

POLITICAL SCIENCE 111-601
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Fall 2014

Instructor: Soomin Chun-Hess, M.A.
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Office Hours: Mon & Wed (1:00-4:00pm) & by appointment

Class Time: EAST 2305
Sep 12, 2014 to Sep 12, 2014
Friday 6:00-10:00: Sept 12, 19, 26
Saturday 9:00-5:00: Sept 13, 20, 27

Required Text: Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy, Special Edition 2012, by Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry.
Choices: An American Government Reader

Optional Text: Writing at RRCC

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course asks the question: Is American democracy an adequate vehicle for achieving the good life? Our first goal will be to define what exactly American democracy is and how it has developed over time. You will then decide if American democracy works, if the political culture supports and promotes democratic institutions, and what changes can be made to improve the process. To answer these questions and others you will be introduced to the methods for evaluating American democracy and the skills to prepare you for participation in the system. To achieve these objectives we will focus on various political theories, institutions, and processes. This course includes the background of the U.S. Constitution; the philosophy of American government; general principles of the Constitution; federalism; civil rights and civil liberties; public opinion; citizen participation; political parties; the media; interest groups; and the branches of government. Current events will be used to illustrate how the political system operates. This course is premised on the belief that the study of politics prepares the individual for complete living.

INITIAL OBJECTIVES:

- A. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various democratic theories.
- B. Demonstrate basic familiarity with the U.S. Constitution.
- C. Develop an understanding of “federalism” in the United States.
- D. Critique the role of the media and interest groups in American political life.
- E. Understand the importance of public opinion, political parties, and elections.
- F. Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government.
- G. Critically evaluate the use of power, collaboration and judgment as well as the importance of values in the American political system.
- H. Examine how diversity is addressed in the American political system.
- I. Hold an informed dialogue on American politics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY:

CAVAET: Student can only receive an A when all assignments are completed.

Participation & Attendance	50	GRADING SCALE:	
News Analysis (2 x 25)	50	90-99%	A
Final Exam	100	80-89%	B
Total:	200 pts	70-79%	C
		60-69%	D
		59% and below	F

Political Events/Extra Credit

You may receive extra credit for attending approved political events. You may attend on and/or off campus political lecture, films, debates, rallies, etc. You may also share information about events you think would be interesting and appropriate for your classmates to attend. Please double check with me before attending and I will let you know if the event in question merits extra points. Each student can attend up to 4 extra credit events. Students can earn up to 5 points for each event.

**Caveat: Students may only collect extra points after all assignments are completed.*

Attendance

Your presence in class is extremely important. Everyone's participation is crucial to learning and to the success of group activities. I will provide direct information that will ensure your success in class, as well as draw upon your input concerning course relevance. You can't miss a class and expect to earn an A in this class. If you know you will miss class ahead a time or if you have a serious illness or emergency, please inform me immediately.

It is the instructor's responsibility to guarantee that you are able to learn in an environment as free from distraction as possible. For this reason, coming to class late is unacceptable. You may be late to class twice without penalty. After that, your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

Miscellaneous

I will adhere to the College policy regarding Incompletes. In order to request an Incomplete, you must have 75 percent of the course completed with a grade of C or higher and demonstrate extenuating circumstances that justify an extension. The request must be made in writing, preferably by e-mail. If the Incomplete is granted, we will need to complete a contract by the end of the semester to determine how and when the work is to be finished.

Please remember to drop officially if you plan to drop the class. Failure to do so will result in an "F".

Cheating is defined as the practice of fraud or trickery, to violate rules dishonestly and to act deceptively. Plagiarism is defined as presenting ideas or words of another as one's own. As a college student it is your responsibility to fully understand the concepts of cheating and

plagiarism. I am always available to clarify for students the exact definition of cheating and plagiarism. Failure to understand these concepts does not excuse you from potential reprimand. According to Red Rocks Community College policy, consequences of cheating or plagiarism can result in an F on the assignment or exam, an F in the course, and/or dismissal from Red Rocks Community College.

Please remember that my sole reason for existence as an instructor is your learning. Do not hesitate to ask if I can be of any assistance. I am always available during office hours and by appointment, but feel free to drop by my office or stop me in the hallways outside of those times. You can also e-mail me, and my usual response time is less than 48 hours, excluding weekends.

ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Red Rocks Community College is committed to access for students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and need assistance or are interested in requesting accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Faculty is not obligated to provide accommodations without proper notification by the ODS. Students may contact the ODS staff by telephone or email to make an intake appointment at 303-914-6733 or ods@rrcc.edu. The ODS is located in Suite 1182 at the Lakewood campus. More information is available at www.rrcc.edu/disabilityservices.

The following actions have eligibility implications for financial aid recipients: non-attendance, dropping courses, withdrawing from courses, repeating courses, academic progress, and the number of credit hours attempted and completed. You are strongly encouraged to seek financial aid advising throughout the term if you have any questions about eligibility implications.

News Analysis

Overview:

You will submit four news analyses to me as writing assignments throughout the semester, worth twenty-five points each. Keeping up with current events will enrich your understanding of the course, as well as the world around you. The purpose of this assignment is to follow the news throughout the semester, in order to connect what you are learning in class to your everyday life.

Requirements:

- 1) Your analysis **MUST** address a topic that is being covered in class or is political in nature. You can use any news topic that has to do with national and/or international politics/government.
- 2) Locate an article from a reputable source on approved news topic (see above). Publications like the Washington Post, New York Times, Newsweek and/or Time are excellent sources. I also encourage you to find sources that add viewpoints beyond the mainstream, such as The Nation, Mother Jones, The Guardian, The National Review, and The American Conservative. You may not use on-line search engine articles, on-line network articles (e.g. Fox News, CNN News, MSN News etc.). You can find most of these magazines and newspaper sources in the library's resource center.
- 3) **Summarize the article:** Begin with a short overview (summary) of the article you are analyzing. A summary is written in your own words and captures the article's main point(s) or argument. (A reader who has not read the article should understand its overall point from your summary.) A summary is objective, meaning it does not include your opinion. Include the title and author of the article in the summary.
- 4) **Analyze the article:** After summarizing, analyze the article. Analysis involves thinking critically about the purpose, ideas, evidence, and presentation of the article. Be careful not to include your opinion of the issue addressed in the article.* **Instead, focus on *how* and *why* the article was written.** Some questions you may ask yourself are:
 - *Why was the article written? What is the purpose of the article?*
 - *What is the context of the article? In other words, why was this article written now?*
 - *How is the article written? What type of evidence is presented? How is it organized?*
 - *What is the effect of the information presented? Does it evoke emotion? Does it appeal to logic and reasoning?*
 - *Do you detect bias? What is the agenda behind the article? Who wrote the article? What is their affiliation? What is the bias of the publication? (You may need to do some Googling to find out the answers to these questions.)*
 - *How does the article inform your understanding of the issue? How does the article connect to what you are learning in class?*

*A response that merely states your opinion on the issue will not be given credit.

- 5) Provide evidence from the article to support your analysis. Focus on the article itself in your analysis, and support your responses with examples and evidence from the article.
- 6) You may rewrite one news analysis with the help of the Writing Center for a better grade. You may earn additional two points per assignment (a total of ten bonus points throughout the semester) if you have each analysis reviewed by the Writing Center before submission. <http://www.rrcc.edu/writing/>

Format:

- News analyses should be typed, proofread, and two to three pages long.
- Cite the source of your article; see written work guidelines.

Grading:

Your grade is based on your ability to provide thoughtful analysis, connect the article to course material, and upon style and the proper use of grammar.

Course Schedule

We will cover the material, as time allows, in the following order. Material may be added to or subtracted from each section, as time allows.

READING & LECTURE SCHEDULE (Instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule)

WEEK 1 (Friday)

Introduction Review Syllabus
Who Gets What, When and How?
Readings: Chapter 1: Introduction
Class Project: *American Citizenship Test*

WEEK 1 (Saturday)

The Constitution

Readings: Chapter 2: The Constitution
 The US Constitution (appendix)

Federalism

Readings: Chapter 3: Federalism
 Federalist No.10 and/or No. 51 (appendix)

Civil Liberties

Readings: Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
 Chapter 5: Civil Rights
 Civil Rights Continued: Brown v. Board of Education (reader)

Film: *Fighting Back (1957-1962)*

Class Project: *Answer Film Questions*

WEEK 2(Friday)

Public Opinion and Mass Media

Readings: Chapter 6: Public Opinion and Political Action
 Chapter 7: Mass Media and the Political Agenda

Film: *Bill Moyer Interview with Jon Stewart*
 And at least 1 episode of The Daily Show

Class Project: *Answer Media Questions*

WEEK 2 (Saturday)

NEWS ANALYSIS 1 DUE SEPT 20th BY MIDNIGHT on D2L

Political Parties

Readings: Chapter 8: Political Parties

Campaigns and Voting Behavior

Readings: Chapter 9: Campaigns and Voting Behavior

Interest Groups

Readings: Chapter 10: Interest Groups

Class Project: *Look at Public Opinion Polls*

WEEK 3 (Friday)

Congress and Collaboration

Readings: Chapter 11: Congress
Film: *Sick Around the World* (2009)

Presidency and Power

Readings: Chapter 12: The Presidency

WEEK 3(Saturday)

NEW ANALYSIS 2 DUE SEPT 27th BY MIDNIGHT on D2L

Readings: Chapter 13: Electorate/Elections

The Courts and Judgment

Readings: Chapter 14: The Federal Courts
Film: *Of Civil Rights and Wrong: Story of Fred Korematsu*
Recap Lecture : Democracy in America?

FINAL EXAM IS DUE BY SATURDAY OCT 4th on D2L

Bill Moyers Interview with Jon Stewart

1. Recent polls suggest that many 18-30 year olds claim that *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* is their only source for political news. Watch at least two episodes of *The Daily Show* and reflect on the following question: Is *The Daily Show* a positive tool for shaping public opinion?
2. What does comedy do to enhance or detract from the news? Does it empower you? Does it help you to better understand political information?
3. Do you believe Jon Stewart when he says: Young people are “not getting any journalism from us?” Why or why not?
4. Do you agree with Jon Stewart when he says that politics have become: “the best way to sell the product.”

Public Opinion Polls. In the [United States](#), some notable companies include:

- [Gallup poll](#) run by [The Gallup Organization](#)
 - [Harris Poll](#)
 - [Ipsos](#)
 - [National Opinion Research Center](#)
 - [Nielsen ratings](#)
 - [Pew Research Center](#)
 - [Rasmussen Reports](#)
 - [Research 2000](#)
 - [YouGov.](#)
 - [Zogby International](#)
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PBS. Eyes on the Prize: “Fighting Back “ (1957–1962) (1987)

Central High School: Little Rock Nine

James Meredith at the University of Mississippi

1. Madison’s model of democracy
 - a. Federalism: the Federal and State governments,
 - b. Compromise: the Northern and Southern states
 - c. Factions: Ethnic and racial groups
 - d. Tyranny: representing the majority while protecting the interest of the minority

Terms you should know:

- a. Amendment 14
 - b. NAACP
 - c. ACLU
 - d. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)
 - e. Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
 - f. Civil Rights Act 1964
- Were the segregated schools and states in violation of the Constitution?
 - List three political outcome of the Supreme Court Case *Brown v. Board of Education 1954*.
 - Why did it take so long to implement the policy of integration?
 - What did the President(S) do to enforce the Supreme Court ruling?

How is Civil Rights America’s Unfinished Business?

- Racial discrimination: The practice of racial discrimination is illegal. But how is our country still practicing racial discrimination? Give some examples of public and private life where racial discrimination is practiced?
- Do you think Civil Rights Act (a Federal mandate) was necessary or would our country extended the rights of citizens to be more inclusive regardless?