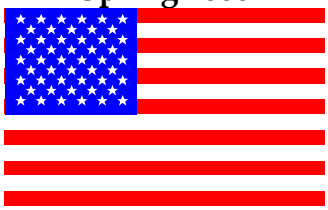
POS 2041 American National Government
Brevard Community College
Professor Amy E. Hendricks, Ph.D.
Spring 2006



Zoon Politikon: Man is by nature a political animal.
Aristotle, *The Politics*

Office Phone: (321) 433-7060
Office Location: Cocoa Campus, Building 5, Room 127
Email: hendricksa@brevardcc.edu
Office Hours: M-F 1:30 – 4 PM, or by appointment

This course focuses on the national level of American government. Politics is described as "who gets what, when, and how." While much maligned, politics is an inevitable part of human society. How we determine "who gets what, when and how" is what politics and governing are all about. In some societies this is determined by a dictator or a powerful few; in a democracy, all the people decide together -- at least in theory. We will study the structure of the US government, and the processes used to make, enforce and interpret laws. We will cover some of our nation's history, including the impact of an ethnically diverse culture on the political system. We will also examine the major national institutions - the presidency, the Congress, and the federal judiciary - as well as outside players who affect the system, such as interest groups and lobbyists, political parties and the news media. We will place a special emphasis on understanding the diversity present in an immigrant culture and how our constitutional democracy responds (or does not respond) to these culturally and politically diverse populations.

The objectives of this course are for you, the student, to understand:

The history of your Constitution
The rights guaranteed to you by the Constitution and Bill of Rights
How states and the nation relate in power
How the major institutions of the federal government can check each other
The politics and procedures used to pass a law in Congress
The powers of the president and the limits on that power
The court system and the powers of the Supreme Court
How parties, interest groups, and the mass media affect politics
How non-majority groups (ethnic, cultural, and political minorities) affect the system
The impact of multi-cultural perspectives on representation, the free press and public opinion
The difference between liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans
How to evaluate the accuracy and value of public opinion polls
How the Electoral College works
How the political system attempts to represent the diversity of the American population.

Required Texts

1. Thomas R. Dye, Politics in America., 5th Ed., Basic Version. Prentice Hall, 2003. Available in the bookstore. ISBN 0-13-049415-1.
2. Current and legitimate news sources for keeping up with current political events. These include newspapers, newsmagazines (such as *Time* or *Newsweek*), reliable news sites on the Internet, or television news. It is best to use a variety of sources for adequate coverage.

Course Requirements

Tests: There are three tests, each covering 1/3 of the material (no comprehensive tests). Each test counts 15% of the final grade, and covers material from the text and lecture notes. Tests include multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Study guides are provided before the tests. Test dates are found in the Schedule of Classes.

Writing: This is a Gordon Rule class with a writing requirement of 3000 words. *Please note that you cannot pass the class without passing grades on* ***all*** *the writing assignments, regardless of your grades on other assignments.* The Gordon Rule requirement is fulfilled by writing essays on the tests, and three writing assignments, described below. Further details will be provided in class.

A. The Elections List is a list of all the elected positions of which you are a constituent. Based on your home address, you will compile a list of all national, state and local elected of which you are a constituent, followed by the name, party and salary of the incumbent. This assignment counts 10% of the final grade.
B. Take-home Quizzes on the textbook reading. There are 5 quizzes, turned in every few weeks throughout the term (see schedule of classes for due dates). Quizzes must be typewritten. Altogether, the quizzes count 15% of the final grade.
C. The Term Project is selected by the student from a list of choices. The resulting paper should be typewritten, between 1000 - 1250 words (4-5 pages on average). The project counts 15% of the final grade. A presentation to the class (10 minutes) on your term project comprises 5% of the final grade. You may choose from the following:

1. Analysis and comparison of three media outlets
2. Interview with a person involved in politics (30 minutes minimum)
3. Creation, administration and analysis of a public opinion survey given to at least 20 people
4. Composition and delivery of a campaign speech, followed by Q&A from the class

Participation: 10% of the final grade is based on your participation in class and is assigned by the instructor based on overall attendance, promptness, politeness and participation. Students who chronically are absent or late, or are disruptive or rude in class, may receive a "0" in participation points. The grade is also reduced for every absence beyond 15% of the total class meetings. I will discuss special circumstances with students individually.

Grades are calculated as follows:

Tests =	45% (3 @ 15% each)
Elections List =	10%
Quizzes =	15%
Term Project =	15%
Class Presentation =	5%
Participation =	10%.
Final Grade	100%

Class Policies

Final grades are based on a 10 point scale: 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, < 60% = F. No curves are used in this class, although there are some extra credit options available (see below).

Academic Dishonesty: A student who cheats on an assignment or test, including turning in a plagiarized paper, may receive an "F" in the course, despite any other grades earned. Plagiarism includes submitting papers written by others, cutting and pasting from websites or other sources without quotation marks and proper citation, AND cutting and pasting while changing a few words. The term project paper will be turned in both in hard copy and online, using turnitin.com, which is a plagiarism detection service used by the College. I reserve the right to review your drafts, notes, and sources for any paper turned in to me. You should keep these materials until you get the paper back with a grade on it. If you cannot produce these materials you will cast strong doubt on your authorship and risk a grade of "F" on the paper and in the class.

Attendance: The number of classes you miss, excused or unexcused, affects your participation grade. All absences over the BCC maximum (15% of class meetings) will lower your final grade (see Participation). If you have a major conflict that prevents you from coming to class this semester (work, child care, etc.), you should take the class at another time. If you develop such a conflict during the semester, please see me so we can explore your options.

Withdrawal: The last day to withdraw with the grade "W" is **March 21, 2006.** If you do not withdraw by March 21, you must receive a grade for the class, even if it is an "F." For emergency situations, contact me and/or the Dean of Student Services. *Please be aware that if you stop coming to class, but do not formally withdraw (fill out the form in Admissions), you will receive an "F" for the class on your transcript.* **I will not withdraw you from the class: that is your responsibility**. If you are taking the course for the third time since Fall 1997, you MUST receive a grade and cannot withdraw.

Missed Tests: Make-up tests will be available only under *extreme circumstances* that are legitimately documented, *in writing*. ***Absences on test days count as a "0" for that test unless I excuse the absence***. I will consider excusing an absence only if it is unavoidable (illness, accident, child emergency) and documented (doctor's written excuse, accident report, etc.). You must contact me immediately if you must miss a test. For instance, if you are ill the day of a test, call me BEFORE the test is given. Waiting until the next class meeting will result in a "0" on the test. Make-up exams are all essay, regardless of the reason for missing.

Late Assignments: Please plan ahead to avoid turning in late assignments. Broken printers, being called in to work, and other minor emergencies are not excuses for late papers since due dates are known well in advance. Assignments must be turned in in hard copy, not via email. All assignments lose 5 points for each day they are late, counting weekend days.

Arriving Late for Class: If you arrive after I have checked roll, you should assume you have been counted as absent. To change the absence to a "late," you must see me after class. Otherwise it remains an absence and cannot be corrected later. Two late arrivals count as an absence when I am calculating your participation grade. If you must come in late, do it quietly and sit near the door. If you must leave class early, inform me ahead of time and sit near the door.

Food and Drink: No food or drink is allowed in the classroom. If you have food or drink with you, keep it put away during class time.
Phones and Beepers: All audible cell phones and beepers must be turned off during class time and must be completely stowed during testing. If you have a serious emergency that will call you out in the middle of class, please discuss it with me before class begins.

Children: Many students are parents, and there are times students may be tempted to bring a child to school with them to avoid missing class. Unfortunately, this is absolutely never allowed under any circumstances, not even a one-time emergency.

Extra Credit on your Test Average: You may earn one extra point on your cumulative test average by writing a 15-question multiple choice test for any chapter in the textbook. The questions must be real test questions - challenging, but not obscure - with at least three independent options per question (do not use "all of the above," "none of the above," "true" or "false" as options). You may write a test for any chapter in the book. As many as five tests may be submitted for a **total of five extra points on the cumulative test average**.

Service Learning for Extra Credit: You may earn **up to three points** of extra credit on your final grade by volunteering in our community through the Center for Service Learning at BCC (Building 12, Third Floor). If you complete at least 15 hours of volunteering at an approved site over the course of the semester, and write a three-page, typed reflective journal about your experience, you will receive three points on your final grade.*

Service Learning Fourth Credit Option: You may register for the class **POS 2948 80C Political Science Service Learning Field Experience** to earn one hour of elective credit (in addition to the 3 credits earned for POS 2041). For this course you must volunteer at least 20 hours with an approved organization during the semester, attend a one-hour seminar (on-campus), and write a five-page, typed reflective journal about your experience.* You must register for this option as a separate course and pay tuition for one hour of credit. You may register for several weeks into the semester without paying a late fee.

*You may take the fourth credit option (POS 2948) in combination with earning extra credit points if you volunteer for a total of 35 hours or more. You only need one five-page journal for both options combined.

SERVICE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

American National Government and State and Local Government
Professor Amy E. Hendricks

If you are participating in Service Learning for extra credit in this class, you may complete *either* or *both* of the following options:

Option 1: Service Learning Extra Credit

For **three points** of extra credit on the final grade, students must:

- complete 15 hours of volunteering at an approved site
- complete paperwork with the Center for Service Learning
- turn in a 3 page (750 word) typewritten journal detailing his or her experience (see description below).

If requirements are partially fulfilled, partial credit or no credit may be assigned, at the discretion of the instructor.

Option 2: Fourth Credit Option

For an extra hour of elective credit in social science, students must:

- register for the class POS 2948 80M and pay tuition for one credit hour
- complete 20 hours of volunteering at an approved site
- complete paperwork with the Center for Service Learning
- participate in a mid-semester seminar on the Service Learning experience
- turn in a 5 page (1250 word) typewritten journal for a grade.
- Make a brief class presentation on your experience

If requirements are only partially fulfilled, the student's grade for the fourth credit (which is factored into the GPA like any other grade) will reflect the deficiency.

Guidelines for writing a Service Learning Journal:

- Journal must be typewritten
- Minimum 750 words for extra credit
- Minimum 1250 words for Fourth Credit Option
- *If completing both extra credit and FCO, one journal of 1250 words will fulfill requirements
- May use informal tone and first person ("I"); no footnotes or other documentation necessary

1. Begin by describing your volunteer site. Is it a government agency, a nonprofit, or a political campaign? If it is a government, what level is it (national, state, or local)? What branch (legislative, executive, judicial)? Who is in charge of the organization? What is its mission (providing counseling, educating children, inspecting factories, etc.)?

2. Next, describe what you were asked to do. What were your assigned responsibilities? Describe your typical day. Were you busy, or was the pace relaxed? Did you interact with the public? You might want to describe some interesting or funny experiences you had while volunteering.

3. Assess whether the agency is doing a good job. If you are volunteering with the police force, for instance, assess whether the department is effectively enforcing the law. If you are working for a politician, critique his or her performance in office or on the campaign. If you could change one thing about the agency, what would you change?

4. Finally, reflect on what you got out of the experience. For some, the volunteer experience influences career choice, awareness of an issue, or political opinions. Did your experience have an effect on you?

Journals may be turned in through the last day of class (NOT finals week). Please see me with any questions.