

American Federal Government

Political Science 1113

Fall 2007

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Graduate Teaching Assistants:
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Course Objectives

Political Science 1113 is an introduction to American government and politics. In this course, we will examine and analyze the social and constitutional environment for politics; the extent to which citizens become involved in their government, and the nature of that involvement; the policy-making institutions of government; and public policies. This course provides an overview of the structures of American government as established in the Constitution, how these structures have developed, the influences, both internal and external, that affect their operations, and how all this leads to public policy-making.

In analyzing the American political system, we will look for more than just a simple description of the formal and legal aspects of the government process. More important, we will search for the answers to some fundamental questions: Why do political and governmental institutions work the way they do? Why do people behave as they do in political settings? What are the policy consequences of these patterns of behavior? The purpose of this course is to gain a better understanding of how the American political system works and its impact upon our daily activities, and to observe the relationship between the policies of government and its structure.

Required Texts

Shea, Daneil M., Joanne Conner Green, and Christopher E. Smith. Living Democracy, Basic Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007. (ISBN: 0-13-613210-30)

Scott, Gregory M., ed. Choices: An American Government Reader for Professor Margaret Ellis, PSC 1113. Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing. (ISBN: 0-536-37683-2) **Only available in OU Bookstore.**

HITT Immediate Responders (clickers). Available at the University Bookstore

Course Requirements

Attendance/Participation

Each student is expected to complete the reading assignment prior to class and be prepared for class discussion. Students are encouraged to raise questions and to discuss topics of interest during class. To do well in this class, a student must prepare for class, attend class, and participate in class discussions. This class utilizes the HITT Student Responder System and questions will be given for credit on almost every time class meets. Students are expected to bring their HITT device to class every class session.

There will be up to 100 points available based on questions posed in class utilizing the responder system. There will be approximately two (2) per class session, but not all classes will include HITT questions. Students will receive one point for answering each graded HITT questions and will receive an additional point for getting the correct answer. There will be 120 potential points but a maximum of 100 points will be applied to the course grade. A student could in principle miss a few classes and still attain the maximum 100 points, Therefore, there will be no make-up credit for missed HITT questions due to absences. Even excused absences will not be given make-up points due to the number of points/questions offered in excess of the maximum throughout the semester

HINT ON HITT: Remember that you need to purchase batteries along with the “clicker.” The book store staff recommends that you remove the batteries when not in use because the little metal lever that holds the batteries in place may break if the clicker is bounced around in your backpack. The book store is working on a buy-back plan for these clickers, but, if implemented, they will only buy back clickers that are in good working order.

Desire to Learn

This class will use Desire to Learn – a web-based course management tool which is free to all students at <http://learn.ou.edu>. This site provides many tools for students such as calendars, e-mail options, and for this class, all the important course documents, such as study guides, announcements, etc. It is the student’s responsibility to check D2L frequently for announcements and changes in the schedule, if they should occur.

Writing Assignment

Each student is assigned one reading summary from the reader for this class, Choices: An American Government Reader. This summary must be submitted online through the drop box on the course account in D2L and must be submitted using Microsoft Word as the work processor. (Word is available on all the computers in the university computer labs.) Each reading summary has a specific due date and must be submitted to D2L by that date. Late submissions or papers handed in during class will not be graded. The summary has five sections: a summary of the article, answers to each of the three questions listed at the end of the reading in the book, and an analysis of how this article relates to contemporary government in the United States. The reading summary will be graded on content, completeness, and adherence to appropriate writing skills. A sheet outlining the requirements of this assignment is posted on D2L. In addition, students will randomly be asked to summarize the reading in class during our discussion of that topic. All the readings will be included on the exams, so it is important that each student reading the readings regardless of their assigned reading summary.

Examinations

There will be four exams given on the dates listed in the course schedule. All exams include only the material in the unit we are currently covering in class. Study guides for the exams will be available through the class account on D2L. The first three exams are taken online; the final is taken in the classroom on the university assigned final date. Only the final exam will have an essay question. All students are expected to take the exams at the regularly scheduled times. Make-up exams will not be given, but a student can make arrangements for a different time to take the exam if it is impossible due to university or work obligations to take the exam within the twenty-four hour period given for that exam. Alternative times to take an exam must be arranged before the online exam begins and appropriate documentation must be given to Professor Ellis prior to the exam date.. Alternative times to take the exam will not be given once the class has begun taking the exam. Teaching

Assistants cannot reschedule exams; students must see Professor Ellis in this regard.

Important Exam Information

Please note that the online exams have a limited time period. The computer will not allow you to go over this amount of time. You must save your answers and submit your exam before the time limit to receive credit for your exam. Also, you cannot log on to the exam and then log off and come back later. Once you log off, you will **not be able to re-enter the exam**. This is true even if you are disconnected from the Internet, so it is highly recommended that you take the exams on a computer that has a very secure internet connection, preferably one of the **university computer labs**. If the university lab connection is broken, I will be able to make arrangements for you to have the remainder of your time on that exam. If it is a laptop or personal computer at another location (particularly WIFI) I will not be able to re-establish your connection for that exam. In the past there have some problems with students who use computers in sorority/fraternity houses and in common areas such as apartments, dorms, or anywhere that utilizes a wireless connection. Exceptions will not be made for these situations, so **BE SURE to have a stable internet connection when you begin the exam.**

Exam Dates: Exam 1 - Online from noon Sunday 9/16 until noon Monday 9/17
Exam 2 - Online from noon Sunday 10/14 until noon Monday 10/15
Exam 3 - Online from noon Sunday 11/4 until noon Monday 11/5
Final - Tuesday, December 11 from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. in regular classroom

Course Behavior Guidelines

Students will comply strictly with the requirements of the OU Academic Misconduct policy which can be found in the OU Student Handbook. The policy states “academic misconduct includes (a) cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; (b) assisting others in any such act; or c) attempts to engage in such acts.”

The code currently runs to seven pages of small-font type, the basics are much simpler: students may not cheat; those who do will be penalized; those who are accused deserve due process and a fair hearing.

1. Students will arrive on time for class and will not leave class until the class is over unless the student notifies the instructor prior to the beginning of class. Due to the size of this class, students coming and going other than at the beginning and end of class is very disruptive. Please be respectful of your classmates and take care of all your business before you come to class and stay until the class ends. Students who leave the classroom during an exam must turn in their exam before leaving and will not be allowed to continue with the exam when they return to the classroom.
2. All cell phones and pagers must be either turned off or on mute during class. Phones are to be put in your backpack or purse during class.
3. Computers can be used to take notes during class, but not for checking e-mail, surfing the net, or other such activities. If you use the computer for reasons other than note taking, you will be asked to turn it off and not bring the computer to future classes. Again, this can be very distracting for students around you, so please do not abuse this privilege.

4. **ANYONE** who attempts to use more than one clicker during a class period will automatically be charged with academic dishonesty. Each student must answer their own questions with their own clicker - **DO NOT USE A FRIEND'S CLICKER TO ANSWER THE HITT QUESTIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT IN CLASS.** Both students will receive full charges for this action.

Accommodation Policy

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your education opportunities.

Grading

Final grades for the course will be determined as follows:

	<u>Points</u>		<u>Grading Scale</u>
Examinations	375	75%	A 500 - 450
Exam 1	75		B 449 - 400
Exam 2	85		C 399 - 350
Exam 3	95		D 349 - 300
Final Exam	120		F 299 - 0
Readings	25	25 5%	
HITT Questions	100	<u>100</u> 20%	
Total Points	500		

NOTE: Grades will NOT be curved. If you are one point away from the next higher grade, you will receive the lower grade.

Assistance and/or Consultation with the Instructor

The best way to contact me is through e-mail, preferably at the ougovt@yahoo.com address. If I feel the graduate teaching assistant can assist you sooner than I will be available, I will forward your e-mail to her. You should also feel free to telephone or come by during office hours. I will be available between 2:00 and 3:00 on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and by appointment on other days to discuss any questions that you may have during the semester. Students should not hesitate to arrange to meet with me at a mutually convenient time. You are responsible for any material, assignments, schedule changes, etc., which are announced in class or on the online class account, even if you are absent when such announcements are made. Students are encouraged to form study groups, exchange information, and seek assistance from both the instructor and fellow students. Cheating in any form, including plagiarism, will be penalized; you will be dismissed from class and be given an *F* and/or be referred to appropriate university officials for discipline. If you are having difficulty with the course work, get help early. I want to help make this a good learning experience and will assist you in any way I can to achieve that goal.

Tentative Class Schedule
PSC 1113 - Fall 2007

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Textbook</u>	<u>Writing Assignments</u>
Aug 21 & 23	Introduction, HITT registration Foundations of Government	Shea, Chap 1	Tocqueville (8/28)
28 & 9/4	Foundation, Structure and Elements of the the U.S. Constitution	Shea, Chap 2	Hobbes & Locke (9/4)
Sept 6, 11, 13	Why a federalist system? Powers of the Federal govt and state governments	Shea, Chap 3	Wildavsky & Derthick (9/11)
16 - 17	EXAM 1 (Online from noon Sun 9/16 to noon Mon 9/17)		
18 & 20	The Judiciary	Shea, Chap 4	<i>Marbury & Thayer</i> (9/20)
25 & 27	Civil Liberties	Shea, Chap 5	<i>Lemon & Texas</i> (9/27)
Oct 2, 4, 9	Civil Rights	Shea, Chap 6	Lewis & Greenhouse (10/4)
14 - 15	EXAM 2 (Online from noon Sun 10/14 to noon Mon 10/15)		
11 & 16	Congress	Shea, Chap 7	Virginia & Kennedy (10/16)
18 & 23	Presidency	Shea, Chap 8	Neustadt & Schlesinger (10/23)
25, 30, 11/1	Bureaucracy	Shea, Chap 9	Goodsell (10/30)
Nov 4 - 5	EXAM 3 (Online from noon Sun 11/4 to noon Mon 11/5)		
6 & 8	Political Socialization & Public Opinion	Shea, Chap 10	Wilson (11/8)
13 & 15	Civic and Political Engagement	Shea, Chap 12	Putnam (11/15)
20	Interest Groups	Shea, Chap 13	Truman (11/20)
27 & 29	Political Parties	Shea, Chap 15	Digest & Kimberling (11/27)
Dec 4 & 6	Elections & Political Participation	Shea, Chap 14	Nagourney, Kirkpatrick, (12/4)
Tues 12/11	FINAL 1:30 - 3:30 (Bring pencil, eraser, and student ID!)		

* *Written summaries are due on the date in parenthesis. See list in the Written Assignments section in the syllabus for more exact information.*