

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Department of Political Science

POLS 114 Introduction to American Government and Politics
Sections 1-5
Spring, 2006

Core Curriculum: Disciplinary Studies: Social Science Component

Lectures: 11:00-11:50 Monday, Wednesday Wham 105

Discussion Section 1	12:00-12:50	W	Pulliam 112
Discussion Section 2	14:00-14:50	W	Pulliam 118
Discussion Section 3	13:00-13:50	W	Wham 203
Discussion Section 4	12:00-12:50	F	Wham 203
Discussion Section 5	16:00-16:50	W	Quigley 201

Instructor:

Dr. John L. Foster
3134 Faner
Phone: 453-3172
Email: jlfoster@siu.edu
Fax: 453-3163

Office Hours:

10:00-10:50 MW
3:15- 4:30 MW
2:00- 3:30 TTh
or by appointment

Assistant:

Mr. Paul Gottemoller
3182 Faner
Phone: 453-3197 (office)
Email: paulgottemoller@yahoo.com

Office Hours:

8:00-10:50 MW
or by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS and MATERIALS

Thomas E. Patterson, *The American Democracy, Alternate Edition, 7th Edition* McGraw-Hill

R. Mark Tiller, *Big Ideas: An Introduction to Ideologies in American Politics*, St Martin's

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is a college level introduction to American government. Students will begin to develop the body of knowledge necessary for informed civic participation and to think

about politics from a social science perspective. More specifically, students will learn about democratic principles, the structure and institutions of government, the role of ethnicity, race, gender, class, culture and the economy play in shaping the political landscape in America.

By the end of the course you will have learned:

(a) what the fundamental characteristics of American government are and how the U.S. Constitution affects the organization of government, the relationship between national and state governments, and the relationship between the government and citizens.

(b) how cultural, economic, and social factors influence how people participate in politics and the ways different forms of participation fit into the policymaking process

(c) how the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government are organized and the role they play in the policymaking process

d) how to effectively use this knowledge as thoughtful citizens participating in civil society

ASSIGNMENTS

First Exam: In class mix of multiple choice and short essay covering first third of course.

Simulation Use of public opinion, election and legislative coalition formation simulations on website: www.mhhe.com/pattersontad7 which accompanies Patterson's, *The American Democracy* Several short exercises on these simulations will be assigned and graded.

Second Exam: In class mix of multiple choice and short essay covering second third of course.

Short Paper A 5 page essay combining your reflections on the political process with the Tiller text. More detailed instructions will be distributed.

Final Exam: In class multiple choice items covering full course with emphasis on last third.

GRADES

Your final grade in the course will be based upon the scores you receive for the three examinations, simulation assignments, the short paper, and class attendance. Extra credit points may be earned by attending on campus lectures on government and political topics to be announced.

<u>Final Grading Scale</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Points</u>	
A 360 or above	First Examination	Feb 15		50
B 320-359	3 Simulation Exercises	TBA	100	
		(total)		
C 280-319	Second Examination	Mar 29	50	
D 240-279	Short Paper	April 17	50	
F less than 239	Final	May 8	100	
	<u>Attendance</u>		<u>50</u>	
	Total		400	
	Extra Credit		30	

INSTRUCTOR and COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Assignments: Regular attendance and completion of readings on schedule are essential to successful completion of this course. Attendance will be taken on a regular basis in lecture and discussion sections and constitute 12.5% of your final grade. Attendance will be converted to points on a prorated basis from 100% attendance equals 50 points to less than 50% attendance equals 0 points. Readings should be completed before the appropriate class period. Questions and comments are encouraged.

Exams: The dates for the three exams and short paper are in this syllabus. Excused absences will be given only for illnesses treated by the Health Service or bona fide family emergencies and must be reported to the instructor or teaching assistant before the exam begins. A late paper will be penalized one-half letter per day. Papers submitted by email or fax will not be accepted unless special arrangements have been made beforehand.

Extra Credit: Up to 30 extra credit points may be earned by attending on campus public lectures on political or governmental topics. Speakers schedules will be announced and distributed in class as soon as available. Each talk you attend (2 maximum) is worth 15 points. For credit, you must turn in the attendance card at the lecture and a copy of the program with short summary during the next class session. No other “extra credit” options will be available.

Classroom Decorum: Some level of reasonable behavior is necessary for a successful learning experience. Please refrain from the following during the class period: 1) Conversations with your neighbor, 2) Reading a newspaper, 3) Listening to a Walkman, 4) Entering late or leaving early in a manner which will disturb the concentration of others, 5) Having a cellphone turned on 6) Other behavior which is likely to disrupt the learning experience of other class members.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any cases will normally be penalized with a grade of "F" in the course. Students are responsible for knowing the basic principles of academic honesty. The instructor will be pleased to discuss any uncertain cases beforehand.

Simulation Assignments: Pols 114 sections 11-15 students will use the 1) “Updating an Opinion Poll”, 2) “Running a Congressional Election” and 3) “Legislative Coalition Building” simulations on the website www.mhhe.com/pattersontad7 which accompanies Patterson’s, *The American Democracy* in discussion groups. Short exercises will be assigned for each simulation and graded and be worth 25% of final grades.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

A tentative daily schedule of topics is listed below, although it may be necessary to deviate from this schedule from time to time. You should complete each assigned reading before we discuss the topic in class.

Part I. History and Framework of American Government

A. Course Overview (Jan 18)

B. American Political Heritage (Jan 23-25)

Patterson 1, pp A-2-4; Tiller 1,2

C. U.S. Constitution (Jan 30-Feb 1)

Patterson 2, pp A-5-21; Tiller 6,7

D. Federalism (Feb 6-8)	Patterson 3, 15, pp A-22-24.
E. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (Feb 13)	Patterson 4,5; Tiller 3,4,5
First Examination (Feb 15)	Part I

Part II. Mass Politics: Citizens and Linkages to Their Government

A. Public Opinion & Political Participation (Feb 20-27)	Patterson 6-7; Tiller 6,7,8,9
B. Parties & Elections (Mar 1-Mar 6)	Patterson 8,
C. Interest Groups (Mar 8-20)	Patterson 9
D. News Media (Mar 22-27)	Patterson 10
Second Examination (Mar 29)	Part II

Part III. American Governing Institutions

A. Congress (April 3-5)	Patterson 11
B. Presidency (April 10-17) Short paper due April 17)	Patterson 12
C. Bureaucracy (April 19)	Patterson 13
D. Courts (April 24-May 1)	Patterson 14

Part IV Future and Course Wrap up (May 3)

Final Exam (Monday May 8 7:50 am)	Tiller 10,11
	Parts III & IV primarily, with some items from first two parts

