

M: Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of the course the successful student will be able to:

1. Describe American political culture, institutions and processes of the American government: the U.S. constitution, Presidency, judiciary and bureaucracy; federalism; the U.S. electoral and party system; and interest groups.
2. Analyze critical issues in American politics.
3. Apply their knowledge in writing a formal research essay relevant to course content and objectives.
4. Undertake further study of American politics.

N: Course Content:Unit One: The Context of American Government and Politics

- Introduction - the internal environment, the changing external role of the U.S., American political culture: individualism, anti-statism, egalitarianism, and populism
- The U.S. Constitution - the nature of the original constitutional compromise, the separation of powers, historic constitutional amendments, constitutional change in the U.S.
- The federal system - evolutionary development, contemporary state-federal relations

Unit Two: The Major Institutions of the National Government

- The Presidency - the office and the person, presidential power and constraints, the evolving character of the presidency
- The Congress - lawmaking and representation: the House of Representatives; structure, role, operations; the Senate: structure, role, operations; relations between the Senate and the House; the role of parties in the Congress; relationship with the Presidency, the Congressional Budgetary Office
- The judiciary - structure of the federal judiciary; judiciary review; the functioning of the Supreme Court; selection of the judiciary; judicial activism and restraint; the Supreme Court - civil rights and civil liberties
- The bureaucracy and policy making - the budgetary process, the role of the presidency, congress and the bureaucracy, domestic policy, foreign policy

Unit Three: The Process of American Politics

- Interest groups - characteristics of American interest groups; the impact of interest groups; the art of political lobbying- the National Rifle Association (NRA); the impact of interest groups on American democracy
- Political parties and elections - the evolution of American political parties, the decline of American political parties; the structure of the electoral system, the role of states in the national electoral system, the national convention, the electoral college

Course Content Cont'd.

Unit Four: The Enduring Issues of American Politics

- The nature of American democracy - the founding dream; the criticisms of American democracy; evaluating American democracy
- Civil rights: race and gender - the continuing issue of race in American politics; American feminism, the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); concepts of equality, affirmative action; language issues in the United States
- Civil liberties - the freedom of expression; freedom of religion; the right of privacy - property rights, the rights of persons accused of crimes
- The U.S. political economy - the nature of the American economy; government regulation; government subsidization of industry; poverty in America
- The U.S. role in international politics - the evolution of U.S. involvement in the international system; the linkage between domestic and foreign policy determination

O: Methods of Instruction:

The course will employ a variety of instructional methods to accomplish its objectives, including some of the following:

Presentation of the course will involve the use of formal lectures, structured group work by students, and in class discussion of assigned material. Additional readings may be assigned for each unit of the course and placed on reserve in the library. Where appropriate, audio-visual materials and computer instruction will be used.

P: Textbooks and Materials to be Purchased by Students:

Text and course readings will be selected by instructors after consultation with the department. Texts will be supplemented with other materials.

Examples of texts to be used:

Lowi, Theodore and Bejamine Ginsberg, *American Government: Freedom and Power*, 7th edition
New York: Norton & Co., 2002

Texts will be updated periodically.

Q: Means of Assessment:

This course evaluation will be based on the course objectives and in accordance with Douglas College policy and the policies of the Political Science Department. A minimum of 50% of the student's grades will be assigned to the midterm and end of term examinations. A minimum of 30% of the student's grades will be assigned to a formal research essay. A maximum of 20% of student's grade will be based upon a series of components, for example, quizzes, short essay, attendance, participation, class presentations. The specific evaluation criteria will be provided by the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

An example of an evaluation scheme:

Midterm Exam	20%
Seminar Presentation	20%
Research Essay	30%
Participation	10%
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

R: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: specify whether course is open for PLAR

No.

Course Designer(s): S. Tyakoff

Education Council / Curriculum Committee Representative

Dean / Director

Registrar