Introduction to American Politics  
RPOS 101  
Online  
Winter Session 2015

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Course Description

This course will undertake a broad and critical survey of American politics. Emphasis will be placed on the understanding of fundamental concepts, themes, and controversies in American politics. Subjects to be explored include the Founding, parties and elections, national institutions, civil liberties, movements, and the media. Gen Ed: U.S. History, Social Sciences.

Required Reading

The textbook for this course is *Living Democracy, 4th Edition* by Shea, Green, and Smith, available in paperback at Mary Jane’s Bookstore (ISBN: 0134016238). Rental should be around $50 to $70, depending upon the store and format. You may rent the book as a kindle book on Amazon. You can also get the book in “loose leaf” form (that you place in a three ring binder) for between $40 and $55 (ISBN: 9780134080833). The 3rd edition of the textbook may be used, but you are responsible for the differences in the editions. A summary of the updates in the 4th edition is posted in Blackboard under the “Course Content, Course Information” section. You do NOT need the access card for the REVEL supplement.

Policies

**Participation and Time Expectations for a Four Week Course:** You will be expected to put as many hours into an online class as a traditional course taught in a classroom. In a 14-15 week semester course, you should normally plan to spend at least 12 hours a week on a 3 credit course: 3 hours a week on the course website participating in discussions and an additional 9 hours a week reading and completing your assignments. In a 4 week course, this means that you should expect to spend 45 hours a week on the course. 4 week courses are challenging even in the best of circumstances, so you will need to be extra careful about how you plan and spend your time during the 4 weeks of this course. If you are unable to keep up with the course readings and assignments, it is best that you drop the course early. Extensions will NOT be provided on assignments; in a short course it is unlikely you will catch up if you fall behind. The last day to withdraw from this course is January 15.

**Students With Disabilities:** Please email me within the first week of classes if you anticipate that you will need accommodation.
Email Response Policy: I will generally be online Saturday and Sunday mornings. During these and other times, I will respond to emails on a first come, first serve basis. While I will make every attempt to respond to your emails as soon as possible, please remember that it may take between 24-48 hours to receive a response. Making note of the deadlines and planning accordingly should prevent any need for urgent emails.

Grade Distribution

Every week you will take a multiple choice and true/false exam on the weekly readings and will be evaluated for your response to two weekly discussion questions. Each hour long exam will have 50 questions and will be worth 15% of your final grade. At 11:59 p.m. ET each Saturday the exam for that week will become unavailable and you will NOT be able to take the exam after this time. Each discussion response is worth a possible 5 points and will account for 5% of your final grade. At 11:59 p.m. ET on Sundays the weekly discussion questions will become unavailable and you will NOT be able to post after this time. Grades will be distributed as follows:

- 40% 8 Discussion Responses
- 60% 4 Exams

Weekly Deadlines

Each week will contain the following general deadlines:

- Saturdays: Exam must be completed by 11:59 p.m. ET. Everyone should complete readings for the week by 11:59 p.m. ET to inform responses to the discussion question for the week and exam.
- Sundays: Responses to the discussion question must be posted by 11:59 p.m. ET.

You may complete the exam and post your discussion responses before these deadlines, but please remember that extensions will NOT be provided and you will NOT be able to access or complete the weekly exam or discussion after the deadline has passed.

Schedule

Week 1, December 21-27: The Founding, Federalism, and Political Socialization
Read Chapters 1, 2, 3, 10, and Appendix 2 (U.S. Constitution)

Week 2, December 28-January 3: Congress, The Presidency, Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary
Read Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9

Week 3, January 4-10: Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and Interest Groups
Read Chapters 4, 5, and 12

Week 4-5, January 11-19: The Media, Elections, Political Parties, and Policy
Read Chapters 11, 13, 14, and 15