

Political Science 110
American National Politics
Spring, 2002

Instructor: Geoff Peterson
Office: 200D SSS
Office Hours: 10-11 M/W/F & 11-12 T/Th and by appointment
Office Phone: 836-3641
E-mail Address: petersgd@uwec.edu
Web Page: <http://www.uwec.edu/petersgd/index.html>

Student Mentor: Duncan Cameron
E-mail Address: camerodr@uwec.edu

Course Description: The general focus of this course will be to examine the nature of American government in the context of the most recent Presidential elections. We will look at the basic institutions and processes of government, but we will endeavor to integrate material about the 2000 election whenever possible. The class will be a combination of lectures and in-class discussion, depending on the material. In general, the goal will be to lecture for one day and discuss the materials the next day. Students will be expected to participate in the discussions regularly and to come to class with the material read in advance.

Books:

Thomas E. Patterson, The American Democracy, 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 2001. **RENTAL**
Larry Sabato, Overtime! The Election 2000 Thriller. New York: Longman, 2002.
Michael Nelson (ed.) The Elections of 2000, Washington D.C.; CQ Press, 2001.

The Patterson text is available through the rental system. An optional study guide for the Patterson text is also available for purchase at the bookstore. All of the readings are listed in the semester outline at the end of the syllabus.

E-mail: Students need to get into the habit of checking e-mail on a regular basis. You will receive reminders about exam dates, extra credit notifications, and other information. You will also receive notices if the instructor chooses to post assignments on the web. You cannot receive e-mail from the instructor unless you are registered for the class, so please verify your registration status in the course.

WebCT: Portions of the course materials will be made available through the WebCT system. You must be registered for the course in order to get access to the WebCT materials. A specialist will walk the class through the basics of how to use WebCT on January 24. If you need more training, you can contact the BITS office @ 836-5157 or visit their office in OL 1102.

Course Requirements: There are three basic requirements for the course: three examinations, discussions (both in-class and on-line) and two short papers. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Examinations	60%
Discussion Topics	20%
Short Papers	20%

The examinations will consist of short identification and longer essay questions based on the readings and in-class lectures. The examinations are NOT comprehensive. The dates are listed on the semester outline. The instructor reserves the right to change the dates and content as needed for the course. Make-up examinations will be long essay exams given at the discretion of the instructor. Attendance is mandatory for the scheduled exams. Make-up exams will NOT be given unless you contact the instructor prior to the regularly scheduled time AND only if inability to take the exam on time is for good reason. Keep in mind that oversleeping, hangovers, and forgetfulness are NOT valid reasons. If a genuine emergency prevented prior contact, see, call or e-mail the instructor as soon as possible after the exam. Failure to take an exam will result in zero points on that exam.

The discussion topics include both in-class discussion and participation on the WebCT bulletin boards for the course. Participation will be judged primarily on the **quality** of your participation rather than the quantity. This does not mean you can get a good grade with a single insightful comment, but you will NOT be rewarded for verbal diarrhea.

You will be graded on participation in both areas, but you are given an option as far as grading is concerned. The 20% assigned to the discussion grade can be divided in three ways: 10% in-class/10% on-line, 5% in-class/15% on-line, 15% in-class/5% on-line. You must decide which distribution you want applied to your grade by the end of the first week in February.

The two short papers for the class will help you to examine and understand various aspects of the American political system. For the first paper, you will examine your own party affiliation and compare your preferred party to others in the system. You will look at the party platforms for three different political parties and see where you fit within the parties.

The second paper will be an examination of a major political issue. You will choose

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class, but no formal attendance will be taken. Be warned, however, that failure to attend will result in missed discussion and in-class assignments. In addition, a substantial portion of the exams will be based on material covered **ONLY** in lecture. Consistent failure to attend will lower your grade dramatically. You are responsible for ALL information covered in lecture, including changes in the reading assignments, changes in test dates, and in-class homework assignments. **Mentors have been clearly instructed that they are not to give copies of their notes to anyone without permission from the instructor.** If you miss class for a legitimate reason, talk to the instructor before talking to the mentors about notes.

Students With Disabilities: Any student who has a disability that will in any way impede his or her completion of the course needs to speak to the instructor as soon as possible about alternative arrangements. All possible arrangements will be made to accommodate students in need of assistance.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Do it and you run the risk of failing the course. This should seem obvious, but it must be made clear--if you are caught cheating, every remedy made available to the instructors on this campus will be pursued. Cheating is defined as attempting to improve your grade through any method considered unethical by the university, including copying another student's test, bringing crib sheets for exams, writing notes on your hands or on the brim of your baseball cap, etc.

Plagiarism is defined as claiming any other author's intellectual work as your own. This can include copying parts of another written work and not giving the original author credit for it; using summaries of work written by others and claiming it as your own, etc. Plagiarism is NOT limited to copying another author's work word-for-word. If you use the author's IDEAS without giving the author credit for them, you are just as guilty as if you had Xeroxed the statements and put yourself down as author.

Extra Credit: There will be occasional extra credit options made available to you. You will be informed by e-mail when they come up, so please check your e-mail on a regular basis.

WEEKLY READING AND DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Discussion Topic</u>
1/22	Introductions		
1/24	Web CT Introduction-Meet in SSS 210		
1/29-1/31	Political Culture	P 1	Is our culture conducive to democracy?
2/5-2/7	The Constitution	P 2	The Constitution: Outdated or model of longevity?
2/12-2/14	Federalism	P 3	Is sovereignty overrated?
2/19-2/21	Civil Liberties	P 4	The fine line between freedom and oppression
**** Exam One--Tentatively Scheduled For 2/26 ****			
2/28-3/5	Opinion & Socialization	P 6, S 1, N 1 & 4	Socialization or indoctrination?
3/7-3/12	Political Parties	P 9, S 2, N 2	Do parties matter any more?
3/14-3/21	The Media	P 11, S4&6, N 5	How powerful is the media?
4/2-4/4	Elections and Voting	P 7, S 5, N 3&4	Why bother voting?
**** Exam Two--Tentatively Scheduled For 4/9 ****			
4/11-4/16	Congress	P 12 & 13, N 8	Has Congress become irrelevant?
4/18-4/23	The Presidency	P 14 & 15, N 7	Is the president too powerful?
4/25	NO CLASS		
4/30-5/2	The Supreme Court	P 17	How much is just partisan politics?
5/7-5/9	Florida	S 7-10, N 9	What the heck happened? Who really won?

****** Final Exam—1 PM, Thursday, May 16******

Paper 1

Party Paper: You will write a 6-8 page paper (typed and double-spaced) addressing the question “Why I am a ***.” For the purposes of this paper, you can choose from the following parties: the Democratic party, the Republican party, the Green party, the Reform party, the Socialist party (and the various permutations within the socialist movements), the Communist Workers party, the New Party, and the American Taxpayers Party. For the bibliography, you may include the party platforms for at least three parties as part of your references. If you choose to use a minor party, you are required to compare it to either the Democratic or Republican platform. All of the party platforms are on the web using most common search engines. The party platforms and party websites are the **ONLY** sources you may use from the Internet. You may use newspapers, magazines, journal articles, and books as your source, although the textbook and encyclopedias are not acceptable sources.

In the body of your paper, you need to address at least five (5) differences between the three party platforms on issues that are important to you and explain why you support your party on those issues. You **MUST** discuss how **BOTH** parties stand on the issues and present the information in a **FAIR AND UNBIASED** manner. Among the issues you wish to consider are: defense spending, social security, the national economy, Medicare, welfare reform, gun ownership, abortion, education, taxation issues, farm subsidies, tobacco regulation, campaign finance reform, international trade, environmental issues, and foreign policy. If there are other issues you wish to use, feel free to include them—this list is provided only to give you a starting point. Your paper must include at least four (4) sources of information **NOT INCLUDING** the party platforms. When you use these sources, you **MUST** either directly quote the authors (and cite the quotation from the source) or re-write the idea in your own words. Plagiarism (stealing another author’s ideas or words without giving proper credit) will result in a **ZERO** for the paper and, possibly, failure in the course.

THE PAPER IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON

MARCH 19

LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!

Paper 2: Issues Paper

This paper will be an examination of a particular political issue of interest to you. The paper should look at how the major parties stand on the issue as well as considering how at least one minor party stands on the question. The paper should be 6-8 pages in length. You are required to use at least 5 outside sources as well as party platforms (where applicable) to research the issue. Possible issues of interest can include: Social Security reform, tax policy, campaign finance reform, legalization of marijuana, education reform, the US role in the United Nations, nuclear disarmament, environmental policy, gun control, abortion, economic policy, gay rights, energy policy, or the death penalty. You may choose to do another issue, but you **MUST** get approval from the instructor before proceeding.

For this paper, you must present the **FACTS** as well as the political spin the parties put on the issue. If you do not present an **UNBIASED** assessment of the issue at some point, your grade will suffer. You are welcome to include your opinions on the issue, but these opinions must be in addition to the factual information.

THE PAPER IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON

APRIL 25

LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!