

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

A distance learning course

Pol F111 (D)---CRN #2124, 3 credits,

June 29, 2016-August 5, 2016

Joseph Avitable, Instructor

COURSE OVERVIEW

I. Scope of course (catalogue description)

Scope of course: This course examines our society's politics and its patterns in the Constitution, congress, judiciary, and presidency. Topics of study include political ideologies, interest group pluralism, elite influence, citizen alienation, elections, institutional power, democracy's requirements, and others. Present-day issues will be analyzed from the framework of these concepts.

Learning objectives include becoming politically informed, engaging in political discussions, and analyzing the government's responsiveness to citizens' needs.

Course paperback text---The Irony of Democracy by L. Schubert, T. Dye, & H. Zeigler, 17th Edition

Course prerequisites: none, additionally, this course, has been deemed transferable to other colleges. It fulfills a general education and/or liberal arts requirement for several majors.

II. Welcome

As your instructor and facilitator of your learning, I welcome each of you to this course. I have constructed the course to be supportive and encouraging of your interest in the study of society's politics and its effects both nationally and globally. Whatever advice you may want to communicate to me at any time to enhance your success in the course will be taken into consideration.

This course has been constructed to foster discovery and learning about range of topics and issues. It requires individual effort from each of you. Please recognize and remember that there is an ongoing expectation that you are willing and able to be an independent learner within the unique circumstances of an on-line distance learning course. Let me assure you, however, that I will be regularly communicating with you as to how you should be self initiating for achievement in the course.

III. A. General Learning Objectives

This course is part of a foundation for an individual's liberal arts education which endeavors to nurture a person's intellectual growth and responsible citizenship for participation in a Democratic society. Critical thinking, open-minded discovery, creative generalizations, and shared learning are some of the traits of intellectual growth which will be encouraged in the learning exercises of our course. This on-line course potentially enables everyone to become part of a community of learners, but, to re-emphasize, you must be self-initiating and self-responsible in undertaking the study requirements of the course. More specifically, the learning activities of the course are designed to develop your skills in thinking and analyzing current, political events and issues. You will need to regularly read newspapers and devote a lot of

regular attention to television news as well as particular Internet sources towards becoming more aware and informed of American politics and government.

Some advice: You will soon realize that politics is extremely complicated and confusing. Some of the confusion and difficulties in the course occur because you are moving beyond just a general awareness of political events in the news to their systematic study. It's all right to be confused, and the course provides ideas and terms to help you sort things out. So jump right in the flow of information and knowledge, paddle a lot in keeping your head above water by conscientiously doing the assignments, and ask questions by email of me and by posing questions on the Discussion Board, as I am supposed to help you keep your head above water and actually achieve academic success.

III. B. Citizenship and Career Objectives

The ideas of this course are part of your skills development in becoming active in your community and in your career pursuits. The course provides information for you to understand politics for participation by being an advocate of your values and beliefs that hopefully will be a benefit to yourself and to your community. Learning about positive politics can also further your endeavors in your career field. Your work life will require you to understand its organizational dynamics, and the constructive political skills it calls for in one's career advancement. Many of the discussion topics of the course will stimulate your thinking about the positive role politics can have in one's worklife.

IV. A community of learners

Beyond your independent studying, we are also a community of learners. Even though we won't be together in the typical college classroom, it is my expectation that we will be engaging each other via threaded discussions on a web site Discussion Board and by e-mails about the topics of the course. I encourage each of you to be honest and candid about the issues of the course. I truly believe we have a lot to learn from each other. As a practical consideration, your discussion participation and comments in shared learning will be accorded a grade value for each required activity towards your overall grade. While we will be learning from each other, it is my expectation that we each should always endeavor to be considerate and respectful of each other's views---even as we analyze, discuss, and advocate positions on the issues confronting the country and its citizens. I encourage candor in your communications, but you should do so in a civil manner. Very likely there will be some "stressing" in this sort of course which involves differing views regarding politics; but everyone is expected to abide by the norms of tolerance for open expression of ideas. No one should be targeted for hurtful messages by someone due to his or her views. Please be mindful that this is a college level of learning and we must be responsible in our academic freedoms.

Your major (or possible major): Some in the course may be a Criminal Justice curriculum major or Human Services or other disciplines for which American government and its politics does and can have direct impacts. As you think about the course's concepts and issues, you might bring the concerns of your major to the required Discussion postings. For example, we explore judicial review in terms of political science's concepts about elites. We do not delve extensively into its historic, legal interpretations by the courts as that consideration can be explored in some the CJ courses. Thus Political Science perspective has its own discipline's perspective and it does not fall solely a History or another disciplines domain and mode of thinking.

Grading Policy/Assessment:

<i>Threaded Discussions</i> (12 @ 20 points each) These are public discussions	240
<i>Personal Media Journals</i> (11 @ 20 points each) These are private discussions between each student and me	220
<i>Quizzes</i> (6 @ 50 points each) These are timed multiple choice quizzes based on weekly readings	300
<i>Final Exam</i> This is a cumulative review of the course materials	240
<i>Total Grade</i>	1000

Letter grades for the course will be assigned based on your total points for the semester.

A	925-1000 total points
A-	895-924
B+	865-894
B	825-864
B-	795-824
C+	765-794
C	735-764
C-	695-724
D+	665-694
D	625-664
F	less than 625