Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the principals, institutions and processes of American politics. This course is designed to provide a foundation that should enable students to understand and critically evaluate the American political system and its form of government. As a General Education Course, POLI 2051 classes are designed to address the following General Education outcomes:

- A familiarity with the nature and function of the social sciences.
- An appreciation of the methods of critical inquiry.

The course is divided into three sections. The first section introduces students to the fundamental of policymaking, explores the constitutional context of politics, and examines political participation. The second section of the course explores components of the political system (elections, interest groups) and institutions of government (executive, legislative, and judicial branches) that create and implement public policies. The third part of the course examines the policymaking process in the specific areas such as the economy, social welfare, civil liberties and national security. The preponderance of our time will be spent on national-level politics, buts aspects of state and local governments will be incorporated throughout the semester.

Required Texts:

Two texts are required for this course:


Hamilton, Madison, Jay, The Federalist Papers. [also available online at several websites, including: memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fedpapers.html.]
Student Evaluation and Policies:

Grades for the course are based on a student’s performance on two in-term exams, a final exam, and one (1) book review written summary. Letter grades are determined on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0% - 59%</td>
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Participation & Book Review Summary:

Each student is expected to attend every class. I reserve the right to give “pop quizzes” and if given, will be calculated into your overall grade. If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed.

In addition to attending class, you will be required to read and provide a written summary of a current book (in the last 8 years) relevant to any of the topics discussed in this course (i.e. Congress, Presidency, Interest Groups, Constitution, etc). The written summary will count for a total of 100 points. Deadlines and additional information will be distributed in class.

Exams:

Two exams and one final consisting of 100 points each will be given. The final exam will focus on the last section of material covered; however, material covered earlier in the semester may be drawn upon as well. Please note that any reading not covered in class will still be on the exams. It is the student’s responsibility to complete all reading and be prepared to answer any questions about them on the exam.

Makeup exams are only provided for students who can produce a valid excuse (serious illness, family crisis, etc). For problems that can be anticipated, students must let me know in advance of the problem. For problems that crop up at the last minute, students should contact me as soon as it is reasonably possible. Students who do not meet these conditions will earn a 0 on the exam. Note that it is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements with me about makeup exams. Makeup exams are generally scheduled for the Friday following the date of the missed exam and are written essay tests.

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation. For accommodations involving the exams, please contact me about the necessary arrangements well in advance of the testing date.
**Assignment Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>March 5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>April 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>May 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Summary</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Due no later than April 30th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classroom Policy:**

Please be considerate of those around you who are trying to listen and take notes. Keep in mind that class will begin promptly at 6:10. Please be on time and seated prior to the beginning of class each day and leave early only for emergencies. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Use of a cell phone or blackberry device including texting is prohibited during class- turn off all cell phones and blackberry devices prior to the beginning of class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.
Course Schedule

January 22nd  Introduction to Course

January 29th  No class

February 5th  Introduction: Elections and American Democracy
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 1

Creating a Constitutional Democracy
The Declaration of Independence –Read online at
www.memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fedpapers.html

Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 2

The Federalist Papers, #10, #47, #48, #51

February 12th  Federalism
The Federalist Papers #39, #45, and #46

Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 3

Public Opinion
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 5

February 19th  Media
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch 9

Political Participation
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 6

February 26th  Political Parties
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 8

Interest Groups
Re-read The Federalist Papers, #10

Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 7

Exam 1 Review

March 5th  EXAM 1
March 12th  
**Congressional Decision Making** 
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 12

**Presidential Elections** 
The Federalist Papers, #68

Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 10

**The President in Office** 
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 13

March 19th  
**The Executive Branch and Domestic Policymaking** 
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 14

**The Executive Branch and Foreign Policymaking** 
The Federalist Papers, #70

Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 20

March 26th  
**The Courts** 
The Federalist Papers, #78

Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 15

Exam 2 Review

April 2nd  
**EXAM 2**

April 9th  
No class (Spring Break)

April 16th  
**Civil Liberties** 
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 16

**Civil Rights** 
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 17
April 23rd

**Social Policy**
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 18

**Economic Policy**
Fiorina and Peterson, Ch. 19

April 30th

**BOOK REVIEWS DUE TODAY**
Final Exam Review

May 7th

**FINAL EXAM**