B+
83-86    B
80-82    B-
77-79    C+
70-76    C
60-69    D
Below 60  F

Attendance Policy

There will be no attendance policy per se; however, to the extent that class participation is a requirement, poor attendance will have a negative effect on one's grade.

Academic Integrity

See the College policy at the following web site:

http://www.hbg.psu.edu/hbg/acadint.html

Additional Information

Please be aware of the consequences of cyberplagiarism. And note that there are resources available for faculty to assess whether or not a document turned in has been cyberplagiarized.

Note to students with disabilities: It is Penn State’s policy not to discriminate against qualified students with documented disabilities in its educational programs. If you have a disability related need for modifications in this course, contact your instructor and the Disability Service Coordinator in the Student Assistance Center (W117, Olmsted, ext. 6025). Instructors should be notified during the first week of classes.