

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA
Fall 2014

COURSE TITLE: American Government -3 credit hours
COURSE NUMBER: Political Science 1010:0 (CRN 40585)
CLASSROOM: FLETCHER 113
CLASS HOURS TuTh 9:25-10:40a
INSTRUCTOR: Richard Wilson
INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE: FLETCHER 414
INSTRUCTOR'S PHONE (423) 227-1312; EMAIL: Richard-Wilson@utc.edu
INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: TuTh 10:50 - 12 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course fulfills a general education requirement in Behavioral and Social Sciences. The foundations, institutions, processes, and policies of American national government with attention to the Constitution and such topics as elections, political and civil rights and liberties, federalism, public policy, public opinion, political culture, interest groups, and the role of citizens in governance.

COMMUNICATION: To enhance student services, the University uses your UTC email address for all communications. (See <http://www.utc.edu/> for your exact address.) Please check your UTC email on a regular basis. If you have problems accessing your email account, contact the Help Desk at 423/425-4000.

ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT: If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 425-4006 or come by the office, 102 Frist Hall.

COUNSELING CENTER STATEMENT: If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely impacting your successful progress at UTC, please contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center at 425-4438.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Each student is strongly encouraged to attend class. Some departments on campus have mandatory attendance policies so severe that a student may fail after only a few absences. The policy in this course is not quite so severe, but it is serious and one can fail the course for unexcused absences alone. Each student will be allowed three unexcused absences before a penalty of 5% of the numerical grade for the course is imposed. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a further 5% reduction in the numerical score for the final grade. Excused absences are only granted upon presentation of a written excuse for reasons such as illness, death in the family, car accident, etc. Since the exam dates have been set, be advised that there will be no makeup exams without PRIOR notification to me that you cannot attend and without a valid WRITTEN excuse (illness, death in the family, car accident, etc.)

TARDINESS: I have not yet decided to impose a penalty for tardiness as I do understand that this campus is large and it can be difficult to get to this class in only 10 minutes if you are walking from a distant point on campus. If I find that people who arrive late are disrupting class, I may decide that a penalty is necessary. IF YOU ARRIVE LATE, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT YOUR ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN RECORDED BY TALKING WITH ME AFTER CLASS.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND GRADING POLICY: There will be at least three tests each of equal value. Two will be multiple choice and a third one will be essay with questions taken from the books and the class lectures. The first exam will be held before the University's withdrawal deadline. Grades are calculated using a curve as provided for by the official UTC sponsored Blackboard Learning System.

REQUIRED BOOKS: NO book is required for purchase, but portions of Richard L. Wilson, American Political Leaders. New York: Facts on File, 2002 are posted to Blackboard and are required reading. My American Government textbook manuscript is on also Blackboard. Both books also available in printed form at the circulation desk in the Lupton Library for those more comfortable reading a hard copy rather than off a computer screen.

DAILY TOPICS AND READINGS:

How Political Science Research Affects Our Understanding of Major Contemporary Issues

In the first third of the course, we will learn how current research into the operation of the constitutional democratic system in the United States helps us understand a number of important contemporary issues.

This is particularly true of the important constitutional issues such as civil liberties and civil rights.

Currently, various media sources have raised a question of whether the United States directly or indirectly engages in intensive interrogation techniques, such as "water boarding," and whether such practices, if they

occur, are compatible with the civil liberties guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. In other cases, the media also raise questions about affirmative action policies and whether these are covered by the civil rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. We will apply to recent political science research to help us understand these issues and many others.

DAILY TOPICS AND READINGS (continued):

8-19 Introduction to Blackboard Academic System. Blackboard Reading: 1-08-04 Theory of Government written by Richard Wilson in the textbook, which is available online through Blackboard and as a printed copy at the reserve desk in the Lupton Library.

8-21 Blackboard Reading: 1-08-04 Theory of Government- continued and 1-13-04 Theory of Democracy

8-26 Blackboard Reading: 1-13-04 Theory of Democracy continued and 1-15-04 Free Expression

8-28 Blackboard Reading: 1-20-04 Rule of Law & Wilson

9-2 Blackboard Reading: 1-22-04 Cons. Sep. of Powers, Checks & Balances: Wilson, Leaders: Profiles, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison.

9-4 Blackboard Reading: 1-27-04 Federalism; Wilson, Leaders: Profiles on Alexander Hamilton, John Marshall, and Abraham Lincoln,

9-9 Blackboard Reading: 2-3-04 SU Constitution: Wilson, Leaders profiles on Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, Oliver Wendell Holmes.

9-11 Blackboard Reading: 2-05-04 Press

9-16 Blackboard Reading: 2-12-04 Speech; Review for First Unit Test

9-18 FIRST UNIT TEST -- TAKEN IN University Center COMPUTER LAB BACK ROOM

How Political Science Research Affects Our Understanding of Major Contemporary Issues

In the second third of the course, we will learn how current research into the operation of political parties, elections, interest groups, and the presidency help us understand major contemporary issues. In these third of the course, we will examine -- in detail -- public opinion polling and the latest political science research showing why public opinion polling so often fails. We will then examine the recent strides made by Cass Sunstein in developing a new paradigm called infotopia. We will also examine how political science research into the plebiscitary presidency helps inform our understanding of the weakening of our constitutional system.

9-23 Blackboard Reading: AG3a_Poll_Pty_2_17. and

9-25 Blackboard Reading: AG3bPty_Nomin_2_19

9-30 Blackboard Reading: AG3c_ElecCol_2_24

10-2 Blackboard Reading: AG4a_Pres.Const. Wilson, Leaders profiles on John Tyler, William Jennings Bryan, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy

10-7 Blackboard Readings: AG4b_Vice_Bureau Wilson, Leaders profiles on Gerald Ford, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Edith Galt Wilson

10-9 AG4c_New_Pres.Power., Leaders profiles on Franklin Roosevelt and John Nance Garner

10-14 Blackboard Reading: AG4d_RuleLawPres

10- 16 SECOND UNIT TEST -- TAKEN IN University Center COMPUTER LAB BACK ROOM

10-21- NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

How Political Science Research Affects Our Understanding of Major Contemporary Issues

In the final third of the course, we will learn how current research into the operation of the U.S. Congress and U.S. Supreme Court help us understand major contemporary issues. For example, recent research into the impact of “single member district-single election district” helps us understand the perceived weakness in how the U.S. Congress operates. Recent research into the Rule of Law helps us understand the increasing politicization of the U.S. Supreme Court and why battles over appointments to the Court have been intense.

10-23 Blackboard Reading: AG5a Congress – Intro

10-28 Blackboard Reading: AG5b Job-Congress

10-30 Blackboard Reading: AG5c How-Bill-Law

11-4 Blackboard Reading: AG5d_Cong_RuleLaw

11-6 Blackboard Reading: AG6a_ Intro COURTS

11-11 Blackboard Reading: AG6b Appoint

11-13 Blackboard Reading: AG6c Marbury

11-18 Blackboard Reading: AG 6d_ Rule Law Courts;

11-20 Review for the Third Unit Test

11-25 THIRD UNIT TEST -- MUST BE TAKEN IN THE UC COMPUTER LAB BACKROOM