American Government and Politics
POL 101 Fall 2015
MSEE B010
MWF 10:30-11:20

Instructor: John Megson - Beering Hall 2233
Email: jmegson@purdue.edu
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:30-1:00, Fridays by appointment

Course Description and Objective:

This course will cover the nature of democratic government, the US Constitution, federalism, civil rights and liberties, and the bodies of government (the presidency, Congress, and the judiciary). The course objective is to provide a thorough understanding of each course topic and an understanding of how the institutions of US government function. Paying particular attention to the Constitution of the United States.

Classroom Behavior:

ABSOLUTELY NO TEXTING or cell phone usage in class. You are expected to be respectful of your fellow students. If you are distracting your classmates or me, you will be asked to leave.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism and/or cheating on any exam will result in a zero for the work in question and subsequent college disciplinary proceedings in accordance with University policy. Review the guidelines regarding plagiarism and academic integrity on the Online Writing Lab’s website.

Disabilities:

If you are an individual with a disability and require accommodations for this class, please notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester.

Course Caveat: I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus, schedule, and/or assignments contained therein at any time. You should also be aware that it is possible that the final exam could take place on the 19th December, please do not make any travel arrangements before the date of the final is known.
**Course Material:**

There is no compulsory textbook for the Course.

If you would like the support of a textbook I recommend “The Logic of American Politics” Kernell, Jacobson & Kousser

It would also help you to have access to the text of the Constitution of the United States. I believe it is well worth having a hard copy of this document. It is available for the kindle for free, and can be found online at many places including

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html

Additional readings may be placed on blackboard

**Course Assessment:**

Your grade for the class is calculated on a points system. There are a total of 1,000 points available for the course. The distribution of these points is as follows.

**In-class written tests  3 x 133 points.** Four written tests will be set over the course of the semester, these will be based mainly on the lectures. I will drop your lowest score when calculating your final grade.

**Midterm 200 points,** a midterm comprising of multiple-choice questions will take place on October 9th

**Final Exam 211 points,** this will be a comprehensive final. However, the questions covering the material before the midterm, will be selected from the midterm exam.

**State of a State Report 75 points,** towards the end of each lesson a student will present a short 5-7 min. presentation about recent political events in a specific State of the Union. More details will be given and States allocated on August 26th.

**Attendance 75 points,** 2 points will be added to your score for every lecture you attend, you may however miss a maximum of two lectures and still receive the full attendance points.

**Active Participation 40 points,** I have an annoying habit of asking questions at the start and end of lectures; please be prepared to answer these questions, as I get upset and cry if I think nobody is listening to me. Participation may also be measured through occasional pop quizzes.
Grading:

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Class Schedule,

8/24  Syllabus day
8/26, 8/28 & 8/31  Power/Authority/Institutions
9/2 & 9/4  Founding of the Constitution

9/7  Labor Day, John will be eating Sweetcorn

9/9  Founding of the Constitution
9/11 & 9/14  Federalism

9/16  TEST 1
9/18  9/21 & 9/23  Congress
Read Article 1 of the Constitution
9/25  9/28 & 9/30  The Presidency
Read Article 2 of the Constitution
2/10  10/5 & 7/10  The Federal Courts
Read Article 3 of the Constitution

10/9  Test 2
10/12  Fall Break, John will be asleep

10/14  MIDTERM
10/16  10/19 & 10/21  Civil Rights/Civil Liberties
Read the Bill of Rights & Amendments XI thru XXVII
10/23  10/26 & 10/28  Interest Groups/ Bureaucracy
10/30  11/2 & 11/4  Media/Public Opinion

11/6 Test 3

11/9  11/11 & 11/13  Voting, Campaigns and Elections
11/16 11/18 11/20  Political Parties
11/23  Social Policy
11/25 & 11/27  John will be eating turkey

11/30  Economic Policy
12/2  Foreign Policy

12/4 Test 4

12/7 12/9 & 12/11

Dead Week/Catch Up