American Government and Politics
POL 101 Spring 2016
SMTH 118
T TH 1:30 -2:45

Instructor: John Megson - Beering Hall 2233
Email: jmegson@purdue.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-4:15, Thursdays 11:30-1:15 Wednesdays 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. 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  **2 x 200 points**. Three 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.

Final Exam **400 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 January 14th.

Attendance **75 points**, 3 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. Please note, these “free” absences only count if you miss 2 or 1 classes. If you miss 3 lectures your attendance score would be 69 points.

Active Participation **50 points**, I have an annoying habit of asking questions as 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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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>980+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>930-979 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900-929 pts</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>870-899 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830-869 pts</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>800-829 pts</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>770-799 pts</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>700-729 pts</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>600-629 pts</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-599 pts</td>
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Class Schedule,

1/12 Syllabus day
1/14 & 1/19 Power/Authority/Institutions
1/21 & 1/26 Founding of the Constitution
Read Federalist Papers 10 & 51

1/28 & 2/2 Federalism

2/4 & 2/9 Congress

Read Article 1 of the Constitution

February 11th TEST 1

2/16 & 2/18 The Presidency

Read Article 2 of the Constitution

2/23 & 2/25 The Federal Courts

Read Article 3 of the Constitution

3/1 & 3/3 Ratification, and other stuff

Read Articles 4-7, the Bill of Rights & Amendments XI thru XXVII

3/8 Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

March 10th Test 2

March 15-17th SPRING BREAK

3/22 Civil Rights Cont

3/24 & 3/29

Interest Groups/ Bureaucracy

3/31 & 4/5 Public Opinion

4/7 & 4/12 Voting, Campaigns and Elections

4/14 Political Parties

4/19 Foreign Policy

April 21st Test 3

4/26 & 4/28

Dead Week/Catch Up