FOCUS

This course is designed to help students to understand American political institutions, policies, and processes; the evolution of the American political system and how it is changing in the modern world; and, the American system as compared to other institutions and processes elsewhere. In addition, the course is meant to supply the tools for; critical reasoning, and analysis of the American system of government, and the knowledge and understanding needed in order to become a responsible citizen in terms of political participation. Its other objective is to encourage critical thinking about the state of American politics while discouraging mindless cynicism.

TEXTS

Required:


There will also be additional readings handed out during the course of the semester.

REQUIREMENTS

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<td>Examination 1</td>
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<td>Examination 2</td>
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<td>Research Paper or Service Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Final Examination</td>
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Examinations 1 and 2 will consist of short answer and some essay. They will be **in-class, closed notes, and closed book.** The final examination will also be in essay format.

**CLASS POLICIES**

1) Students are responsible for all materials covered in the lectures and assigned readings. You must read the relevant chapters before the lecture pertaining to those readings.

2) Failure to attend class and participate in class discussion will cause those who are on the borderline between two grades to receive the lower of the two.

3) Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty **will not be tolerated**, and **will be punished** to the fullest extend allowable by the Academic Committee at the University of St. Thomas. *(See Below)*

4) Other than in exceptional cases of personal or family emergencies, no make-ups will be given for students missing any of the regularly scheduled assignments during the semester. **Every calendar day late that an assignment is will result in the reduction of a full letter grade.**

5) A grade of “I” (Incomplete) will not be given in this course except in the most extraordinary of circumstances.

**PLAGIARISM**

The following are some dictionary[^1] definitions of plagiarism:

- “The action of copying someone else’s idea or work or pretending that you thought of it or created it” (Collins).
- “To take words, ideas, etc., from someone else’s work and use them in one’s own work without admitting one has done so” (Longman).
- “To steal or pass off as one’s own the ideas or words of another” (Webster).

Plagiarism also includes[^2]:

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[^2]: Dr. Miguel Roig (University of St. Thomas Spring 2004 Faculty Study Day Speaker, January 12, 2004.)
• “Double-dipping - This is submitting a paper or other assignment which had previously earned credit from another course.”

• “Text recycling - Reusing in a new assignment large portions of a previously submitted paper(s) or other written assignment (computer code, speech, etc.) without acknowledging their former use.”

Common student misconceptions on plagiarism:

• “Many students believe that as long as a citation is included, they can simply appropriate portions of text from another source and use that text as their own writing.”

• “Many are also confused as to what constitutes common knowledge believing that anything on the Internet is common knowledge.”

Some General Tips to Students:

• Citation Guidelines
  - Common Knowledge: Did you look up the information? If so, then a citation is needed
  - An emphasis should be placed on proper paraphrasing (This will be discussed in greater detail when the paper topics are handed out).

• Student assignments should always be crafted and turned in with the understanding that the professor will be operating under the assumption that:
  - unless otherwise properly noted in the assignment, the assignment submitted is the student’s own.
  - the representation of their own or others’ work is accurate (e.g., data fabrication).
  - that the assignment turned in/presented is exclusive to that course.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, LECTURES, AND EXAMS

January 25 - Introduction to the Course.

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3 Dr. Miguel Roig (University of St. Thomas Spring 2004 Faculty Study Day Speaker, January 12, 2004.
4 Dr. Miguel Roig (University of St. Thomas Spring 2004 Faculty Study Day Speaker, January 12, 2004.
**Topic One:** Congress (Chp. 10, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Two:** The Presidency (Chp. 11, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Three:** The Bureaucracy (Chp. 12, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Four:** Courts (Chp. 13, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Five:** Texas Politics – The Legislature

**Topic Six:** Texas Politics – The Legislative Process

**Topic Seven:** Texas Politics – The Executive Branch

**Topic Eight:** Texas Politics – The Governor

**Topic Nine:** Texas Politics - The Texas Justice System

**Topic Ten:** Politics and Personal Liberty (Chp. 14, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Eleven:** Politics and Civil Rights (Chp. 15, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Twelve:** Politics and the Economy (Chp. 16, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Thirteen:** Politics and Social Welfare (Chp. 17, Dye and Gaddie)

**Topic Fourteen:** Politics and National Security (Chp. 18, Dye and Gaddie)

**Important Dates:**

- No Class, March 13-17, Spring Break
- Examination #1: February 22
- Examination #2: April 12
- Research Papers or Service Projects are due on May 3
- Monday, May 15. Final Examination, 3:00-5:30PM.

**RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENTS**

The paper, five to six pages in length, must be typed, double-spaced, paginated, and must use an academically accepted format for footnotes, citations and reference
pages. The topic once chosen will have to be turned in to the instructor on February 22. This will have to be accompanied by a brief bibliography. Since this is a research project, four to five sources must be cited. Sources consulted may include academic press books, academic journals, periodicals and newspapers. I will be discussing possible topics that may be selected if that option is chosen and the papers themselves in more detail at a later date.

**SERVICE PROJECT GUIDELINES**

If you chose this option in place of the research paper, you will be expected to spend at least **15 hours** volunteering at an organization on a list that I will hand out later this week. Information about these sites will be on the aforementioned sheet. Requirements for the Service Learning Project include the following:

1. Choose a site of interest to you.

2. Contact the site you have chosen. Arrange a visit with the person who will be coordinating volunteer activity for this project.

3. Take the contract to the coordinator. Have him/her complete his/her portion. You, the volunteer coordinator, and I will need to sign the contract before you begin your volunteer activity.

4. You will need to be prompt and reliable once your service has begun. You will also need to be prepared to perform the duties listed on the contract. See me if you have any difficulties.

5. You should keep a log of the times and days you are volunteering and your volunteer activities.

6. After you have completed your volunteer activities, you will need to write a 5 to 6 page (approximately) reflective paper. In this paper, discuss the volunteer agency, your experiences there, what you have learned about the agency while you were volunteering, what you learned about yourself, how it pertains to the course material, and what you liked most and least about the experience.

7. Turn in your log and reflective paper on **May 3**.

8. A total of 100 points are possible for the combined paper and log.