

PSCI 264: American Government and Politics

Fall, 2013

Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 am – 11:20 am.

Classroom: Arts Lecture Hall 208 (AL 208)

Instructor: Dr. Oleg Kodolov (Ph.D., University of Western Ontario; MA, Northeastern University)

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Phone: none, communication is by e-mail

Office: Hagey Hall 340

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 am – 1 pm, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Jing Li

Course Objectives.

The major objective of this course is to survey contemporary American politics, foundations of the US government, US constitution, institutions and the system of governance. Among other things, the course looks at crucial contemporary policy issues, such as the electoral college, US Presidential elections, civil rights and civil liberties, debates over Presidential and Congressional powers, and nominations to the US Supreme Court. By the end of the course, students should be familiar with the structure of the US government and should be able to analyze contemporary issues in US politics and governance.

Prerequisite

PSCI 101 or 110

Course Format and Requirements

The course will follow the schedule (attached). Students are expected to do the assigned readings every week, complete all assignments, tests and exams in proper form and submit these on due dates. In the interest of fairness, all assignment policies, including late penalties, will be strictly enforced (barring documented, extenuating circumstances). If you anticipate, or are experiencing difficulty in meeting these requirements, you

MUST consult the instructor as soon as possible and prior to the deadline. In addition, it is a student responsibility to present to the Instructor the UW Verification of Illness Form that can be found at:

[Health Services www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html).

The Instructor will deliver lectures each week. These lectures will include further guidance to the course material. Students **must** consult these lectures, in addition to all the readings assigned for the week. The Instructor will respond promptly to student academic inquiries.

It is very important that students do the work regularly and prepare for every class. If this is not done, it is easy to fall behind. Attendance and participation are mandatory. Students are also **required** to follow the current news and to stay updated on the developments in American Politics.

Required Texts and Readings

Fiorina, Morris et al (2011), *America's New Democracy*, 6th edition. Pearson Education.

Rourke, John (2012), *You Decide*, 9th edition. Pearson Education.

Additional journal articles and web material as assigned by the Instructor.

Texts are available for purchase at the University of Waterloo bookstore.

Written Work and Grading

Course grades are based on the following:

Essay Assignment: 20%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Midterm Exam: 35%

Final Exam: 35%

The students are expected to write all assignments, papers and exams to get academic credit for the course. **There will be absolutely no changes in grade weighting.**

Attendance/ participation grade is based, in part, on your presence in class, and in part, on your MEANINGFUL and COMPETENT responses to Instructor's questions based on the knowledge of material studied in this course. If you are absent from classes most of the time, you forego the opportunity to participate and to earn a good grade. We will not

only discuss the textbook material, but also lecture material and Internet/video material. Assigned readings must be completed BEFORE the topic is discussed in class. Students are encouraged to contribute to class discussions when asked by the Instructor. One reason is that discussions may often facilitate better understanding of concepts and issues. Students are free to articulate any position that is relevant to the subject matter. It is important, however, that students are respectful of the ideas expressed by other students and by the Instructor.

One of the skills you should learn in the course is to develop critical thinking and to substantiate your ideas IN WRITING (not only orally). This is the main purpose of the **Essay Assignment**. The Essay Assignment will be in the form of a short paper. The Instructor will elaborate on the topics in class. The assignment should be about 5-8 pages long. The paper **must** be submitted to the Instructor no later than the due date (early submissions are accepted without an extra credit). **All assignments must be submitted in paper form; no online submissions will be accepted.** The paper does not require the research of extra material beyond the texts assigned for the course. It is strongly recommended that students submit the assignment at least several days prior to the due date in case of last minute problems since **no** late essay assignments will be allowed in this course. **No** issues including any computer-related issues, constitute reasonable grounds for extensions.

If students wish to improve their writing skills, it is strongly recommended that they consult a manual, for example J. Buckley, *Fit to Print: the Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing*. 6th ed. Toronto: Thomson/Nelson, 2004. The University of Waterloo Writing Centre web site: [elpp http://elpp.uwaterloo.ca/writingcentre.html](http://elpp.uwaterloo.ca/writingcentre.html)

Most of your grade will be based on your **exam performance**. The midterm exam and the final exam will be in the form of multiple choice questions, short answers and/or essays. The two exams will cover **all** assigned material of the course. Due to the fact the material of the second half of the course has a direct overlap with the previously studied information and concepts, the final exam may cover the material of the whole course.

Only those performing consistently well on all assignments, papers and exams are likely to succeed in the course.

Extra Readings: Students are required to stay updated on the American government and politics news. The sources may include academic journals and the Internet, including mass media (ex, FOX NEWS, MSNBC, PBS etc.). This will help students develop further interest in the subject matter. Many useful sources on the Internet and in print are outlined in the textbooks (including textbook web sites). The Instructor will also identify some sources in class. The material includes government sites, news sources, partisan web sites maintained by political parties and interest groups, think tank web sites, document collections, printed scholastic works, etc. For example, there is much useful information in the following sources: *Perspectives on Politics* and *American Political Science Review* (official journals of the American Political Science Association), *Foreign Affairs* [Foreign Affairs http://www.foreignaffairs.com/](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/) (published by the Council on Foreign Relations), other academic journals, political web sites such as

American National Election Studies [Election Studies](http://www.electionstudies.org/) <http://www.electionstudies.org/>
Real Clear Politics [Real Clear Politics](http://www.realclearpolitics.com) <http://www.realclearpolitics.com>
Politico [Politico](http://www.politico.com/) <http://www.politico.com/>
Human Events [Human Events](http://www.humanevents.com/) <http://www.humanevents.com/>
The Wall Street Journal [The Wall Street Journal](http://online.wsj.com/home-page) <http://online.wsj.com/home-page>
The New York Times [The New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/) <http://www.nytimes.com/>
The Living Room Candidate [The Living Room Candidate](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/)
<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>
The Patriot Post [Patriot Post](http://patriotpost.us/) <http://patriotpost.us/>
The Economist [Economist](http://www.economist.com/) <http://www.economist.com/>
The Huffington Post [Huffington Post](http://www.huffingtonpost.com) www.huffingtonpost.com
Imprimis [Imprimis](http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis.asp) <http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis.asp>
The Claremont Institute [Claremont](http://www.claremont.org) www.claremont.org
The National Journal [National Journal](http://www.nationaljournal.com/) <http://www.nationaljournal.com/>
The National Review [National Review](http://www.nationalreview.com/) <http://www.nationalreview.com/>
The New Republic [New Republic](http://www.newrepublic.com/) <http://www.newrepublic.com/>
The Weekly Standard [Weekly Standard](http://www.weeklystandard.com/) <http://www.weeklystandard.com/>
The American Prospect [The American Prospect](http://prospect.org/) <http://prospect.org/>

Attendance and missed work:

Students are expected to be on time for classes and to remain in class the full time unless excused. Students who arrive late to class after attendance has been taken must make their presence known to the instructor after class to avoid being marked absent. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and making up any missed material or acquiring missed information. A **documented** excuse is required to make up a test/an exam.

Course Website

The course outline, detailed assignments, class announcements, additional readings, grades, etc. will be available on the course website on LEARN. **It is student responsibility to regularly check the course website.**

Users can login to LEARN via: [Learn](http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/) <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>

Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

Please note that this Instructor will not be posting lecture notes on the course web site nor will he be providing students with lecture notes in any other form.

University Regulations:

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [Student Discipline](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [Student Petitions](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70> . In addition, consult [Student Grievances](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes) <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes> for the Faculty of Arts’ grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [Student Appeals](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72> .

Academic Integrity website (Arts): [Academic Integrity](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html) http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): [Academic Integrity Office](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) <http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Office for Persons with Disabilities:

[Student Services](http://www.studentservices.uwaterloo.ca/disabilities/index.html)
<http://www.studentservices.uwaterloo.ca/disabilities/index.html>

Student Counselling Services (academic/career or personal):

[Student Counselling Services http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/)

Course Schedule.

Week 1 (Sept.10). *Introduction to American Politics.*

Fiorina, chapter 1; the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the USA (in Fiorina's text).

Week 2 (Sept.17). *The US Constitution and the US Federalism.*

Fiorina, chapter 2, chapter 3; Rourke, chapter 1, chapter 2; Federalist No. 51 (in Fiorina's text).

Week 3 (Sept.24). *American Political Culture, Public Opinion, Media, and Political Participation.*

Fiorina, chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7; Rourke, chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7.

Week 4 (Oct.1). *US National Elections and Campaigns.*

Fiorina, chapter 8; Rourke, chapter 10.

Week 5 (Oct.8). *Political Parties and Interest Groups.*

Fiorina, chapter 9; Rourke, chapter 8, chapter 9; Federalist No.10 (in Fiorina's text).

Week 6 (Oct.15). Exam week.

OCTOBER 15: MIDTERM EXAM (in class).

NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 17: Essay Assignment Writing Day.

Week 7 (Oct.22). *The Congress.*

Fiorina, chapter 10; Rourke, chapter 11.

Week 8 (Oct.29). *The Presidency.*

Fiorina, chapter 11; Rourke, chapter 12.

Week 9 (Nov.5). *The Bureaucracy.*

Fiorina, chapter 12; Rourke, chapter 13.

NOVEMBER 7: Essay Assignment due (in class).

Week 10 (Nov.12). *The Judiciary*.

Fiorina, chapter 13; Rourke, chapter 14.

Week 11 (Nov.19). *Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*.

Fiorina, chapter 14, chapter 15; Rourke, chapter 3, chapter 4.

Week 12 (Nov.26). *Conclusion: Governance in the USA*. Pre-exam review.

Review of all assigned material.

FINAL EXAM: during the final exam period in December.