

Graduate School of American Studies
Doshisha University
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POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN AMERICA (4 units)

This course is a comprehensive introduction to the American political system and to the theories that political scientists have devised to understand it. Although the course is designed for students who have had little or no prior study of politics in the United States, it should also prove valuable to those who have had some previous exposure to the topic. The course will be organized around one of the best textbooks in the field (by Fiorina and Peterson), but we will also read a selection of challenging essays by contemporary political scientists. Among the topics we will consider are: the origins and nature of the American Constitution; the workings of Congress, the presidency, and the judiciary; the political processes that connect institutions to society; and the size and scope of government. The course should be especially useful for any students who are considering doing further research on any aspect of American politics.

Course Requirements: All students must keep up with the assigned readings, attend all class meetings, and complete three paper assignments (each of which will be between 7 and 10 pages in length). Instructions on how to complete these assignments will be provided as the course proceeds, and may be altered depending on student interest and performance. Participation in class discussion will also have a positive impact on the final evaluation. The final grade will be calculated in the following way: 30% for each paper, and 10% for classroom participation.

The core reading will be selections from the textbook by Fiorina and Peterson, but in addition we will read selected classic essays and articles written by professors for a scholarly audience. These selections will be distributed in class or made available for you to copy. Students will be required on a regular basis to write brief outlines and make verbal presentations to the class on parts of the assigned readings.

Textbook: Morris P. Fiorina and Paul E. Peterson, The New American Democracy, Second Edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon/Longman, 2002). ISBN: 0-321-10132-4.

Please read the chapters in the order I suggest. Although a copy of the book will be on reserve in the GSAS library, students are encouraged to purchase the textbook via <http://www.bookfinder.com/> if they have sufficient financial resources. If you purchase a used copy, be sure to get the right edition.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART 1: THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS CRITICS

Meeting 1: Introduction.

Course content, procedures and requirements; discussion of American politics.

Meetings 2 - 7: The Founding and the Constitution

Read: Chapter 2, The New American Democracy; plus selected readings distributed in class.

Meetings 8 - 10: The Logic of Federalism

Read: Chapter 3, The New American Democracy; plus selected readings distributed in class.

FIRST PAPER DUE!

PART II: THE JUDICIARY, CIVIL LIBERTIES, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Meetings 11 - 15: The Judicial Branch, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

Read: Chapters 15, 16, 17, The New American Democracy; plus selected readings distributed in class.

SECOND PAPER DUE!

PART III: CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENCY, AND THE PARTIES

Meetings 16 - 20: Congress

Read: Chapters 11 and 12, The New American Democracy; plus selected readings distributed in class.

Meetings 21 - 23: The Presidency and Federal Bureaucracy

Read: Chapters 10, 13, 14, The New American Democracy; plus selected readings distributed in class.

Meetings 24 - 26: Interest Groups and Political Parties

Read: Chapters 6, 7 and 8, The New American Democracy; plus selected readings distributed in class.

THIRD PAPER DUE!