

# Department of Political Science

## The University of Oklahoma

### Norman Campus

**Course Title: Introduction to American Federal Government**

**Course Number: PSC 1113, Section 013**

**Fall 2005**

**Instructor:** Professor Peters

**Office:** Monnet Hall Room 101

**Office Phone:** 5-6372

**Email:** [rpeters@ou.edu](mailto:rpeters@ou.edu)

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 or by appointment

**Classroom:** Neilson Hall 270

**Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30-11:45

**Teaching Assistants:** Students will be assigned to sections mentored by Professor Peters and by the Graduate Teaching Assistants listed below. The instructor of the section to which you have been assigned will be the primary grader of your research paper. Once you are assigned, please contact the instructor for your section as your primary contact. If, however, you have scheduling conflicts that make it necessary to see one of the other instructors during his/her posted office hours, you are invited to do so. Professor Peters is happy to meet with any student in the class.

Kate Carney

Office: Monnet 101

Office Hours: 12:30-2:30 Thursdays or by appointment

Phone: 325-6372

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Matt Field:

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Brandon Hill:

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Office Hours: 1:00-3:00 Mondays or by appointment

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Leslie Bracy:

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**Course Description:** This course will examine the theoretical foundations, institutions, and processes that shape American government and politics today. The course aims to inform you about the American political system and to encourage you to think about important issues and concepts. As you know, Political Science 1113 is required by the State of Oklahoma for all graduates of its higher education system. This requirement is shaped by an expectation that good government requires the participation of an informed citizenry. This course, then, is not simply another among many required courses that you will have to take in order to complete your degree requirements. It is also a forum for civic engagement and discussion of the issues of the day. When you finish this class you will, we hope, be better informed about American government; but we also hope that you will be more engaged in the political system that in many ways shapes your life.

While this is a large lecture class, we hope that it will be interactive. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussion and to raise questions during class.

The course will depend upon technology for aspects of its delivery.

(1) We will use Learn.OU.Edu (this is the OU version of Desire to Learn) as our basic platform. You should consult it regularly for announcements. Supplemental course readings are posted in the content area. We will also be using Learn.OU.Edu for examinations, as explained further below. <http://learn.ou.edu/>

(2) We will use Turnitin.com for submitting, revising, and grading of the required course paper. Turn it In is a comprehensive web site that assesses papers for their original content by comparing each paper to a set of data bases. Student papers are incorporated into the data base and so each student's paper is compared to other papers submitted for the class. The teaching staff will use Turn it In to grade and comment on your papers, which you can then access via your Turn it In account. <http://www.turnitin.com>

(3) We will use the H-ITT student responder system to support class presentations and discussions. You are expected to purchase a responder device ("clicker") from the Bookstore and bring it to class with you each day. Graded questions will be offered every class session, so it is essential that you come to class if you expect to earn a good grade in the course. If you do not plan to come to class every day, you should consider transferring to another section of PSC 1113.

(4) Infotrac. This web site is accessed by a personal log in number provided with your textbook. It is a research site in which you can identify sources for specific topics by entering key terms in a search field. It will be used for your research paper (described below). <http://infotrac.thomsonlearning.com/>

**Assessment:** Assessment is arrayed in three categories:

## **(1) Retention of material**

**(A) Hourly Examinations.** There will be three, 50 question examinations (see the course schedule posted as a separate document for the dates). These examinations will be taken by each student through Learn.OU.Edu. For each hourly examination, there will be an “exam week” during which students may log on and take the exam (in the quiz area) at convenience. The questions for each examination will be drawn uniquely for each student on a random basis from a bank of questions pertaining to the topics covered by the examination. You will be able, within the time period specified, to log on and take the exam when you want to do so. You will have one hour to take each exam from the time that you begin. You can take each exam only once. The results will be reported directly to the grade book. You will be able to see your scores as soon as you take the exam; however, the questions and answers will only be made available after all students have taken the exam.

Cheating? Since these are open book tests, you are not cheating if you take the test with your books and notes open in front of you. Any form of collaboration or assistance in taking these tests constitutes cheating. Each of you will have a decision to make. Are you a person who cheats? Study together, review together, practice together, but do not take the tests together. Cheating, if discovered, will be prosecuted under the student conduct code.

Since these exams are “open book” exercises, since nothing precludes you from consulting the course readings as you take the test. However, it would be rather unwise for a student to rely on “looking up” the answers to the questions instead of studying for the test, for the simple reason that you must complete the exam within the allotted time. Furthermore, the final examination will be comprehensive and taken in the traditional format (closed book); thus, you need to study as you go along in order to be prepared for the final exam. Total Points: 150

**(B) Final Exam.** There will be a final exam given during the regularly scheduled final examination period for this class, December 15 at 8:00 a.m. This will be a “regular” examination (closed book) comprised of objective questions. Approximately one-third of the questions will cover the material since the last hourly exam. The rest of the questions will cover all course material. Total points: 120.

Please Note: Students qualified for disability services requiring more time to take the examinations may do so at Goddard. Please contact Professor Peters to make arrangements.

## **(2) Research and Writing Skills**

**(A) Research Paper.** (See separate description of the Research Paper posted in the content area of Learn.OU.Edu for more detail.) Each student will research and write a 10 page paper addressed to an important policy issue. Topics will be selected from among a list provided. The paper will involve three steps.

1. Research Paper Proposal. Each student will submit a two page research paper proposal that will include a brief description of the topic and an annotated bibliography. Please note that Infotrac provides a comprehensive web site offering advice on research, writing, and formatting. 10 points.

2. First Draft. The first draft of the paper will be reviewed, edited, and graded. 50 points.

3. Final paper. 40 points.

Total Points: 100.

**Please Note:** We will record each component of the research paper as a separate item in the grade book.

**Critical Analysis and Discourse:** This category of assessment relates to dialogue that takes place during class.

**(A) H-ITT Points.** We will be using the H-ITT system during each class session. For some questions you will receive a point for simply answering the question. For other questions, you will receive one point for answering the question and a second point if your answer is correct. Questions may be taken from the assigned readings for the day, as reinforcement for points made during class that day, or simply as surveys of opinion on issues that are under consideration.

The total number of H-ITT points cannot be known in advance. You can be sure, however, that it is in your interest to come to class with a working clicker.

Please Note: You are expected to come to class with working clicker. We will be updating the H-ITT points at the end of each week. You should check each time you cast a vote to make sure that your clicker ID # appears on the screen. You can check to make sure that your response has been recorded by observing your number on the screen. Those students with the new, 3-hole clickers also may observe that it flashes a green light when the response is recorded. You should also check regularly to make sure that your points have been recorded. **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A WORKING CLICKER, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY POINTS. NO 'PAPER BALLOTS' WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

### **Extra Credit**

On October 10, 11, and 12, Professor Morris Fiorina of Stanford University will present a series of three lectures for the Carl Albert Center's Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lecture in Representative Government. The lectures will be held from 3:30-5:00 pm in Meacham Auditorium of OMU. We will be discussing Professor Fiorina's work in class. Students will receive 10 points for each lecture they attend. Please note: you will be asked to sign in both before and after each lecture. It is a matter of simple courtesy that you remain until the lecture and question/answer session is completed. Students who have unavoidable scheduling conflicts that will prevent attendance at one or more of the lectures, but who would like to receive extra credit, will have an option to listen to audio recordings scheduled subsequently. However, any student wishing to take advantage of this option MUST make a request BEFORE October 10, 2005. Please contact your assigned instructor.

### **Summary:**

Hourly Examinations: 150

Final Exam: 120

Research Paper: 100

H-ITT Questions: 100 or more

Total: 470 plus any HITT questions in excess of 100

Extra Credit: Up to 30

## **Grading:**

- A 90%-100% of available points
- B 80%-89% of available points
- C 70%-79% of available points
- D 60-69% of available points

## **Caveats:**

1. It may be necessary to adjust this curve downward in order to produce a fair grade distribution. Any adjustments to the curve can only be determined once all the points have been calculated. In light of the possibility that the final grade for the class will be based on a curve, students should be additionally mindful that any points credited to other students as a result of cheating may be directly detrimental to other students in the course. Do not cheat, and do not assist others in cheating. And, if you become aware of cheating, report it to me.

2. The extra credit (bonus) points are enrolled in the Learn.OU.Edu grade book with zero given as the total points available. Thus, they add to your total points while not increasing the total number of points available for the course.

## **Required Material:**

Jillson, *American Government, Third Edition*. Thomson. ISBN 0-534-64326-4. [Referred to in the course schedule as “Text”] Please make sure that your copy has the Infotrac card in it.

Morris Fiorina, *Culture War?* Pearson, Longman. ISBN 0-321-27640-X [Referred to as “Fiorina.”]

Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York. WW. Norton. 2004. ISBN 0-393-04764-4. [Referred to as “Zakaria.”]

H-ITT Student Responder Clicker.

Other Readings may be posted on Learn.OU.Edu.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s work as if it were your own. It can take many forms. The most obvious form is to turn in a paper that someone else wrote over your signature. Or, you might copy material from a book or an article and present it as your own work. When you use words that are directly copied from a source, you *must* place them in quotation marks and cite the source. A person might make a few changes in the text, and then think that it is permissible to present the material without using quotation marks or without citing the source. This is a form of paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is still plagiarism, unless you explicitly say that you are paraphrasing and cite the source from which the original material comes. Plagiarism is academic misconduct and is severely penalized. Do not plagiarize. If you do, expect that if you are caught you will face disciplinary procedures that can include expulsion from the University and will almost certainly result in your receiving an F in this class. Remember that cheating with the clickers is like any other form of cheating.

For OU's policy on Student Ethics and Plagiarism, please consult the following web site:

<http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity>

### **Decorum**

Please arrive on time. Please make sure that your cell phone is turned off during class. This classroom has Internet connections at each seat. Please do not use your computer to exchange email, play games, or surf the Net during class. Please avoid casual conversation during lectures and class discussions. Please sleep elsewhere.

### **Policy on Withdrawals and Incompletes**

You will only be allowed to withdraw from this course with a passing grade if you are in fact passing. You are passing if the number of semester points that you have earned comprises 60% or more of the points available to the date of proposed withdrawal. If you are ill or have some personal situation that prevents you from attending class, your obligation is to contact us as soon as you start missing class in order to discuss your situation. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in cases of complete withdrawal from the University approved by Student Affairs and the Dean's office.

Incompletes will be given only upon request and for good cause. Incompletes will not be given if a student has missed so much of the course that it is in a practical sense impossible to make up the work. If an incomplete is given, the student will be asked to sign an agreement specifying the work to be completed and the date the work will be due. The student will participate in the determination of the deadline. Extensions will be given only under exceptional circumstances.

### **Policy on Challenged Persons**

If you have a disability that may affect your participation or performance in this class you should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity. In particular, if you are qualified and plan to take your examinations at disability services, you need to provide the written documentation prior to each exam and make sure that we know that you are planning to take your exam there so that we can make arrangements for it.