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American National Government

Fall 2008

PSCI 216 El Centro

Mon 6:10-8:50 PM

Course Overview

This course is designed to teach the foundation of the U.S. National Government. We will examine its history and it's politics, as well we will look at where we stand today socially, economically, and politically. We will learn through text, history, current events and the media. **Please be prepared to be a VERY active PARTICIPANT in our sessions.**

Course Objective

The objective for this course is to give the students a clear understanding of the concepts and framework of our national government. We will do this through oral and written assignments and class discussion. The objective is to have the students gain an interest in our government and its systems and procedures before the class is over and be able to use critical thinking to analyze political evidence.

Required Text

American National Government; Eleventh/Twelfth Edition: Volkomer

Exams and Grades

Your grade will be based on the mid-term, final, oral presentation, and other homework assignments as listed below. Class participation and attendance for each class is expected. Absences must be communicated prior to class start time.

*** ALL assignments are mandatory in order to receive a passing grade.**

NO HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED LATE

The first half of each class will be for the students to present their articles.

Weeks and Assignments

Week 1: August 25th
Introduction to class

Assignment:

Write one-three sentences for EACH amendment to the Constitution: **10 points**
In your own words 1-3 sentences for each of the 27 amendments to the US Constitution

Due: September 8th

******NOTE: NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 1ST due to LABOR DAY HOLIDAY******

Week 2 and 3: September 8th and 15th

Read: Chapters One and Two

The American System

We will look at America in the 21st Century and at the history and making of the Constitution. We will study how our government's history affects us and our politics today.

Assignment: Define and discuss 3 terms from chapters One and/or Two: **15 points**

Due: September 22nd

Week 4 and 5: September 22nd and 29th

Read: Chapters Ten and Eight, (State of the Union)

Assignment: Film State of the Union
State of the Union Paper

10 points

Write **ONE** page about either the State of the Union film we see in class or any other State of the Union ever given, your opinion of the speech.

Due: October 6th

Week 6 and 7: October 6th and 13th

Review for the Mid-Term which will be October 13th

Chapter Seven / Finish discussion of the Three Branches of Government

Week 8 and 9: October 20th and 27th

Read: Chapters Six and Seven

Assignment: Senate Presentation of a piece of legislation due **30 points**

Go to thomas.loc.gov, find a piece of legislation that interests you, you will present it to the class. You are to attempt to persuade the class to either vote for or against the piece of legislation.

Due: October 27th

Institutions of Government

We will discuss our Congress and the Executive branch

Week 10 and 11: November 3rd and 10th

Read: Chapters Eleven and Twelve

Assignment: Film

Civil Rights two page paper

20 Points

You will write a **TWO** page paper on any topic relating to Civil Rights. You can focus your paper on one of the two or both films, or any other Civil Rights topic.

Due: November 10th

Our Liberties and Civil Rights

We will discuss the culture and politics of our civil rights and civil liberties from the past, current and what the future holds.

Week 12 and 13: November 17th and 24th

Read: Chapters Four and Five

Opinions, Interests, and Organizations

We will discuss political culture and ideology. We will work with public opinion and political participation. We will study our media and how it affects our political culture.

Assignment: Create a public opinion poll from Zoomerrang.com

20 Points

This will consist of TEN questions plus demographics. The poll will be distributed to ten people. The summary/the results will be turned in for the assignment.

Due: November 24th

Week 14: December 1st Review for final

Mid-term October 13th

multiple choice, T/F

50 Points

FINAL December 8th

multiple choice, T/F

50 Points

Misc assignments for the term:

4 articles: Must present a current article to class

1.25 pts each

4 Quizzes: These will be unannounced (From book)

10 pts each

Total for class:

250 Points

Grading Scale:

225-250 Points

A

180-224 Points

B

160-179 Points

C

Less than 160

D which is not passing for this class

All chapters will involve discussion of current events and the media. We will not be limited to discussions of American government as our current culture involves political issues of governments around the world.

Should time allow we will discuss chapters 13 and 14