SYLLABUS

Govt 2305-015 (10960): U.S Government 1st 5.5 Wks Sum ‘10
Class: MWTWh 2:10-4pm NRG2 Room 2119
Instructor: Shina Amachigh, Ph. D.
Office: Room 2111
Office Hours: M-Th 4-4:30 Frid 8-1pm by appt only .
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Phone: 512-223-2144

Textbook:
The textbook can be purchased in any ACC bookstore.

Course Introduction.
This introductory course is designed to familiarize the student with the political and governmental systems of the United States-a political and governmental system that “runs” a country that is at the same time the envy and the “thorn in the flesh” of most of the world.

A course in United States Government such as this is important, both for United States citizens and non-citizens alike, if for no other reason than the fact that the United States is the world’s sole super power and many of its activities have global effects and implications.

Course Description.
This course is an introduction to United States national government. The course includes an introduction to a framework for understanding United States government and politics, the constitutional basis for United States government and politics, the processes of United States government and politics, the institutions of United States government and politics, and the policies of United States government and politics.

The course covers the major institutions and processes of U.S. Government using the design of the Ginsberg, Lowi and Weir text as a guide. One major strength of the textbook is that it does not pretend to be anything other than what it is-a basic text that covers the "Foundations," "Institutions," and "Politics" of U.S. Government.

We will begin generally by taking a look at enduring concepts such as Liberty, Equality and Democracy. Then we will examine the colonial and constitutional foundations of American government taking note of inherent constitutional conflicts such as the desire for an effective (read “powerful”) national government versus the need to secure the freedoms and liberties of the people. The role of powerful but “unofficial” participants in the political process such as political parties and the media will be discussed next. We will then look at the formal institutions of American government—Congress, the Presidency and the Judiciary.

Course Objectives.
Students:
Will be led to think through and examine their positions on various US governmental and political issues with a view to “making sense” of them.
Will understand the rules of US government (Federalism, Separation of Powers and Individual Liberties and Rights),
Will become familiar with the "nuts and bolts" of US government (Congress, the Presidency and the Judiciary) and be introduced to the problem of bureaucracy in a democracy.
Attempts will be made to provide opportunities for students to “see” government in action and to become familiar with the political process. A major objective of this course is to encourage student participation in the political process as informed actors.
Course Requirements.

1. Class “participation” is required and includes attendance, asking relevant questions, expressing opinions and commenting during class discussions which will be numerous, hopefully. **Attendance will be verified by roll call. Only documented medical absences will be excused.** Students who have a **100% attendance record** will be given the opportunity to earn up to **10 extra-credit points.** An additional 20 points will be awarded for asking relevant questions, expressing opinions and commenting during class discussions for a possible total of **110 participation points.**

2. **Tests**
There will be three tests required. **Test one** will be over chapters 1-4, **test two** on chapters 5-8 and **test three** on chapters 9-12. Each test will have **45 multiple-choice items** [objectives, True and False, Identification]. Each item will be worth **two points.** Also, students will be asked to respond to **1 short-answer question** which will be worth **ten points.** This means that each test will be worth **100 points.**

**Test Dates:** (See course outline for more details)
I. 6/9  II. 6/21  III. 6/30

3. **Paper.**
Students will write a research paper (not an opinion paper) on an important US constitutional court case of their choice. A number of these cases are mentioned in our text. Nothing wrong with opinion papers, of course, but students are to write a research paper as plainly defined. That is, gather information about a subject (court case) and share that with the reader.

As defined, here is a possible outline of a research paper about “my water bottle.”

**Intro:**
State the reasons why you chose the topic (case)-fascinated/ intrigued by it, desire to know more about it for what reasons.

**Body:**
- The physiological need for liquids generally
- The superiority of water, physiologically, in comparison to other liquids (sodas, alcohol, “power” drinks) etc
- A brief history of drinking water-purification issues, portability issues, availability issues
- A modern history of water bottling and the variety of water bottles available-plastic, metal and glass
- Controversies: environmental (plastic), commercial (tap water)
- Who makes my water bottle, their process, share of the market and other water bottle products
- Why I chose my particular kind-80oz silver colored water body with a screw-on cap: cost, size, usage, care of

**Conclusion:**
Water as a vital necessity of life
Hauling a water bottle around may be one habit we should all have
It could make a dent in the cost of health care

Students will describe and analyze the case and the litigants involved and talk about the ascent of the case to the US Supreme Court, if applicable. A description and analysis of one or two related cases may be included. Students will also describe the impact/consequences of the case and state their reaction to it. Students may thoughtfully take issue with the ruling, or the rationale for it, making sure that their opinions are defensible.

Essentially, students are to tell the story of the case-who did what to whom, when, where, why- and to talk about how the courts disposed of the resulting litigation. **Students are strongly advised to seek the help of tutors at the writing lab** as all the rules of common writing are expected to be kept-paragraphing, punctuations, spelling, grammar etc. Students should not be verbose and should pretend that the reader is a very bright 7th grader.

**Research Paper Requirements**
Students must use five (5) sources from at least three (3) different genres including books, articles in professional journals, news magazines or newspapers, or internet sources. Students must document direct quotes
or paraphrased information that are/is included in the papers in the Modern Language Association (MLA) style. For information about the MLA style or how to cite internet sources, consult the ACC Learning Resource Service’s MLA Documentation Guide at [http://library.austincc.edu/help/MLA/](http://library.austincc.edu/help/MLA/).

The paper must be 5 whole pages in length counting neither the cover page (name, course & class time) nor the works cited page both of which are required. It must have one-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) and must utilize a standard font size-Times New Roman 12. Papers must be typed, double-spaced and must be stapled. Papers that violate any of the above requirements will be penalized 10 points per requirement and/or 20 points per page or its fractions correspondingly. Students must avoid plagiarism and collusion. See academic dishonesty under Course Policies below. Due date for the paper is June 24th. Late papers will NOT be accepted. The paper is worth 100 points at the rate of 20 points per page. Therefore, again, a 2-page paper can earn up to a maximum of 40 points only, etcetera.

**Final Grade Computations.**
A=450-500; B=400-449; C=350-399; D=300-349; F= 0-299

**Course Policies.**

**Academic Freedom**
Each student is strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. In any classroom situation that includes discussion and critical thinking, particularly about political ideas, there are bound to be many differing viewpoints. Students may not only disagree with each other at times, but the students and instructor may also find that they have disparate views on sensitive and volatile topics. It is my hope that these differences will enhance class discussion and create an atmosphere where students and instructor alike will be encouraged to think and learn. Therefore, be assured that your grades will not be adversely affected by any beliefs or ideas expressed in class or in assignments. Rather, we will all respect the views of others when expressed in classroom discussions.

**Scholastic Dishonesty**
As described in the ACC Student Handbook, scholastic dishonesty constitutes a violation of college rules and regulations and is punishable according to the procedures outlined in the Handbook. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an exam (either providing answers to or stealing answers from another student), plagiarism, and collusion. Plagiarism includes use of another author’s words or arguments without attribution. Collusion is defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement. If a student commits any of the above actions, the instructor will seek disciplinary action in the form of an academic penalty (which may include a course grade of ‘F’).

**Learning Disability**
Each ACC campus offers support services for students with documented physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities. Students with disabilities must request reasonable accommodations through the Office for Students with Disabilities on the campus where they expect to take the majority of their classes.

**Withdrawals**
Students may withdraw themselves from the class anytime during the semester up to the deadline for withdrawals on June 30th without an academic penalty by filling out the required form with Admissions & Records. It is your responsibility to officially withdraw yourself from this class if you reach that conclusion. Should the reason for your withdrawal be low performance, I hope you will come see me before you withdraw as I may have some helpful suggestions to offer for your success. That you simply stopped coming to class does not constitute an official withdrawal.

**Class Conduct**
According to the Student Handbook, “students are expected to attend classes in order to progress satisfactorily toward completion of course objectives.” Again, attendance is expected. Students are expected to arrive on time and not to leave until the class is dismissed. The instructor expects to be the last to arrive for class, and will be the last to exit the classroom at the end of class. Disruptive conduct will not be allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, chit chatting, text-messaging and reading material or doing work
not related to this class. You may be asked to leave class for the remainder of that particular lecture and counted absent.

“Make-ups” and “Incompletes”
No “make-up” examinations or “incompletes” will be allowed except for documented medical reasons or unforeseen or unforeseeable circumstances as defined by the instructor. The test date for all allowed make-up tests is July 1. “Incompletes” will only be given to students who are passing with a “C” or better average and request one. Students who fail to fulfill any of the requirements above will fail the class irrespective of their accumulated points.

Office Hours
The instructor is eager to help all students achieve their goals for this course. But students must do their part and communicate during office hours or by e-mail or voice mail with the instructor regarding any difficulties or challenges with course materials.

Course Outline:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<td>June 1</td>
<td>Intro/Syllabus/Amer Pol Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>American Political. Culture</td>
<td>Chap. 1</td>
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<td>June 3</td>
<td>Founding &amp; Constitution</td>
<td>Chap 2</td>
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<td>June 7</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>Chap. 3</td>
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<td>June 8</td>
<td>Civil Liberties/Civil Rights/Review</td>
<td>Chap 4</td>
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<td>June 9</td>
<td>Test One</td>
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<td>June 10</td>
<td>Class Project on Elections</td>
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<td>June 14</td>
<td>Public Opinion/The Media</td>
<td>Chap. 5/6</td>
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<td>June 15</td>
<td>Political Parties &amp; Elections</td>
<td>Chap 7</td>
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<td>Pol. Participation &amp; Voting</td>
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<td>June 16</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>Chap 8</td>
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<td>June 17</td>
<td>Class Project on the founding presidents (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe)</td>
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<td>June 21</td>
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<td>June 22</td>
<td>The Congress</td>
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<td>June 23</td>
<td>The President</td>
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<td>June 24</td>
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<td>June 29</td>
<td>The Federal Courts</td>
<td>Chap. 12</td>
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<td>June 30</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw</td>
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<td>June 30</td>
<td>Paper Due</td>
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<td>July 1</td>
<td>Make-up Test Date for those who qualify</td>
<td>Chap. 9-12</td>
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Note:
This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Think of this class as your job for as long as it lasts. If you already have a job, this is your second one! You will like some things about the content/structure of the class and may not care for others, that’s life. Everything…everything we talk about will be important in some way or other although it may not appear to you to be so at the time. That means that should you miss class, please do not email me to ask whether you missed something important. Get to know a person or two in the class that you can borrow notes from on those occasions.

Please keep your syllabus-it is our constitution-you will need to refer to it during the course of the semester. If you lose your syllabus, go to my website (www.austincc.edu/samachig) and print another copy-do not email me to send you another copy and please do not email me to ask when things are due as the syllabus is the authoritative source for that. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and by email.

Make sure to activate your student email to be sure to get my emails which can only go to your ACC student email.