

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
Spring 2007
PLS 101-003 AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Instructor: Ric Kolenda

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MWF 10-10:50 A.M. Leutze Hall 111

Phone: 910-431-6911

Purpose of the Course:

This course is designed to give students an understanding of the workings of American government as they have evolved historically, and to relate that understanding to current issues facing democracy in the United States.

Approximately one-third to one-half of the course will be devoted to contemporary issues and their historical roots.

Required Text:

Kenneth Janda, Jeffery Berry, Jerry Goldman, and Kevin Hula. *The Challenge of Democracy*. 6th Brief Edition, 2006.

Website:

http://college.hmco.com/polisci/janda/chall_dem_brief/6e/student_home.html

<http://uspolitics.org/>

George McKenna and Stanley Feingold. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues*. 15th Edition.

Website: <http://www.dushkin.com/online/get-isbn.mhtml?isbn=0073515051>

Course Requirements:

2 exams (30% each)	60%
Quizzes and assignments	25%
Classroom participation	15%

Students are expected to prepare for class by reading the scheduled assignments **and** by reading the newspaper and/or news Websites for articles related to American government. Be prepared to discuss the text and current events in class, as you will be called upon to do so. Students will also be expected to participate in the SeaPort message boards. Since classroom participation is extremely important, it will account for 15% of the grade by itself.

The mid-term examination will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. The final examination will be similar, but will be semi-comprehensive, weighted toward the final chapters but with elements and concepts from the whole course.

Assignments will include 4 quizzes and two short papers. **Quizzes may not be made-up without prior arrangement or emergency absence.** The lowest quiz score will be dropped. Each of the quizzes and short papers is worth 5% of the overall grade, for a total of 25%.

Office Hours: Office hours will be by appointment only.

Course Outline:

Introduction

CoD Ch. 1: Dilemmas of Democracy

TS - Introduction: Labels and Alignments in American Politics

TS - ISSUE 1. Should Americans Believe in a Unique American “Mission”?

CoD Ch. 2: The Constitution

TS - ISSUE 2. Is Democracy the Answer to Global Terrorism?

CoD Ch. 3: Federalism

CoD Ch. 4: Public Opinion, Political Socialization, and the Media

CoD Ch. 5: Participation and Voting

CoD Ch. 6: Political Parties, Campaigns, and Elections

CoD Ch. 7: Interest Groups

TS - ISSUE 4. Do the Media Have a Liberal Bias?

Midterm Review

Midterm Exam

CoD Ch. 8: Congress

CoD Ch. 9: The Presidency

CoD Ch. 10: The Bureaucracy

CoD Ch. 11: The Courts

CoD Ch. 12: Order and Civil Liberties

TS - ISSUE 8. May the President Wiretap Without a Warrant to Protect National Security?

TS - ISSUE 16. Stopping Illegal Immigration: Should Border Security Come First?

CoD Ch. 13: Equality and Civil Rights

TS - ISSUE 10. Does Affirmative Action Advance Racial Equality?

CoD Ch. 14: Policymaking and the Budget

TS - ISSUE 13. Are Tax Cuts Good for America?

TS - ISSUE 14. Is America Becoming More Unequal?

TS - ISSUE 18. Does the War in Iraq Help the War Against Terrorism?

TS - ISSUE 19. Is the Use of Torture Against Terrorist Suspects Ever Justified?

Final Review

Final Exam

CoD – *The Challenge of Democracy*

TS – *Taking Sides*

Important Dates

Monday, January 15

Dates TBA

Monday, February 19

March 3-11

April 5-8

Monday, May 7

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Great Decisions Lecture Series

Leadership Lecture Series: Charles Fishman, “The Wal-Mart Effect,” 7 P.M. Kenan Auditorium

<http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/activities/UNCW Presents/lectures.htm>

Spring Break

State Vacation (No Class Friday, April 6)

Final Examination, 8-11 A.M.