COURSE OUTLINE

POL 101 American Political System 3
Course Number Course Title Credits
3
Hours: lecture Co- or Pre-requisite: n/a

Catalog description (Catalog):

Introduction to the basic structures of the United States national government and the political processes with a view toward helping the student to understand better current issues and policies. Topics include the Constitution, national-state relations and powers, the legislative and judicial processes, elections, and the activities of interest groups.

Is course New, Revised, or Modified? Revised

Required texts/other materials:

See Division List
Newspapers/the Internet/MCCC Social Science databases (ie. JSTOR)

Revision date: 1/30/2013
Course coordinator: Guy DeRosa, ext. 3855; Derosag@mccc.edu

Information resources:

Print media
Internet sites
Guest speakers
Films
Library databases

Other learning resources: Tutoring available at Learning Center/ MCCC Library reference staff
Course Competencies/Goals:

The student will be able to:

- To challenge, criticize, and/or defend the norms, values, and ideals that form the foundation of American Democracy.
- To identify participants in political systems and analyze their role, influence, and power.
- To compare the respective sphere of responsibility and power of the levels of government in the American federal system.
- To specify and describe the various methods of political participation available in the American political system.
- To explain the structure, process, and interrelationship of the three branches of American government.
- To describe, and evaluate the major domestic and foreign policies of the American government.
- To analyze current political developments in terms of concepts used throughout the course.

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills. [ ]

General Education Knowledge Goals
Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.
Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.
Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills
Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.
Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.
Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
Goal E. Computer Literacy. Students will use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.
Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.
Units of study in detail.

Unit I: Development of U.S. Democracy and the Federal System

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...
- understand the history of the creation of the U.S. Constitution and its importance (Gen ed goals 1, 7; Core Skills A,B,D,F,G)
- explain the development and workings of American federalism (Gen ed goals 1,7; Core Skills A,B,D,F)
- understand the advantages and disadvantages of federalism (Gen Ed Goals 1,6,7; Core Skills A,B,D,F,G)

Unit II: Development of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...
- describe basic rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F,G)
- understand the relevance of case law to the development of U.S. rights and liberties (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F,G)
- understand the development of basic rights over the course of U.S. history (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F,G)

Unit III: American Political Process

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...
- understand the formulation measurement and content of public opinion (Gen Ed Goals 1,4,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F)
- explain the nature, diversity and power of interest groups (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F)
- analyze the strategies and tactics used by interest groups and political candidates (Gen Ed Goals 1,4,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F)
- analyze the voting behavior of the American electorate (Gen Ed Goals 1,4,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,E,F)

Unit IV: The Three Branches of U.S. Government

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...
- describe the structure of the branches of government (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8; Core Skills A,B,C,D)
- explain the concept of separation of powers in the American political system(Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8; Core Skills A,B,C,D)
- discuss the policy making process within the branches of government (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8; Core Skills A,B,C,D)
Evaluation of student learning:

There will be three in-class examinations. The examinations will consist of both essay and objective type questions. The students will also be graded on class participation and a term project. Proportional weight given to the component parts of each students’ grade is as follows:

- Three Examinations - to be announced - 75%
- Term Project - 20%
- Class Participation - 5%

(The last exam may be a comprehensive take home examination - at the instructor's option)

The Term Project requires students to apply the Public Policy-making Model thoroughly described in the Introduction section of the textbook (THINK American Government). This involves selecting and researching a law or policy and applying the steps associated with the model.

Academic Integrity Statement:

Mercer County Community College is committed to academic integrity – the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception.

Students should never:
- Knowingly represent the work of others as their own
- Knowingly represent previously completed academic work as current
- Fabricate data to support academic work
- Use or obtain unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work
- Give fraudulent assistance to other students
- Unethically use technological means to gain academic advantages

Violators of the above actions will be penalized. For a single violation the faculty member will determine the course of action. This may include, assigning a lower grade on the assignment, lowering the course grade, failing the student, or another penalty that is appropriate to the violation. The student will be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee, who may impose other penalties for a second (or later) violation. The student has right to a hearing and also to appeal any decisions. These rights are outlined in the student handbook.