

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT--PSC 200-03 (TR 9:30-10:45)--SPRING 2017
Mr. Jeff Colbert--308 Curry Building--Office Hours--MWF 8:00-8:50/TR 8:00-9:15
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Texts: Introduction to American Government (8th edition) by Turner, Stephenson, Bresler, Friedrich, Karlesky
Vital Readings in American Politics (2nd edition) by Colbert

The study of government begins with form and structure, but stopping there denies you the opportunity to know how it operates and, just as important, how it cannot. Government is called both the savior from and the cause of most of our problems. I believe it is neither. It is a morass of organizations and individuals that generally attempt to do what is right and what is desired by our citizens combined with enlightened self-interest. In addition, we must realize the diversity of our opinions and our officials' difficulties in reflecting those views.

The course will examine issues and governmental structures and is largely a lecture driven course with some discussion. I hope to make class time interesting while adhering to the utmost necessity—that I both present to you and help you discover relevant and accurate information about our governmental system. More specifically, by the end of the course, you should be able to:

- 1.) describe fundamental workings of the American government, such as, but not limited to, lawmaking, the operations of the Supreme Court, presidential activities, the role of political parties and interest groups;
- 2.) locate key provisions of the Constitution and consider the intent of the founders in writing them;
- 3.) identify players, forces and ideologies that affect the political process in the US;
- 4.) locate numerous websites that offer information on the content areas of this course;
- 5.) read and explain in written and oral form historical and current writings about our political system;
- 6.) successfully complete tests which require discrete knowledge (multiple choice and short answers) as well as discrete knowledge combined with larger thoughts and bodies of material (essay questions).

As a class member, you are important to the progression of this course. Timely reading of the material and a willingness to discuss will make the course more interesting and stimulating for you. It is required that you come to class prepared, involved and reasonably willing to participate. I hope you will feel comfortable discussing issues and opinions. To help you do this successfully, you must read all assigned material prior to class. Class discussion and pop quizzes will reveal to me whether or not you have done the reading. Further, assignments are due in class on the dates as announced. It is **your** responsibility to know about them and have them prepared. Pop quizzes are used to see if you've done the reading, encourage discussion and emphasize the importance of attendance. Missed pop quizzes cannot be made up. **I DO NOT DO EXTRA CREDIT.**

GRADING STRUCTURE

Web/Class/Research Assignments/Quizzes	10%
3 exams—(best grade=35%, next=30% each, worst=25%)	<u>90%</u>
	100%

SCHEDULE

T = Turner, Stephenson, Bresler, Friedrich, Karlesky

C = Colbert

01-17	Introduction		
01-19	American Political Culture		
01-24	NO CLASS		
01-26/31/02-02/07	Constitution	T 1	C 1
02-09/14	Political Parties/Interest Groups	T 7	C 7
02-16	Public Opinion/Individual Participation/National Elections	T 5/8	C 9
02-21	Test #1		
02-23	NO CLASS??		
02-28/03-02/07-09	Presidency	T 10	C 3
03-14/16	SPRING BREAK!!!!		
03-21/23	Bureaucracy	T 11	C 4
03-28/30	Federalism	T 2	C 2
04-04	Media	T 6	C 8
04-06	Test #2		
04-11/13/18/20	Congress	T 9	C 5
04-25/27	Courts	T 12	C 6
??-??/??-??	Courts	T 12	C 6
05-03	Reading Day		
05-09	Test #3 (12:00-2:00)		

ELECTRONICS:

Turn off or turn to vibrate ALL cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices other than your laptop computer. If there is an emergency possibility and you need your cell phone to be on, inform me. Otherwise, they ARE NOT to be heard or seen in class. If you use a laptop computer in class, you may use it for note-taking only unless otherwise directed or approved. Close, not reduce, all other screens. If you are found using your laptop for other purposes in class, your right to use your laptop in class will be forfeited. All students who use laptops must sit in the first row(s).

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

I have an attendance policy because the taxpayers of North Carolina and others are paying a decent chunk of change for your education. Since this class regularly meets two times a week, you have two cuts. Generally, I do not live in the “excused” and “unexcused” absence world. Whether you have a bug, want to sleep in, have car trouble, or want to leave early for the weekend, you get two and that’s all. There are, however, three exceptions:

- 1.) If you are ill for a lengthy period (defined as a week or longer), present me with the appropriate documentation and we can discuss it;
- 2.) If you are required to miss class due to a university function, discuss this with me ahead of time and those absences will not count against you;
- 3.) Third, students are, by state law, allowed two excused absences due to religious holidays, which do not count toward your total allowed absences. If you plan to miss class because of a religious observance, you must notify me in advance of your absence.

Two other matters related to attendance. First, if you are later than 5 minutes to class, stay out. You will disrupt the class. If you enter the room, I will count you as absent. If you enter the class later than 5 minutes and choose to stay in the room to gain the content, do NOT sign an attendance roster. That roster is designed to give credit to those who came to class and arrived on time. If you sign it, you are violating the honor code. So, be in class and be on time. In addition, moving in and out of class is disruptive to other students and disrespectful to me. Do what you have to do so that you don’t have to leave during class without good reason.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification, and facilitating academic dishonesty. If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated (from UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy). To ensure that you understand the university’s policy on academic integrity, review the guidelines and list of violations at <<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>>.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with documentation of special needs are allowed certain accommodations in classes. If you believe you could benefit from such accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services on campus before such accommodations can be made. The office is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215, and the office is open 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday. Telephone: 334-5440; e-mail: ods@uncg.edu. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me during the first week of classes. **Any specific accommodations MUST be discussed NO LESS than one week before the accommodation is needed.**