

Political Science 111-601
American Government
Spring 2010 Weekend—Mar. 5,6; 12,13; 19,20
Fridays 5:00pm-10:00pm/Saturdays 8:00am-5:30pm
Red Rocks Community College—REA 2305

Instructor: Derek M. Johnson, M.A.

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Text: *Government in America, Brief Tenth Ed.*, Edwards, et. al.
Choices, an American Government Reader

Course Description

This is a 100 level course, and therefore no assumptions will be made in regard to prior information possessed by students. American government's theoretical underpinnings, institutions, and actions are the basics that will be covered in this course.

Students will be presented with information that will allow them to assess what American government is, how it has evolved over time, and ultimately whether it "works" or not. By the end of the course, students should have developed the necessary skills to be able to determine whether or not the system is flawed, and if so where these flaws come from and how they might be fixed. All of this will be accomplished through assigned and outside reading, participation in class discussions, and work on individual and group assignments.

Course Requirements

3 quizzes—Multiple choice and short answer (on-line)--**200 pts.** each=total **600 pts.**)

2 writing assignments—2-4 pages. (**100 pts.** Each=total **200 pts.**)

Case Study—(200 pts)

Grading Scale:

900 and above—A

800-899-----B

700-799-----C

600-699-----D

600 and below—Fail

*****Late assignments WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED*****

Student Responsibilities

Students will need to make use of personal or library resources during the course. These will include the internet, newspapers, other print material, radio or television.

Students will be engaged in group activity and it is imperative that they communicate well and contribute to the group's product.

Respect for the instructor and for each student is paramount! Students must keep in mind that most political disputes are not between "good" and "evil". Other members of the class—and certainly other members of society—have *radically* different views on what is good/bad or right/wrong in the political arena. It is a great miscalculation on anyone's part to assume that because somebody does not agree with you they are ignorant, misguided, or in error. Every issue should be looked at as objectively as possible. Each student has a responsibility to alert the instructor if he or she feels offended or abused by either another student or the instructor himself. This classroom should be a safe arena for the sharing of ideas.

Respect extends into classroom behavior: be on time, turn off cell phone ringers, and keep excess noise (eating, drinking, whispering, rustling, etc.) to an absolute minimum. Any disruption may result in penalties against a student's participation grade.

As this is a weekend class and extremely condensed, absence from a single day will be detrimental to a student's learning of course content. The nature of the course also demands that students participate in discussions and ask questions if concepts are unclear within the text. *Therefore missing any more than three hours will result in a loss of 20 points from the final grade for every hour missed after that.*

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Special Services to arrange for accommodations and support services.

Assignments

Short Writing Assignments- Each will be 2-4 pages in length. Grammar, spelling and documentation will all be a part of the grade.

Examinations—There will be 3 quizzes of 15 multiple choice and one short answer questions that will evaluate the student's knowledge of material covered during that weekend.

Case Study—Each student will write a description of a policy question that might be on the policy agenda and how he or she would work the policy making system to make the question public policy.

Note!!

Many assignments in this class require research or outside sources. Plagiarism and cheating demonstrate an inclination toward laziness. DO NOT DO EITHER!
Give credit for all sources where necessary.

Penalties for plagiarism, cheating, or other types of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the school policies

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
3/05	Class Overview	
	Introduction	Ch.1
	What is Government?	<i>Hobbes and Locke</i>
	Film: <i>Liberty the American Revolution</i>	
3/06	The Constitution	Federalist Papers #10 & # 51 <i>Antifederalists 1&84</i> Ch. 2
	Federalism	Ch. 3
	Civil Liberties/Civil Rights	Ch. 4&5
3/12	Public Opinion	Ch. 6
	The Media	Ch. 7
	Political Parties	Ch. 8
3/13	Campaigns & Voting Behavior	Ch. 9
	Electoral College	<i>Pro & Con-- Electoral College</i>
	Interest Groups	Ch. 10
	Film: <i>Recount</i>	
3/19	Congress	Ch. 11
	Film: <i>Congress-Ken Burns</i>	
	Presidency	Ch.12
3/20	Bureaucracy	Ch. 13
	Federal Courts	Ch. 14
	The Politics of Taxing & Spending	Ch. 15

Readings in *italics* are from the Choices reader.

The instructor reserves the right
to alter any of this syllabus as events may dictate.