Spring 2-1-2010

PSC 540.01: Seminar in American Government

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American Government
University of Montana
Political Science 540
Thursdays 4:10 – 6:30, LA 344
Spring 2010

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Required Texts and Other Readings

The following books are required:


Other readings will be posted on the course’s Blackboard website. Blackboard readings are designated on the syllabus as “(BB).” Contact me if you are not familiar with Blackboard.

The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or alter course readings as needed.

Requirements and Grading

Paper: 35%
Final: 35%
Participation: 30%

Exams: Makeup exams will only be permitted if I have been notified prior to the missed exam and only if I agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency. Check your calendar now to make sure you do not have anything that conflicts with the exams.
**Paper:** Each student will write one 20-page paper on a topic of his/her choosing that is related to the course. Papers will be due on May 4. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor early in the semester to discuss their paper and its design.

**Participation:** Most of our class time will be spent discussing the course readings in a seminar setting. Consequently, both quantity and quality of class participation will be very important. Students are expected to do all of the assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Daily attendance will be taken and factored into participation grades. *Students missing 3 or more of our scheduled class meetings will not pass the course.*

- On three occasions, as assigned by the instructor, each student will write a response paper to the week’s readings, circulate it to the class by 9:00 AM Thursday, and present their paper in class.
- Each student will write one review of a book on the suggested reading list (or a book that is approved ahead of time by the instructor) and present this review to the class.

**Grades:** Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

- A 93-100
- B+ 87-89.9
- C+ 77-79.9
- D+ 67-69.9
- F below 60
- A- 90-92.9
- B 83-86.9
- C 73-76.9
- D 63-66.9
- B- 80-82.9
- C- 70-72.9
- D- 60-62.9

**** The Final Exam and the paper must be completed in order to pass the course.****

**Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at [http://life.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf](http://life.umt.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf). I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

**DSS Students**

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact DSS in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations at least one week prior to the first exam. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Jan. 28: Introduction to the Course

PART I: CONSTAT OR RECURRING INFLUENCES ON AMERICAN POLITICS

Week 2, Feb. 4: American Exceptionalism
John W. Kingdon, America the Unusual (New York: St. Martin’s/ Worth, 1999).
Suggested:

Week 3, Feb. 11: American Political Culture
Suggested:
Rogers Smith, Civic Ideals (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

Week 4, Feb. 18: Social Cleavages
Suggested:

*Suggested:*

**Week 6, Mar. 4: Class will not meet this week**

**Week 7, Mar. 11: Institutional Structure, Part II: Congress and the Courts**


Nathan Glazer, “Towards an Imperial Judiciary?” *The Public Interest* 41 (Fall 1975) (BB).

*Suggested:*

**Week 8, Mar. 18: Partisan Realignment**


*Suggested:*
PART II: EVOLUTIONARY INFLUENCES ON AMERICAN POLITICS

Week 9, Mar. 25: Political Development

*Suggested:*

Week 10, Apr. 1: NO CLASS: Spring Break

Week 11, Apr. 8: Ideologies

*Suggested:*

Week 12, Apr. 15: NO CLASS: National Conference on Undergraduate Research. At the Provost’s urging, students are “academically redirected to attend NCUR sessions in lieu of class time.”
Week 13, Apr. 22: Issue Evolution
*Suggested:*

PART III: CONTINGENT EVENTS IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Week 14, Apr. 29:
*Suggested:*

Week 15, May 6: Class will not meet this week; papers due.