Federal Government of the United States Online 2305

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Office Hours: (summer 1by arrangement)

Required Text:  

Course Description  
This course is an introduction to U.S. politics with a particular focus upon foreign policy, the U.S. Constitution, the three branches of government, and public policy.

ASU Mission Statement  
Angelo State University is a member of the Texas Tech University System, and delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines in a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co-curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.

Course Objectives  
This is an introductory course so the course objectives are modest:

1. Students should gain some conceptual knowledge; new terminology, classifications, and concepts (i.e. capitalism, exceptionalism, democracy, ideology and so on). The point is NOT to memorize "facts" and "data" about the mechanisms of government, some of which should have been achieved in high school courses, but to develop critical thinking about these concepts.

2. Students should develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to personal values; by the end of this course you should have a deeper sense of YOUR own core values, and of first principles, and why you have them (i.e. how you view human nature, your core principles and so on).

3. Students should be more adequately equipped to analyze, and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and different points of view (following how this was done in class; the spirit of questioning, the use of irony, paradox, evaluation of interest and so on).

Course requirements  
All course requirements must be met in full for the successful completion of the course. All assigned work must be completed. All FOUR tests must be completed regardless of cumulative course GPA.

Honor Code  
ASU expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the academic honor code, which is available at:  
http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcodeS.pdf
Assessment
4 Short Multiple test quizzes 25% each test consists of 30 questions in 30 mins on all aspects of the course content, including all the assigned readings from the textbook. The quiz will be taken on Blackboard, the settings are as follows: one hour, no backtracking, force completion, and presentation of one question at a time, randomized. This is not intended to be an open book test and students who attempt to check lecture, textbook and other references while taking the test are likely to find themselves in time trouble.

Note: I will calculate the final grade for the course based upon the best three test scores, as long as ALL FOUR TESTS were completed, regardless of grades.

Grading Scale
A-90% and over, outstanding.
B-80% very good.
C-70% satisfactory.
D-60% minimum required.
F-less than 60%.

The Course Calendar
(I reserve the right to make course changes from time to time)

Week 1
INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS

Politics in a Democratic Society

Themes: Democracy and criticism, Neo-liberalism, capitalism and Globalization, Ideology, the American Dream.

Reading Assignments:
Readings: 1, 2, 5, 9, 8, & 34, Voices of Dissent.
Lectures: 1-5, Introduction to Politics.
Handouts: The Politics of Language.

First Quiz: Friday, June 8, (Available 8-Midnight)

Week 2
Foreign Policy, Terrorism, the Constitution and the Modern Presidency

Themes: Foreign Policy, the Bush Doctrine, Terrorism, the Constitution & the Presidency.

Reading Assignments:
Readings: 11, 10, 26, 36, Voices of Dissent.
Lectures: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13


Second Quiz: Friday, June 15 (available 8am-midnight)

Week 3
The Congress, the Supreme Court, Civil liberties and Public Policy

Themes: the Congress, the democratic deficit, the Supreme Court, Economics, Welfare and other issues.

Reading Assignments:
Readings: 21, 23, 29, 32, 40
Lectures: 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18
Handouts: Congressional ethics, sex in Congress

Third Quiz: Friday, June 22 (available 8am-midnight)

Week 4
Federalism and Civil Society

Themes: Federalism, political socialization, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups and the mass media.

Reading Assignments:
Readings: 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, & 33, Voices of Dissent.
Lectures: 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, & 24
Handouts: (none)

Final Quiz: Tuesday, July 3 (available 8am-midnight)