

Political Science 101
Introduction to American Politics
Autumn Quarter 2006

Dr. William Angel
Office: GA 460B
Hours: M-Th, 9:15-10:15; M-W,
4:30-5:30 & by appointment

THE COURSE:

Welcome to Political Science 101! Not only will our course give you a fuller appreciation of American government, it will also help you build skills to interpret political events on your own. You will soon begin to develop a feel for the sophisticated complexities of American politics, as well as an understanding that politics does not consist of a series of random events. In other words, you will come to view politics theoretically, seeing the historical, economic, and cultural forces which condition decision-making in American government.

You will come to recognize that politics does not occur just in other places but also takes place right in our home communities. And political decisions are part of a complicated cultural web, which includes economic institutions, legal arrangements, and socially defined beliefs about race and gender. Our course will pay special attention to race relations in the United States, and the role that mass politics and governmental institutions, especially the courts, Congress, and the Presidency, have played in transforming relationships between white and black Americans.

Most importantly, you will learn that politics is not a spectator sport. By the conclusion of this course, you will be armed with a knowledge of how American government works, and you will be in a position to respond selectively to problems at national, state, and local levels. A sophisticated understanding of the American political process should encourage you to be a participating citizen, not a passive spectator who merely watches events unfold.

GOALS/RATIONALE:

This course like others in the social sciences will help you understand human behavior and cognition, as well as the structures of human societies, cultures and institutions. Consequently, as a student of political science, you will understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies. Also, you will comprehend human differences and similarities in various psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts. And finally, you will develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

ASSIGNED TEXTS:

Miroff, Seidelman, and Swanstrom, *The Democratic Debate*, **fourth edition**;
Morris Fiorina, *Culture War?* **Second edition**.
The New York Times, student subscription available through the bookstore. Hard-copy version required.

EVALUATION:

Your grade will be based upon the following formula:

Midterm I	100 points
Midterm II	100 points
Final	150 points
Quizzes	25 points
Participation	25 points
Total	400 points

Grade scale will be as follows:

A=360 points or above
B=320-359 points
C=280-319 points
D=240-279 points.

Tests will include a mixture of multiple choice and essay questions. More information will follow. The participation grade is a subjective assessment, based upon observations of your involvement in the course. Obviously, attendance is taken into consideration, as are submission of ungraded written assignments, oral participation, and small group work.

ADMINISTRATION:

Office Hours: M-Th, 9:15-10:15; M/W, 4:30-5:30. If these hours are inconvenient, please schedule an appointment.

Phone/voice mail: (419) 995-8377.

e-mail: angel.1@osu.edu

Makeups/Midterms: Makeups for midterm exams will be given to students who have reasonable excuses for missing the original exam. Students should attempt to contact me prior to the exam if they know they are going to miss it, but in all cases students who miss midterms must contact me no later than 24 hours following the scheduled time of the exam. Makeup exams are generally more difficult. The Learning Center, GA 310, will administer all make-up exams. I reserve the right not to grant a make-up.

Attendance: Attendance is evaluated as part of your participation grade (see above). It is never a good idea to miss classroom instruction, and missing more than **2 days** of class time will adversely affect your participation grade.

Class Decorum: Use of cell phones, ipods, and electronic messaging during class time is strictly prohibited. If you are expecting an important call, place ringer on silent mode so as not to disrupt the class. Laptops may be used for note-taking purposes only. If you want to tape record class sessions, please ask my permission.

Tardiness: Arriving after class business has begun disrupts the class and is disrespectful to your fellow

students. Although there are valid reasons for arriving late, a pattern of tardiness should not occur.

Quizzes: Lowest quiz grade is dropped. Several quizzes are pop quizzes and cannot be made up. Scheduled quizzes may be made up according to the policy for Makeups/Midterms (above).

Written Work: Written work must be ready by the beginning of class on the day it is due. This includes directives, @ which you prepare in response to the reading assignments. Although I do not grade directives, you will receive credit for turning them in providing 3 conditions are met: (1) You are present for the class for which the directive is required; (2) the directive is submitted on the date it is due; and (3) *the directive is typed*. Exceptions to this policy may be granted in extreme circumstances. I reserve the right not to accept a written assignment that is submitted late.

Incompletes: None will be granted. All work must be completed by the time I assign grades. Any uncompleted assignment will receive a grade of "0." Exceptions to this policy will be granted only in extreme circumstances.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities which have been certified by the Office of Disabilities Services will be appropriately accommodated. Eligible students should inform me as soon as possible--preferably during the first week of the quarter--regarding their needs.

Academic Misconduct: Any suspected instance of cheating, including plagiarism, will be turned over the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. Please check with me if you have any questions regarding the definition of plagiarism or if you need clarification of this issue.

COURSE OUTLINE:

I. The American Tradition

Read: *Democratic Debate*, Chapters 1-6
Assigned *New York Times* articles

Midterm I: October 9/10

II. Institutions and Policy

Read: *Democratic Debate*, Chapters 9-13
Assigned *New York Times* articles

Midterm II: November 1/2

III. Leadership and American Democracy

Read: *Democratic Debate*, Chapters 14-18
Culture War? (entire)
Assigned *New York Times* articles

Final Exam: Week of December 4 (TBA)