Fall 2000

PLST 212: American National Politics

Donald E. King
Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/fall2000
Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation

This Syllabi is brought to you for free and open access by the 2000 at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2000 by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.
# PS 212 American National Politics

Prof. D.E. King [dking@dordt.edu](mailto:dking@dordt.edu)  Phone 722-6371

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview and Objectives</th>
<th>Political News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Outline</td>
<td>Federal Govt. Websites (Library of Congress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>FEDStats Library of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Grading</td>
<td>Great American Web Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS Legislative Search Engine</td>
<td>Journals/Newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Action</td>
<td>Text online site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction and Course Objectives

PS 212 provides the student with an overview of U.S. national politics, including its historical development, underlying values and assumptions, structure, institutions, processes. A central focus is given to an examination of democracy--its principles, practice, and performance in light of a biblical understanding of the normative role of the state. The role of the citizen, both individually and communally, in self-government will be explored as students are challenged to clarify the nature of their political responsibilities as kingdom citizens.

Students, therefore, will be able to:

- describe the biblical mandate of the state and the principles that define its role in the social order
- identify the foundational values underlying the historical development of the U.S. and point out the connections between these values and the structures of the political system.
- understand the unique characteristics of this system, including the shared and contending powers of the three branches of the federal government and the dynamic relationship with their component states.
- explain the predominant values of the American political culture and the tension that exists with competing political subcultures as they are created and transmitted by the agents of political socialization.
- identify the linkage institutions (e.g., political parties, media, interest groups, elections, and social movements) that allow citizens to participate in self-governing.
- comprehend the strengths and weaknesses of American democracy and be able to suggest possible avenues of reform to bring the political community into closer conformity with its call to promote justice in the public square.
- demonstrate an awareness of how the American political enterprise produces a governing consensus sufficient to produce the public policies necessary to provide for a stable and adaptable society.
# American National Politics Course Schedule Fall 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment [reading and writing due before class that day]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Principles, Am. Politics, state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Christians/politics; democracy, justice, pluralism</td>
<td>handout(s); text 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Who are we; what do we believe?</td>
<td>text 2; Lappe (reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Founding of Republic/Constitution</td>
<td>text 3; *case 1 (modify sep. of powers, checks/balances?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Constitutional Provisions</td>
<td>text 4; *case 2 (state limits on illegal immigration?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>American Liberties</td>
<td>text 5; *case 3 (organized prayer in public schools?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Civil Rights: equal rights for all?</td>
<td>text 6; *case 4 (keep, mend or end affirm. action?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>review chs. 1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>TEST #1</td>
<td>test covers, chs. 1-6 of text; lectures, case discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Govt. Institutions: Congress</td>
<td>text 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Congress (cont.); Presidency</td>
<td>test 8; *case 11 (should Congress have term limits?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Presidency (cont.)</td>
<td>*case 12 (does Pres. need line item veto?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 18</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Executive Bureaucracy</td>
<td>text 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Federal Courts</td>
<td>text 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>*case 13 (does judicial review give court too much power?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TEST #2</td>
<td>test covers chs. 7-10; lectures, case discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Elections, Campaigns</td>
<td>text 15; <em>election 2000 paper due</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>3. Political Parties</td>
<td>text 13; *case 8 (campaign finance reform?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4. Interest groups</td>
<td>text 14; *case 7 (govt.'s role in regulating tobacco industry?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>5. Media.</td>
<td>text 16; * case 10 (include minor parties in tv debates?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TEST #3</td>
<td>test covers chs. 12-16, lectures, case discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 22-27</td>
<td>W-M</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess</td>
<td>text 17; the federal budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Domestic Policy</td>
<td>*case 14 (welfare reform reducing dep. with jobs?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Domestic Policy</td>
<td>text 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Foreign Policy</td>
<td>*case 17 (does War Powers Act curb Pres. mil. power?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Foreign Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Policy and Politics: citizen action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 20</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>? FINAL EXAM: compreh. with policy apps. (Tentatively--Wed. 10:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PS 212 American National Politics

Assignments and Grading

I. Readings:
Barbour, Christine and Gerald Wright. *Keeping the Republic* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001)
handouts, reserve reading and online material

II. Class participation and attendance
Discussion is an integral part of exploring and developing an understanding of the intricacies of politics. You share in the responsibility for the learning process and therefore should come to class prepared to ask questions, offer insights, and engage in a give-and-take of ideas to contribute to the attainment of the course objectives. This is not possible if you are absent, dozing, or passive; therefore your level of active engagement in class in pursuit of our enhanced understanding of American politics and government as a class, will be a significant part of the evaluation process (see Grading/Evaluation below).

III. Writing is another major component of the Dordt curriculum and an important means of fulfilling the course objectives. This will primarily involve a series of Written response memoranda, or Electronic Memoranda on American Politics (EMAPs). The due dates are noted on the course outline and they should be submitted electronically in WordPerfect format (sent as an email attachment to me, dking@dordt.edu). Most of these will be based on your reading of a dozen case studies of contemporary issues in American politics (see *You Decide*, Shank and Drachman). In each EMAP, you should demonstrate:
- your understanding of the issue, its historical, social, and political context,
- your awareness of the controversies surrounding the issue, and the ability to communicate clearly and concisely why it remains controversial,
- your thoughtful evaluation and recommendation for responding to this question, supported by key evidence.

IV. Tests
There will be three tests and one comprehensive final exam. The final will expect you to integrate all the components, values, and institutions of the American political system in analyzing and explaining how policy is created, influenced and reshaped by the wide range of participants in our political process. The tests may utilize any combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in, definitions, matching, short answer, and essay questions to assess your knowledge of the materials essential to an understanding of how the U.S. political system developed and presently operates. Pay attention to vocabulary and highlighted terms for they are essential building blocks in mastering the intricacies of politics.

V. Grading and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMAPs (13)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>A: 91-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests (3 X 15 + 20)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>B: 81-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partic./attend.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>C: 71-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D: 61-70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Objectives

Chapter 1 (Politics)

1. Define the meaning of politics.
2. Discuss the varieties of political systems and the roles they embody for individuals governed by them.
3. Explain the historical origins of American democracy.
4. Discuss the goals and concerns of the founders as they established the Am. system.
5. Identify the themes of power and citizenship that the authors use as a framework for understanding American politics.
6. Identify and define the following terms:
   - anarchy
   - authority
   - capitalist economy
   - citizens
   - elite democracy
   - government
   - institutions
   - pluralist democracy
   - popular sovereignty
   - republic
   - participatory democracy
   - social contract

Chapter 2 (Citizens and Political Culture)

1. Describe U.S. citizens—where do they come from, what do they do for a living, what kind of families do they have, how do they spend their leisure time, etc.
2. Identify the core political beliefs of citizens.
3. Discuss the ideas that bind Americans together as a nation.
4. Discuss what defines our political conflicts or differences.
5. Discuss the legal meaning of citizenship in the U.S.
6. Identify and define the following terms:
   - conservative
   - liberal
   - political culture
   - procedural
   - naturalization
   - individualistic
   - ideologies
   - values

Chapter 3 (Politics of the American Founding)

1. Discuss the struggle of colonial power for control of America.
2. Describe the process of settlement by the English.
3. Discuss the Articles of Confederation.
4. Describe the Constitutional Convention and the ratification of the constitution.
5. Explain the role of average citizens in the founding of the republic.
6. Identify and define the following terms:
   - Anti-Federalists
   - Articles of Confederation
   - Bill of Rights
   - "Common Sense"
   - confederation
   - constitution
   - Constitutional Convention
   - Declaration of Independence
   - factions
   - federalism
   - Federalist Papers
   - Federalists
   - Great Compromise
   - New Jersey Plan
   - popular sovereignty
   - ratification
   - Shay's Rebellion
   - slavery
   - Virginia Plan
   - three-fifths compromise
Chapter 4 (Constitution)
1. Explain how the founders resolved the issue of regional vs. national government relations.
2. List and define the three main tasks of governing.
3. Identify the institutions the founders created to perform the three main tasks.
4. Describe the constitutional relationship among these institutions.
5. Discuss the flexibility the founders built into the Constitution.
6. Identify and define the following terms:
   - amendability
   - bicameral legislature
   - checks and balances
   - concurrent powers
   - confederal system
   - cooperative federalism
   - dual federalism
   - enumerated powers
   - executive
   - fusion of powers
   - initiative
   - judicial power
   - judicial review
   - legislative supremacy
   - legislature
   - electoral college
   - McCulloch v. Maryland
   - necessary and proper clause
   - parliamentary system
   - presidential system
   - referendum
   - republic
   - separation of powers
   - supremacy clause
   - entrenched mandates
   - unicameral legislature
   - unitary system

Chapter 5 (Fundamental American Liberties)
1. Discuss the meaning of “rights” in a liberal democratic society.
2. Discuss the Bill of Rights as part of the federal Constitution and discuss its relationship to the states.
3. Define freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the “right” to bear arms, the rights of people accused of crimes, and the “right” to privacy.
4. Identify and define the following terms:
   - accommodationists
   - establishment clause
   - bills of attainder
   - exclusionary rule
   - civil liberties
   - fighting words
   - civil rights
   - freedom of assembly
   - compelling state interest
   - free exercise clause
   - due process of the law
   - Habeas corpus
   - clear and present danger
   - Libel
   - Miller test
   - police power
   - prior restraint
   - sedition
   - separationists
   - Lemon test

Chapter 6 (The Struggle for Equal Rights)
1. Define political equality.
2. Discuss the struggle of African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans, women, and other groups to gain equal rights & the power to enforce those rights.
3. Discuss women’s battle for rights denied to them on the basis of gender.
4. Identify other groups in society who fight to claim rights denied to them on a variety of bases.
5. Explain the relationship between citizens and civil rights.
6. Identify and define the following terms:
   - affirmative action
   - grandfather clause
   - boycott
   - Jim Crow laws
   - busing
   - literacy test
   - civil rights
   - minimum rationality test
   - de facto discrimination
   - poll tax
   - de jure discrimination
   - English-only movement
   - Reconstruction
   - segregation
   - sexual harassment
   - Strict scrutiny
   - NAACP
   - Equal rights amendment