

Intro to American Politics
Political Science 101

Professor: Dr. K. Campbell
Office: Park 511
Office Hours: T 12:00-1:00pm and by appt
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Fall 2009
MWF 1-1:50

Syllabus

This course will examine the American political process, focusing on both the strengths and weaknesses of the American system. We will explore the theory and practice of the American political system, specifically focusing on the three government branches, federalism, political parties, interest groups in the electoral and governmental process, public policy making, and contemporary political problems. The aim of this course is not only to increase students' knowledge of the American political process and public policy issues, but also to improve students' critical reasoning skills.

Limited Capacity Course

Please be advised that PSC 101 been designated as a "limited enrollment" course, which means that the enrollment in this course is limited by the number of student positions available. Self-registration in these courses in the Fall and Spring semesters will be limited to those students who are taking the course for the first time. Thus, repeat enrollment may be difficult or impossible in the Fall and Spring semesters, and students who plan to repeat the course for any reason should plan to register for the course in the Summer. Repeat enrollment is defined as: a student who was previously enrolled in the course at UB, or who transferred an equivalent course to UB, who received either a letter grade of 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D' or 'F' and qualified values thereof (e.g. 'A-', 'D+'); or a grade of 'P', 'S', 'U', 'I', 'J', 'N', or 'R'. The only case in which a student may self-register for a repeated course is when the student has taken an Administrative Withdrawal for an entire previous semester, so that all the grades for that semester were registered as 'W'.

Required Materials Available in the Bookstore

Fiorina, Morris P., Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson, and William G. Mayer. 2009. *The New American Democracy*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Grade Scale

A (94-100)	A- (90-93)	B+ (87-89)	B (84-86)	B- (80-83)
C+ (77-79)	C (74-76)	C- (70-73)	D (60-69)	F (0-59)

Grade Weights

	<u>Weight</u>
Exams:	
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Final Exam	30%
Group Debate	15%
Attendance & Participation:	10%

Course Expectations

Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis having done the reading required for that day. Class participation is strongly encouraged and students are credited for their contributions. **Attendance is an important component of the participation grade.**

Students will be participating in policy debates throughout the semester. Each student is expected to research a policy issue of their choice and then debate this issue with other members of their assigned group. All debate topics need to be approved by the instructor.

The examinations are designed to assess each student's understanding of the course material and ability to think critically about the political process. The exams will consist of multiple choice questions based on class lectures and the assigned reading. **Make-up exams will not be offered.**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated; students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the college's policy on academic dishonesty. Any student caught **cheating** on an exam or **mis-representing another student's attendance record** will automatically **receive an 'F' for the course.**

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Part 1: Introduction

(Aug 31) Introduction and Course Overview

Part 2: The Constitution and Federalism

(Sept 2-14) Fiorina et al., Chpt. 1, *Declaration of Independence*
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 2, *The Constitution, Federalist #10 & #51*
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 3

Part 3: Campaigns and Elections

(Sept 16-25) Fiorina et al., Chpt. 10
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 11

Part 4: Public Opinion and Political Participation

(Sept 28-Oct 12) Fiorina et al., Chpt. 4 & 5
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 6

****Exam 1: Wednesday October 14****

Part 5: Interest Groups, Political Parties, and the Mass Media

(Oct 16-30) Fiorina et al., Chpt 7
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 8
Fiorina et al., Chpt 9

Part 6: The Institutions: Congress, the President, and the Courts

(Nov 2-20) Fiorina et al., Chpt. 12
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 13
Fiorina et al., Chpt. 15

****Exam 2: Monday November 23****

Part 7: The Bureaucracy: The Fourth Branch?

(Nov 30-Dec 4) Fiorina et al., Chpt. 14

Part 8: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

(Dec 7-11) Fiorina et al., Chpt. 16
 Fiorina et al., Chpt. 17

****Final Exam: See University Final Exam Schedule****