

PSCI 109: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Fall 2008
Mondays 6:10pm -8:50pm
El Centro Campus
Telephone: 312-848-0634

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Office Hours: After class or by appointment
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DESCRIPTION: The First-Year Colloquium provides an opportunity for freshman to actively engage in NEIU's unique makeup as a diverse, urban campus and community. The core theme, "Diversity in Chicago," is explored through the lenses of different disciplines as they apply to the deeper understanding of Chicago as an environment for discovery and learning. The focus on students' preparation for general academic expectations accompanied by some type of discipline-specific field experience (e.g., research component, service learning) situates the course as a bridge to the university experience and higher education, as well as a matrix for future development and active participation in society.

This freshman colloquium explores citizenship, politics, diversity, civic engagement and social change. In addition to learning traditional aspects of American democracy, including Constitutionalism, federalism and the structure of government, students will spend time developing civic engagement strategies, project management, negotiation and teamwork skills.

GOALS: The goals of this course include:

- 1) to promote an understanding of the nature of social change through participatory democracy, which includes community service and the influence of social, cultural, political, economic, and religious factors in community life; and
- 2) to develop awareness and social responsibility regarding local, state, national and the global community; and
- 3) to explore the links between citizen education and civic engagement, including an examination of what "service" means, whom should serve, why people serve, and the relationship of service to the educational process; and
- 4) to strengthen students' analytical, written, oral and leadership skills.

*A final goal to receive special attention will be the participation or representation of Latinos in the democratic process. As we work our way through this course, I hope that we will all come to be more knowledgeable (rather than overwhelmed), more intellectually critical (rather than cynical), and more empowered (rather than apathetic).

REQUIREMENTS: In addition to the readings and journal assignments listed below, PSCI 109 features two essay exams and a multiple stage research project. Due dates are listed on the course calendar. Any changes in the course schedule will be announced in advance. The penalty for lateness on any assignment is one letter grade per day of lateness and there are no makeup exams. In addition, perfect class attendance and on time arrival are required; two absences or more, or frequent tardiness will result in a significant reduction of the participation portion of

your course grade. If you cannot make it to class for some unavoidable reason, you must inform me by voice mail or e-mail BEFORE that class. Regarding academic behavior and standards, please familiarize yourself with the University Student Code of Conduct in the Student Survival Kit. Your participation in this class is valued very much. If you have trouble keeping up with course work, please come and talk with me! If you are willing to work hard, I am dedicated to helping you to succeed.

TEXTBOOKS: There are two books required for this class. Please purchase them immediately.

Walter E Volkmer, *American Government*, 12th ed. (2006).

Santrock, Gordon, Gardner, Dillon and Loeb, *Northeastern Illinois University First-Year Experience*, (2008).

WRITTEN EXAMS: Each of the two exams, consisting of multiple choice, short and long essay questions, will cover three chapters of the *American Government* textbook, (respectively chapters 1-3; and chapters 7, 8 and 10) as well as the assigned chapters from the *NEIU FYE* book.

RESEARCH PAPER: Your final research paper will focus on a social movement or political cause of your choosing (approved by your professor). The research process will proceed through several steps: the forming of a few possible topic questions; general research on one of these questions; the focusing of one specific topic question for your final research paper; intensive research and analysis on this final topic question; an annotated bibliography; a first and second draft of your paper; and your final paper (8-10 pages, typed, double-spaced, carefully cited, and very well proofread). Sources for your project should include articles, books, and websites with my approval.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. I will follow NEIU's rules regarding academic integrity in dealing with students who plagiarize or cheat. Please review NEIU's University Student Conduct Code at <http://www.neiu.edu/Policy/policy2.pdf>. In this document, NEIU defines plagiarism as:

“Plagiarism. Appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work. This includes (1) paraphrasing another's ideas or conclusions without acknowledgement; (2) lifting of entire paragraphs, chapters, etc. from another's work; and (3) submission as one's own work, any work prepared by another person or agency.”

JOURNALS AND PARTICIPATION: You are required to submit four journals to record your critical responses to course materials, including readings, lectures, class discussions and videos. I

will distribute a question/comment to focus on for your journal, however, you may also choose to comment on local, regional, national or international news pertaining to the American Government (be sure to always attach to your journal the news articles on which you are commenting).

Your journal entries should NOT simply be summaries of such material -your score will be lowered if all you do is summarize. Rather, you should use your journal entries as a space for critical reflection and analysis. That is, you will need to make an argument, state a position, or raise an interesting point, and support such argument/position/point by referring to lectures, with class materials, or with other relevant materials as appropriate. Journal entries should be 1-2 pages long, typewritten, and double-spaced with 12-inch font. Journals will be when due at the beginning of class.

The grading scale for the journals will be as follows:

4 - This is the equivalent of an “A.” Journal was well thought out, argument clearly made or interesting points made, and supported by critical analysis.

3 - Good use of argument and/or opinions, but more critical analysis needed. Also, paper too brief or too long for the topic written.

2 - Too much opinion or personal experience and not enough argument and/or critical opinion. Also, grammar, spelling and general use of English is flawed.

1 - The assignment was handed in, but no arguments made, no analysis given, or assignment was rushed for completion and, thus, incoherent.

0 - Failing grade. Journal assignment not turned in.

These grades will be aggregated at the end of the semester to arrive at a total point score for the Journal portion of your Final course grade.

GRADING: The various components of your grade for this class have the “weights” listed below. Your final grade is calculated according to the standard percentages listed in the college catalogue (A = 90-100%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = Below 60%).

Two essay exams	200 points (100 points each)	40%
Research paper	100 points	30%
<u>Journals/participation</u>	<u>100 points (25 points each)</u>	<u>30%</u>
TOTAL	400 points	100%

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 The Nature of Politics

August 25th

READ: No readings due for the first day.
WRITE: No writing assignments due the first day.
FILM: “Hurricane Katrina”

SEPTEMBER 1st – NO CLASS FOR LABOR DAY

Week 2 Politics, Democracy and the Ideology

September 8th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 1
 NEIU FYE, Chapter - College Makes the Difference.
WRITE: **Journal 1** is due.

Week 3 From Colonialism to Constitutionalism

September 15th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 2
 NEIU FYE, Chapter- Learning Styles, pgs. 89- 101.
WRITE: No writings due.

Week 4 The Federal System

September 22nd

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 3
 NEIU FYE, Chapter- Learning Styles, pgs. 101-118.
WRITE: **Journal 2** is due.
EXAM #1 next week

Week 5 EXAM DAY #1

September 29th

READ: No readings due.
WRITE: No writings due.

Week 6 Political Action Strategies

October 6th

READ: *NEIU FYE*, Chapter- Learning Styles “How Should I expect to Learn?”
WRITE: No writings due.
FILM: “Sicko”

Week 7 **Congress**

October 13th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 7
NEIU FYE, Chapter – Skills for Academic Success, pgs157-162 and 187-191.

WRITE: **Journal 3** is due.

Week 8 **The Chief Executive**

October 20th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 8
NEIU FYE, Chapter – Skills for Academic Success, pgs. 191-196 and 216-223.

WRITE: No writings due.

Week 9 **The Judiciary**

October 27th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 10
NEIU FYE, Chapter – Skills for Academic Success, pgs. 223-234.

WRITE: **Journal 4** is due.

Week 10 **EXAM DAY #2**

November 3rd

READ: No readings or Journals due.

WRITE: No writings Due

Week 11 **Public Opinion and the Mass Media**

November 10th

READ: *NEIU FYE*, Chapter – Skills for Academic Success, *Knowing the Basics of Listening and Note-Taking*; and *Critical Thinking*.

FILM: “No End In Sight”

WRITE: **Research Paper Step 1**: Choose topic and beginning research strategies.

Week 12 **Political Parties and Interest Groups**

November 17th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 5
NEIU FYE, Chapter – Time Management, pgs. 36-44.

WRITE: **Research Paper Step 2**: Hand in first draft of your research paper (including citations and bibliography) on April 7.

Week 13 **Nominations and Elections**

November 24th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 6.

NEIU FYE, Chapter – Time Management, pgs.50-58.

WRITE: **Research Paper Step 3:** Go over comments from first draft to be incorporated in Final Draft.

Week 14 **Civil Liberties**

December 8th

READ: *Volkomer*, Chapter 11

WRITE: **Research Paper Step 4:** Comments on Drafts continue

Week 15 **DECEMBER 11th - FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY 5PM BY EMAIL AT linares76@hotmail.com.**