COURSE OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION:

The objective of this course is to provide you with a basic introduction to the workings of American government and politics. This course consists of the study of the constitution, government, and federal structure of the United States. Federal, state, and local problems and issues will be considered in the context of American political culture and history. Special emphasis will be placed on the United States Constitution, the political principles that underlie it, the historical context in which it was framed and contemporary interpretations. By the end of the course you should have gained insight into the political forces and institutions that shape our society and, reciprocally, the social forces that influence our government.

By the end of this course, at the very least you will be able to:
- Discuss the workings of the three branches of the government
- Analyze ways in which separation of powers and checks and balances work among the branches of government
- Analyze the many outside forces at work on the actors in government (e.g., the media, interest groups, etc.)

Topics Covered include: federalism, the constitution, the three branches of government, the bureaucracy, opinion and participation, the media in politics, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, and how the government deals with issues such as personal liberty, the economy, and national security.

Required Texts:


Course Requirements:

Exams: There will be three (3) examinations on the dates listed in the course outline. Exams will be available to you on-line from 8:00am Sunday until midnight Saturday on the weeks that they are given. **The final exam is only available until the Friday of finals week at midnight (See course schedule for date).** Because the semester ends on Friday, I cannot give you until Saturday for this exam. PLEASE, PLEASE make a note of this now; I cannot allow you to make up the exam if you forget to take it by Friday. If you do not take the exams during the time allotted to you, you will be given a zero. There are no exceptions to this policy. Questions will be randomized, so no one will receive the same test questions in the same order. You are not to refer to your book, notes, or any other class material while taking the exam. You are not to take the exam with others from the class. Please be aware that the exams are timed. If you try to look up every answer, you will run out of time. **You must take the test in the same sitting on the same**
day. Any deviation from this policy will result in a zero on the exam.

Because the summer semester is a bit shorter than regular semesters, you will have reading assignments during the weeks that you have exams. However, you will not have quizzes or other written assignments during exam weeks. My advice is to take the exam early in the week and focus on the readings toward the end of the week. Chapters you read during exam weeks will be covered on the next exam.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given as outlined in the course schedule. Please be aware that you do not have quizzes every week. However, even in the weeks in which you do not have a quiz, you will be responsible for the material you read on the next exam. Quizzes are to be taken on-line and will be available to you from 8:00am Sunday until midnight Saturday on the weeks they are due. Each quiz will only cover the material from your Dye text. Please use the weekly questions (when available) on Cigler & Loomis to guide your reading of that text and in preparation for the exams. When no questions are available for Cigler & Loomis text, please understand the key concepts of what you read in preparation for the exam. If you do not take the quiz during that time, you will be given a zero. Each quiz is made up of ten randomly chosen questions from the chapter indicated. You should be aware that no two quizzes will be the same. The quizzes are to be taken individually. Please do not refer to your textbook, notes, or other class materials; each quiz has a time limit to help you avoid the temptation to look up answers in your text.

Weekly On-line Projects/Discussions: This course utilizes the University’s web-based learning system which is located at elearning.uwf.edu. Please refer to your online project schedule for a more detailed description of the assignments. Participation in each of these projects will be determined in several ways; we will utilize the dropbox to ensure that each member of the class is participating. Fifteen percent of your grade depends on your thoughtful participation in each of these projects. Just like the quizzes, each of these projects will be available to you beginning Sunday at 8:00am and ending Saturday at midnight. Any participation in these projects must be done during that time or you will not receive credit.

Course materials available to you on-line: For each week of the course you will have access to several items to help you learn and study the material. First, you will have access to the power point presentations for the course. These power points were formatted to provide additional material not available in your text, as well as to further explain some elements of the reading material. Each week, you will also have access to practice questions to help you prepare for your quizzes and tests. These practices are not recorded and are simply to help you gauge your progress. Please take advantage of every resource available to you. Since this is an on-line course, your active participation is very necessary in order for you to do well on the quizzes and tests.

Other issues:

Communication: I am available to you to answer any questions or concerns you may have through the elearning website or through email. I generally answer emails within 12-24 hours. I may respond more slowly to emails received on holidays or weekends. Please know that emails you send are time-stamped, so if you have an issue that you address in a timely fashion, even if it takes me a day or so to respond, I will know that you acted in the time allotted and will consider that when dealing with your concern. While this is not usually an issue, I feel compelled to request that
you only write in an email what you would be willing to say in person. Please deal with me and your fellow students professionally, and write your emails and discussion board posts in a respectful manner.

Expectations: While this course is taught in a completely on-line environment, you will need to keep up on a weekly basis with your readings, assignments, and quizzes. **Absolutely no make-up quizzes will be given, and no late assignments will be accepted.**

Special Technology Requirements: This course requires the use of email, word processing, and the University’s eLearning system. **You are responsible for any e-mails that I send to you or to the class. Please do not forward your University e-mail to any other e-mail server because if your server goes down or your mailbox is full, you will still be responsible for any information I may send you.** Please check your University e-mail and the Blackboard course homepage several times a week so as not to miss important information.

Expectations for Academic Conduct/Plagiarism Policy: As members of the University of West Florida, we commit ourselves to honesty. As we strive for excellence in performance, integrity – personal and institutional – is our most precious asset. Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways which erode that integrity. Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others. We pledge to share community resources in ways that are responsible and that comply with established policies of fairness. Cooperation and competition are means to high achievement and are encouraged. Indeed, cooperation is expected unless our directive is to individual performance. We will compete constructively and professionally for the purpose of stimulating high performance standards. Finally, we accept adherence to this set of expectations for academic conduct as a condition of membership in the UWF academic community.

Assistance: Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), dss@uwf.edu, (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td>60% (20% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-line Projects/Discussions</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Grading Scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 60-62; F: 59 and below.

Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus and the course schedule is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. Changes will be posted on Blackboard.
Week 1 (May 13-19): Introduction of Syllabus, Overview
Politics, Who Gets What, When, and How?
Political Culture, Ideas in Conflict
Read: Dye, Chapter 1
Read: Dye, Chapter 2

Week 1 Project (familiarize yourself with eLearning)

Week 2 (May 20-26): The Constitution
Read: Dye, Chapter 3
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 1

On-line Quiz, Chapter 3; Week 2 Project

Week 3 (May 27-June 2): Federalism
Read: Dye, Chapter 4
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 2

On-line Quiz, Chapter 4; Week 3 Project

Week 4 (June 3-9): Congress: Politics on Capitol Hill
Read: Dye, Chapter 10
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 10

On-line Quiz, Chapter 10; Week 4 Project

Week 5 (June 10-16): Exam 1 (Covers all material weeks 1-4)
The President: White House Politics
Read: Dye, Chapter 11
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 11

Week 6 (June 17-23): The Bureaucracy; Bureaucratic Politics
Read: Dye, Chapter 12
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 12

Week 6 Project

Week 7 (June 24-June 30): Courts: The Judicial Process
Read: Dye, Chapter 13
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 13

On-line Quiz, Chapter 13; Week 7 Project

Week 8 (July 1-7): Opinion and Participation: Thinking and Acting in Politics
Read: Dye, Chapter 5
Read: Cigler & Loomis, pgs. 142-148 & 176-192

On-line Quiz, Chapter 5
**Week 9 (July 8-14):**  
**Exam 2 (Covers all material weeks 5-8)**  
**Mass Media: Setting the Political Agenda**  
Read: Dye, Chapter 6  
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 8

**Week 10 (July 15-21):**  
**Political Parties: Organizing Politics**  
Read: Dye, Chapter 7  
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 6  

**On-line Quiz, Chapter 7; Week 10 Project**

**Week 11 (July 22-28):**  
**Campaigns and Elections: Deciding Who Governs**  
Read: Dye, Chapter 8  
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 7

**Week 12 (July 29-Aug 4):**  
**Interest Groups: Getting Their Share and More**  
Read: Dye, Chapter 9  
Read: Cigler & Loomis, Chapter 9

**On-line Quiz, Chapter 9**

**Sunday, August 5 – Friday, August 10: Final Exam will be available to take on-line. The final is not cumulative; it covers all material from weeks 9-12. Please take special note that this exam closes on Friday at midnight instead of Saturday. This is because the semester officially ends on Friday.**