

Randi Buslik, M.A.

Cell: 224-805-9670

[Rbuslik@yahoo.com](mailto:Rbuslik@yahoo.com)

**Virtual office hours: 9-5 via email**

**Cell phone leave message anytime until 10PM**

American National Government

Fall 2009 Main Campus

PSCI 216 Sec-L-19 El Centro

Tuesday 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 its 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 and discussion.

## Weeks and Assignments

**Week 1:** August 25<sup>th</sup>  
**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 1<sup>st</sup>

**Week 2 and 3:** September 1<sup>st</sup> and 8th

**Read:** Chapters One and Two

**Assignment:**

Write a THREE page paper on the political significance of *Animal Farm*.

**Due: September 15<sup>th</sup>** **25 points**

### *The American System*

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

We will watch the movie *Animal Farm*

**Week 4 and 5:** September 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>

**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: September 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 6 and 7:** September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup>

Chapter Seven / Finish discussion of the Three Branches of Government

### **Midterm due October 13<sup>th</sup>**

Midterm will consist of TEN terms from the book. You will define and discuss each term thoroughly. Each discussion should be approximately half of a page.

**Week 8 and 9: October 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Read:** Chapters Six and Seven

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

Go to [Thomas.loc.gov](http://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 27<sup>th</sup>**

### *Institutions of Government*

We will discuss our Congress and the Executive branch

**Week 10 and 11: October 27<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Read:** Chapters Eleven and Twelve

**Assignment:** 2 Films: Martin Luther King Jr. Speeches, High-school project  
Civil Rights two page paper **15 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 3<sup>rd</sup>**

***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 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>**

**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 either online or hand written. Find questions online; Gallup poll, public opinion poll, etc. **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: December 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Week 14: Catch-up and make-up of any work or discussions**

**Week 15: December 8<sup>th</sup> Review for Final**

**Week 16: December 15<sup>th</sup> Final**

**Mid-term due October 13<sup>th</sup> TEN terms and discussions 40 Points**

**FINAL: December 15<sup>th</sup> Multiple choice, T/F 40 Points**

**Misc assignments for the term:**

2 articles: Must present a current article to class **2.5 pts each**

2 Quizzes: These will be unannounced (From book) **2.5 pts each**

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**Total for class: 200 Points**

**Grading Scale:**

180-200 Points	A
160-179 Points	B
140-159 Points	C
Less than 159	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***