

B.A. Program in Liberal Studies
Political Science 101
3 semester units
Fall Semester 2012

Instructor: Scott Weatherford, Ed.D

Class Meeting Times & Place: Rm 103 Monday, Wednesday, Friday time TBD

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 8:00 to 9:00 AM and by appointment

Email: sweatherford@davincischools.org

Course Description: This course surveys and analyzes the principles, institutions, policies and politics of U.S. National Government. Major topics in the course include the constitution and federalism, civil rights and civil liberties, the presidency, congress, and the supreme court, modern American politics, and public policy. The primary goal of the course is to help students become critical, analytical observers of American politics, government systems, and institutions. Students will go beyond a basic understanding of how the government works to obtain a critical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system, the pros and cons of various modern policy debates, and the importance of citizen's rights and responsibilities. The course is a college level course and requires a significant amount of preparation for every class on the part of the student.

B.A. Program Learning Objectives:

- Critical and analytical thinking ability;
- The ability to understand issues from multiple perspectives;
- The ability to connect learning to lived experience;
- Social awareness, community engagement, global citizenship;
- Core competency in foundational skills: including, writing, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, technological literacy, oral communication, and research.

Learning Objectives:

Students successfully completing the course will be able to:

- Articulate the philosophies and arguments relevant to the creation and adoption of the US Constitution.
- Identify and summarize the major principles of the constitution, including federalism and checks and balances.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the major political institutions in the United States: the Congress, the presidency, and the federal courts.

- Describe and compare how political parties, elections, political action committees (PACs), interest groups, and the mass media effect modern American politics.
- Reference major Supreme Court decisions to trace the development of individual rights and liberties and their impact on citizens.
- Compare the roles and effect of various institutions including but not limited to bureaucracy and the courts on both the formation and enactment of public policies. Students will be able to interpret and debate major modern public policy issues.

Evaluation Criteria

The final evaluation will address the extent to which students have met the learning objectives listed above, as demonstrated in:

- Active contributions to classroom discussion demonstrating constructive dialogue with peers
- Depth and critical perspective in papers and exams
- Development of understanding of the selected texts and analytical skill over the course of the term including in papers, quizzes, and tests.

Additionally, the specific components of the course grade are constructed as follows:

- Quizzes 20%
- Mid Term Exam 15%
- Response to Reading Papers 30%
- Class Participation 10%
- Final Exam 25%

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate as required in the syllabus. Students missing more than 4 class sessions must make up the missed time by completing assignments per instructors direction, students missing more than 10 class sessions will not receive credit for the course. See AULA General Catalog, 2010-2012 (p. 59) for university policy.

Incomplete Policy

Per University policy, students must complete all course work by the deadlines stated in the syllabus.

If a student anticipates not being able to complete required work by the end of the term, the student may request an Incomplete from the instructor. Incompletes are awarded at the discretion of the instructor. See *AULA General Catalog, 2010-2012*, (p.63) for university policy.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism – that is, the intentional or unintentional borrowing of another person’s ideas, images, research, or data without citation -- is a serious breach of academic integrity that results in sanctions, including dismissal from the University. Please consult Diana Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference*, 6th ed., pp. 344-347 for specific guidance on avoiding plagiarism while

taking notes, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from sources. Students committing plagiarism will be also be subject to disciplinary action from DaVinci Schools as well as from the University.

Student Conduct Policy

Respectful conduct is expected of students on the campus at all times, both inside and outside the classroom. See *AULA General Catalog, 2010-2012*, (p.59 &71) for further details re: Antioch University Los Angeles policy.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (310-578-1080, ext. 441) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

Required Text:

Lowi, *Theodore*, Ginsberg, *Benjamin* & Shepsle, *Kenneth*. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. 11th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011.

Tentative Schedule, Outline of Class Discussions, Readings, Assessments & Assignments:

Weeks 1-2: Creation and Adoption of the US Constitution

Readings:

- **Lowi and Ginsberg:** Chapter 2 (“Constructing a Government: The founding and the Constitution”) pgs 37-62
- Federalist Paper 51: Madison, James. "The Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments." *Independent Journal* (February 6, 1788).
- Federalist Paper 84: Hamilton, Alexander. "Certain General and Miscellaneous Objections to the Constitution Considered and Answered." *Independent Journal* (July 16, July 26, August 9, 1788).
- Federalist Paper 10: Madison, James. "The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection (continued)." *Daily Advertiser* (November 22, 1787).
- Hamilton, Alexander. "Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bank"
- Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. 1787, pp. 92-103

Topics:

Course Introduction

Creation and Adoption of the US Constitution: considerations and arguments that influenced the formulation and adoption of the U.S. Constitution; theories of democratic government.

Assessments:

Primary source Reaction Paper #1 due (Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists)

Week 3: Major principles of the constitution

Readings:

- **Lowi and Ginsberg:** Chapter 3 (“Federalism and the Separation of Powers”) pgs 66-91
- Selected Primary Source readings

Topics:

Major principles of the constitution: federalism; checks and balances; separation of powers

Assessments:

Quiz #1 (open note)

Weeks 4-6 Major Political Institutions

Readings:

- **Lowi and Ginsberg:** Ch 5 (“Congress: the First Branch” selections); Ch 6 (“The Presidency as an Institution” selections); Ch 8 (“The Federal Courts: Structure and Strategies” selections)
- Selected primary sources, readings

Topics:

Roles and responsibilities of the major political institutions in the United States: Congress; the Presidency; Judiciary.

Assessments:

Response Paper #2: “Is the president too powerful or not powerful enough vis-a-vis the legislative and judicial branches?”

Quiz #2 (Open Note)

Weeks 7-10 Modern American Politics

Readings:

- **Lowi and Ginsberg:** Ch 11 (“Political Parties” pgs 468-510); Ch 12 (“Groups and Interests” selections); Ch 13 (“The Media” selections); Ch 10 (“Elections” pgs 412-450)
- Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, “Political Parties in Rough Weather,” *The Forum*, January 2008.
- David Brooks, “The Tea Party Teens,” *New York Times*, January 4, 2010
- Michael Crowley, “Survey Says,” *The New Republic*, November 5, 2008.

Topics:

Modern American Politics:

Describe and compare how political parties, elections, political action committees (PACs), interest groups, and the mass media effect modern American politics.

Assessments:

Response Paper #3: "Should the present campaign system be overhauled and reformed?"

Mid Term

Weeks 11-13 Civil Rights and Liberties

Readings:

- **Lowi and Ginsberg:** Chapter 4 ("Civil Liberties and Civil Rights" pgs 98-162)
- **Kernell and Jacobson:** Chapters 4 & 5 ("Civil Rights" and "Civil Liberties", selections)
- Selections from a variety of Supreme Court Cases

Topics:

Civil Rights and Liberties:

Major Supreme Court decisions related to the constitution and the bill of rights; the fourteenth amendment; right to privacy; 1964 Civil Rights act; current civil liberty issues

Assessments:

Response Paper #4: "Is the Patriot Act a violation of civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution?"

Quiz #4 (Open Note)

Week 14-15 Public Policy

Readings:

- **Lowi and Ginsberg:** Ch 7 (The Executive Branch: Bureaucracy in a Democracy" selections); Selections from Chapters 14-16 (Economic, Social, and Foreign Policy)
- Cassidy, "Anatomy of a Meltdown: Ben Bernanke and the Financial Crisis," *New Yorker* 12/1/08

Topics:

Public Policy:

Examination of the roles and effect of various institutions including but not limited to bureaucracy and the courts on both the formation and enactment of public policies; analyze major modern public policy issues, including economics, foreign policy, and social policies.

Assessments:

Response Paper #5: "Who sets policy agendas for our nation?"

Week 16

Topics:

Semester Review

Course Evaluation

Assessments:

Group Project Presentations Final Exam

Further Readings:

Beard, Charles A. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, 2004, chapters 1, 6, and 9. ISBN: 9780486433653.

Brady, Henry, and Gary Orren. *Media Polls in American Politics*. Edited by Mann, and Orren. Washington, D.C. : Brookings Institution, 1992. Chapter 4.

Hofstadter, Richard. *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It*. New York, NY: Vintage, 1989. ISBN: 9780679723158.

Kernell, Samuel, Jacobson C, Gary & Kousser, Thad. *The Logic of American Politics*. 4th Edition. Washington DC: CQ Press, 2009

Thoreau, Henry David. "Civil Disobedience," "Economy," "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," "Solitude," and "Higher Laws." In *Walden*. 1845. ([View text and additional writings of Thoreau on The Thoreau Reader.](#))

Tocqueville, Alexis d. *Democaracy in America*.

Wood, Gordon. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1972. ISBN: 9780393006445. pp. 391-615.

Zaller, John. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Chapters 2-4.