Fall 2015

PSCI 050--Intro to American Govt

Mark C. Miller
Clark University, mmiller@clarku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.clarku.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation
http://commons.clarku.edu/syllabi/5

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabus Share by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact celwell@clarku.edu.
PolSci050, Intro to Amer Govt, Fall2015, UG
Clark University                                  Fall 2015
Political Science/LAS 050: Introduction to American Government  Professor: Mark C. Miller
Office: 308 Jefferson Academic Center  Office Phone: 508-793-7233
Office Hours:  MW 10-10:45am, Th 11:00am-noon
Other hours by appointment

mmiller@clarku.edu

Required Books:

  Referred to as “Text”.
  Referred to as “Reader”. (Make sure you have the 19th edition of this book).

Recommended Book:


All books are available at the university bookstore and are on closed reserve at Goddard Library.

In addition, students must read daily the New York Times. Current events quizzes will come from the Monday through Friday front sections of the hard copy version of this newspaper. Individual hard copy subscriptions can be purchased from the professor for $49.00 for the semester; digital subscriptions can be purchased directly from the New York Times. More details about the current events quizzes will be discussed in class.

Exams and Grading:

Current Events Quizzes  10%
2–3 page paper  10%
First in-class all-essay Midterm  15%
Second in-class all-essay Midterm  20%
10-15 page research paper  20%
Two Hour Final Examination  25%

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS: In order to get their money’s worth and have fun with this class, students should want to work hard and think hard. Thus I assume all students will always attend class and complete all reading and paper assignments on time. Since this course transfers as 4 semester hours, students should expect to spend at least 180 hours on this class over the course of the semester, including the time when the class actually meets. Students must contact the professor BEFORE the due date concerning any late papers or problems with exams. Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day. Hard copy papers must be turned in; no emailed papers will be accepted. No electronics in class without permission.

Class participation and attendance will weigh heavily in deciding borderline grades. Make-up exams or quizzes will be given only under extraordinary circumstances. Leave a voicemail or email if you can’t reach me in person concerning any problems with the class. I only respond to email during normal business hours. I often respond to voicemails more quickly than emails.
Reading and other Assignments:

What is Democracy? — August 24, 26, 28
   Text: Chpt 1
   Reader: Issue 1.1

The Constitution and the Federalist Papers— August 31, September 2, 4
   Text: Chpt 2, Federalist Paper 10 in appendix, Federalist Paper 51 in appendix
   Reader: Issue 3.3
   Reserve Reading: Connecticut Death Penalty Law is Unconstitutional, Court Rules

Ideology: Modern American Liberals and Conservatives — September 9, 11, 14
   Reader: Intro Portion and Issues 1.3, 4.4
   Reserve Reading: Inequality Troubles Americans Across Party Lines

Public Opinion and the Media — September 16, 18
   Text: Chpt 9
   Reserve Reading: Poll Finds Most in U.S. Hold Dim View of Race Relations
   Reserve Reading: The Supreme Court’s Gap on Race and Juries

Political Socialization Paper: 2–3 page paper due Monday Sept 21

Voting and Elections — September 21, 23, 25
   Reserve Reading: California Democratic Party v. Jones
   Text: Chpt 10
   Reader: Issues 3.6
   Sidlow: ALL
   Reserve Reading: Tea Partiers and Traditional Republicans are Split on Science
   Reserve Reading: Voting Case has Potential to Put House Further Out of Reach for Democrats
   Reserve Reading: Democrats Wage a National Fight Over Voter Rules

Political Parties and Interest Groups — September 28, 30
   Text: Chpts 11, 12
   Reader: Issues 1.2
   Reserve Reading: Is the Democratic Party Getting too Liberal?
   Reserve Reading: Many D.C. Think Tanks Now Players in Partisan Wars
   Reserve Reading: The Unlobbyists

First Midterm — Friday, October 2

Federalism — Oct 5, 7
   Text: Chpt 3
   Reader: Issue 3.7
   Reserve Reading: Washington State Faces $100,000 per day Fine until Schools Plan is Reached
   Reserve Reading: States Confront Wide Budget Gaps Even After Years of Recovery

Library Research Presentation on Term Paper and other Political Science Research – Friday Oct 9
   Bring your laptops to class for the presentation from the reference librarians.
Congress — Oct 14, 16, 19, 21, 23
Text: Chpts 5, 13
Reader: Issues 2.3, 3.4, 1.4, 4.1
Spitzer: ALL
Reserve Reading: Congressman Pushes Staff Hard, or Out the Door
Reserve Reading: GOP Turns to the Courts to Aid Agenda
Reserve Reading: House Republicans, Seizing on Health Law, Challenge Executive Branch

The Presidency — Oct 26, 28, 30
Text: Chpts 6, 14
Reader: Issues 2.1, 4.3
Reserve Reading: Obama’s Use of Executive Power Spurs Intense Lobbying
Reserve Reading: Restoring Balance Among the Branches in Government in Washington

Final Draft of 10-15 page research paper due — Friday Oct 30
See Williams book for assistance

The Permanent Federal Bureaucracy — Nov 2, 4
Text: Chpt 7
Reader: Issue 2.4
Reserve Reading: Supreme Court Rebukes Obama on Right of Appointment
Reserve Reading: Tragedy or Triumph

Second Midterm — Friday Nov 6 (tentative date)

The Judiciary — Nov 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20
Text: Chpt 8
Reader: Issues 2.2, 3.5, 4.2, 4.6
Lewis: ALL
Reserve Reading: Keep the Briefs Brief, Literary Justices Advise
Reserve Reading: Three Justices Bound By Beliefs, Not Just Gender
Reserve Reading: It’s All Right With Sam
Reserve Reading: Bipartisan Push Builds to Relax Sentencing Laws

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties — Nov 23, 30, Dec 2, 4, 7
Text: Chpt 4
Reader: Issues 3.1, 3.2, 4.7
Reserve Reading: Supreme Court Allows Use of Execution Drug
Reserve Reading: The Polarized Court
Reserve Reading: Exclusion of Blacks from Juries Raises Renewed Scrutiny
Reserve Reading: How to Cut the Prison Population
Reserve Reading: The Challenges the Remain after Marriage Equality

Final Examination — Monday December 14 from 10:30am to 12:30pm