

POSC 322

Introduction to American Politics

Class Times: Thursdays – 11:30-2:20 p.m.

Classroom: A-259

Office: D3085

Office Hours: Immediately After Classes

Email: david.macdonald@ufv.ca

Required Text:

Kenneth Dautrich and David Yalof. **American Government: Historical, Popular, and Global Perspectives** (Alternate Edition) (Boston: Wadsworth-Cengage, 2009).

Course Objectives:

This course will provide descriptions and analysis of various aspects of American political life, the major U.S. political institutions, and how they interrelate to affect political outcomes. We will also consider the roles the Constitution, judiciary and American civic life as these impact politics in the U.S. and beyond.

******* IMPORTANT NOTE CONCERNING READINGS *******

While Chapters One through Three are not assigned readings, they are crucial for your understanding of the development of the American Constitution, Government, and History. You are very strongly urged to read these Chapters on your own. They will provide a more comprehensive background of the American political system. Those students who do not have a well-rounded understanding of the subjects of these Chapters must read them!

Course Content:

Week 1:

Introduction to course.

Civil Society and Federal Governance

Week 2:

Chapter Four – “*Civil Liberties*”

Week 3:

Chapter Five – *“Civil Rights, Equality, and Social Movements”*

Week 4:

Chapter Six – *“Congress”*

Week 5:

Chapter Seven – *“The Presidency”*

Week 6:

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

The Law and The People

Week 7:

Chapter Nine – *“The Judiciary”*

Week 8:

Chapter Ten – *“Public Opinion”*

Week 9:

Chapter Eleven – *“Interest Groups”*

Week 10:

Chapter Twelve – *“The Media and Politics”*

Week 11:

Chapter Fourteen – *“Voting and Participation”*

Writing Assignment Due!!

American Political Culture

Week 12:

Film Presentation

Week 13:

Film Presentation

EVALUATION PROFILE:

Midterm – 30% **Term Paper - 30%** **Final Exam - 30%** **Participation – 10%**

PARTICIPATION AND EXAMINATIONS:**Participation:**

Participation in class is crucial!! Class attendance is extremely important for all students. POSC 322 covers a broad area of American political studies and therefore each class is essential for students to receive information pertaining to each week's topics. Further, students will be strongly encouraged in class to ask questions and engage in discussions in order to receive clarification regarding course content.

Exams: Examinations for this course will be closed-book. Exams may be comprised of multiple-choice, short-answer or essay questions.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

A term paper will be produced for this course due in the day of the scheduled class of Week 11 of the semester. The essay will be developed from a topic chosen from a list provided by the instructor by the class following the Midterm Exam. These topics will include a range of issues involving American Politics and political life. Students should have no troubles choosing a topic that they find interesting and challenging.

The paper will be **no more than 12 pages** in length and **no less than 8**. It must be written using the '**Chicago Style**' of formatting. Instructions for this style are available at the Writing Center; as is help in creating a university quality essay. *Students are strongly urged to make use of the resources available to them at both the writing center and the campus library.* **Essays submitted that require extensive grammatical, spelling or format revisions will be graded without comments.** A minimum of **one source per page** is expected. The quality of sources will play an important role in the determination of the total grade for this assignment.

Writing assignments will be submitted by email. They will be graded and returned by email. Penalties for late assignments will be calculated at 5% for each day they are late.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THIS OUTLINE OR ANY OF ITS CONTENTS WHEN DEEMED NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BETTER FACILITATE STUDENTS' NEEDS.
