

University of Jordan
Faculty of International Studies
Department of American Studies

2403703 American Political System
Spring Semester 2012
Social Science Building, Room 4
Sunday, 5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Lecturer: Dr. Debbie Abuelghanam

Office:

Office Hours: 2:00 – 5:00, Sunday & Tuesday

Phone: 06-535-5000, ext 24841

Required Readings

Zimmerman, Joseph F. 2008. *Contemporary American Federalism: The Growth of National Power*. 2nd Edition. New York: State University of New York Press.

Bowler, Shaun and Amihai Glazer, Ed. 2008. *Direct Democracy's Impact on American Political Institutions*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian.

Additional Readings.

Course Description

This course offers an in-depth examination of American politics and government. The first half of the course deals with the origins, evolution, and maturation of the American federal republic, focusing on the development of the United States Constitution, the two party system, and mass politics. The goal is to acquaint students with the structure, functions, processes, and traditions of local state, and national government, and with the complexities of American political culture. The second half of the course explores the theory and practice of democracy in the contemporary United States, placing American politics and government in comparative perspective.

Course Objectives

The objective of this class is to take an in-depth look at the political system and culture in the United States.

Course Requirements

Exams There will be two exams for our enjoyment. There will be a midterm exam on March 25, 2012 and a final exam on May 27, 2012. The exams will consist of essay questions. The Midterm Exam is worth 30 points and the Final Exam is worth 40 points.

Term Paper A term paper is a requirement of this course. The topic of the paper should be relevant to one of the topics in the Assignment Schedule. The paper should be 10 – 15 pages in length. The topic and preliminary outline are due on **March 11, 2012**. The first draft of the paper is due on **April 15, 2012** and the final draft is due at the paper presentations scheduled on **May 20, 2012** (see Assignment Schedule). If you use a published source it must be **documented**. **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated. You will present your paper at the end of the semester.

Attendance Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken each session. Legitimate reasons for any absence will be accepted and must be accompanied with documentation.

Class Each student is expected to have read the assigned reading prior to attending

Participation class. **THIS IS A SEMINAR STYLE COURSE**. Each student must be prepared to participate in class discussion concerning the readings.

Grading The total number of points that can be earned for the semester is **100 points**. The points are distributed as follows:

Midterm Exam	30 points
Final Exam	40 points
Term Paper	20 points
Class Participation	<u>10 points</u>
	100 points

Term Paper	Outline	5 points
	1 st Draft	5 points
	2 nd Draft	5 points
	Presentation	<u>5 points</u>
		20 points

Assignment Schedule

		<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 1	Feb. 5	Orientation	
Week 2	Feb. 12	Creating a Federal System	Zimmerman Ch. 1&2 Federalist Papers
Week 3	Feb. 19	US Constitution	Founding Fathers Zimmerman Ch. 3
Week 4	Feb. 26	Presidency	Healy Intro. & Ch. 1
Week 5	Mar. 4	Congress	Zimmerman Ch. 4 Parenti Ch. 13
Week 6	Mar. 11	Courts	Zimmerman Ch. 5 Sperling & Sunstein
		<u>Outline Due</u>	
Week 7	Mar. 18	Bureaucracy	Goodsell Ch. 1&2
Week 8	Mar. 25	<u>Midterm Exam</u>	
Week 9	Apr. 1	IGR & States	Zimmerman Ch. 6 &8
Week 10	Apr. 8	Political Parties	Lowi etal. Ch. 11 Parenti Ch. 11
Week 11	Apr. 15	Interest Groups	Lowi etal. Ch. 13 Parenti Ch. 12
		<u>First Draft Due</u>	
Week 12	Apr. 22	Democracy I	Bowler etal. 1,2,3
Week 13	Apr. 29	Democracy II	Bowler etal 4,5,6
Week 14	May 6	Democracy III	Bowler etal. 7,8,9
Week 15	May 13	Wrap Up	
Week 16	May 20	<u>Paper Presentations</u>	
Week 17	May 27	<u>Final Exam</u>	

Additional Readings

Burnham, Walter Dean. Ed. 1995. *The American Prospect: Reader in American Politics*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, Inc.

28a – Gene Sperling – Does the Supreme Court Matter?

28b – Cass R. Sunstein – Cass R. Sunstein Responds

Goodsell, Charles T. 1994. *The Case for Bureaucracy: A Public Administration Polemic*. 3rd Edition. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, Inc.

Chapter 1 – Bureaucracy Despised, Disparaged, and Defended

Chapter 2 – What Citizens Experience from Bureaucracy

Healy, Gene. 2008. *The Cult of the Presidency*. Washington D.C.: Cato Institute.

Introduction

Chapter 1 – Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers

Lowi, Theodore J., Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2010. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Brief 11th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Chapter 11 – Political Parties

Chapter 12 – Groups and Interests

Nivola, Pietros and David R. Rosenbloom. 1990. *Classic Readings in American Politics*. 2nd Edition. N.Y.: St. Martin's Press.

Chapter 4 – “Publius” (Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay) – The Federalist Papers.

Parenti, Michael. 1995. *Democracy for the Few*. 6th Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Chapter 11 – The Greatest Show on Earth: Elections, Parties and Voters

Chapter 12 – Who Governs? Leaders, Lobbyists or Labor?

Chapter 13 – Congress: The Pocketing of Power

Woll, Peter. 1990. *American Government: Readings and Cases*. 10th Edition. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown Higher Education.

Chapter 2 – John P. Roche – The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action