POS 101 is an introduction to the study of American politics. The course will provide a broad and critical examination of the ideas, interests, processes, institutions, and public policies that are central to the American political system. Students will not only learn the essential mechanics and facts pertinent to American politics; more important, they will be presented with the concepts, issues, and debates that foster comprehension of the deeper dynamics of American politics. The course will provide a foundation for the further study of American politics and political science. Equally important, and of particular relevance for students who do not intend further study in political science, it will supply an understanding of American politics that will facilitate informed citizenship in the democratic process.

REQUIRED BOOKS


COURSE OUTLINE

Aug. 26 Introduction to the Course

Aug. 28 The Revolution, the Constitution, and American Political Theory

Sept. 2 Reading: *The Democratic Debate* (TDD), Ch. 1, 2;

Sept. 4 *Debating Democracy* (DEB), Ch. 1

Sept. 9 Federalism

Reading: TDD, Ch. 3

Sept. 11 The American Political Economy

Sept. 16 Reading: TDD, Ch. 4, 17; DEB, Ch. 16

Sept. 18 Public Opinion and Political Participation

Sept. 23 Reading: TDD, Ch. 5, 6; DEB, Ch. 2

Sept. 30
Oct. 2 Media and Politics
Oct. 7 Reading: TDD, Ch. 9; DEB, Ch. 9

Oct. 9 MIDTERM EXAM

Oct. 14 Campaigns and Elections
Oct. 16 Reading: TDD, Ch. 7; DEB, Ch. 11

Oct. 21 Political Parties
Oct. 23 Reading: TDD, Ch. 8; DEB, Ch. 10

Oct. 28 Congress
Oct. 30 Reading: TDD, Ch. 12; DEB, Ch. 13

Nov. 4 The Presidency and the Executive Branch
Nov. 6 Reading: TDD, Ch. 13; DEB, Ch. 14
Nov. 11

Nov. 13 U.S. Foreign Policy
Reading: DEB, Ch. 17

Nov. 18 The Federal Judiciary
Nov. 20 Reading: TDD, Ch. 15: DEB, Ch. 15

Nov. 25 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Dec. 2 Reading: TDD, Ch. 16; DEB, Ch. 7

Dec. 4 Citizens and Mass Movements
Dec. 9 Reading: TDD, Ch. 11

Dec. 18 FINAL EXAMINATION (8am—10:00 am)

Grades for the course are on an A-E basis, but the course can be taken on an S-U basis. Grades will be based on unannounced quizzes in lecture, a midterm exam, a final exam, a short paper on the 2014 elections, and discussion section. The two major exams will be combinations of short-answer topics and essays. The paper (4-5 pages) will be based on your Internet research. Brief quizzes will cover lecture material and require regular attendance in lectures to produce correct answers. In your discussion section, you will take part in several group debates. You will be evaluated for your participation in the debates and in weekly discussions; attendance will also be a part of the discussion section grade. Your grade for the course will be computed as follows:
Midterm exam – 20 percent  
Final exam – 25 percent  
Short paper – 15 percent  
Quizzes – 20 percent  
Discussion section grade – 20 percent

Please note the following:
1. All assignments must be completed before you can receive a grade for the course. 
2. Students are reminded that all work handed in must be their own. Cheating on exams or plagiarism on papers will be severely punished. 
3. Twenty percent of your course grade comes from discussion sections. You cannot pass the course unless you regularly attend your discussion section!

My office hours on the main campus are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:45 – 12:45 in the Rockefeller College Contact Office, located in Humanities 16. I am also available at the downtown campus; my office there is Milne 216 and my hours there are Wednesdays from 2:30-3:30. My email is bmiroff@albany.edu