What is political power, and how concentrated is it in the United States? How resistant to change is the United States Constitution, relative to other national constitutions? Why is the US still stuck with the Electoral College, which made George Bush our 43rd President, even though Al Gore got more votes from real people? If more people favor gun control than oppose it, why is the NRA so powerful? How globalization changed the American politics from Washington DC to Atlanta to Americus? What is it, online voting, intelligence design, “MoreOn.Org,” etc?

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to provide a comprehensive survey of the form and functions of the US government, as well as to provide an understanding of American political culture and how it has changed over time. The course will explore the unique nature of American government from its modest beginnings through today. While we study the traditional aspects of American government (checks-and-balances, separation of powers, the party system, etc.), we will also pay special attention to the role of immigration and ethnicity in American politics as well as the impact of mass media and globalization on politics in this country.

Participation in class discussions is a requisite of the class and students are invited to bring their own personal perspectives to bear on the topics we will tackle. While this is an introductory course, students will be expected to think critically, interpret texts and formulate their own ideas in verbal and written forms.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


- Daily reading of either the Washington Post or the New York Times online. Students will also be required to read a journal of major stories (*Times, Newsweek, Economist, or US News & World Report*), which will form part of the class participation grade. About 15% of exam questions will come from your daily readings.
EVALUATION:

Class Attendance and Participation (15%)
- Class attendance is mandatory. An unexcused absence will lead to the loss of half point in your class attendance and participation grade.
- Active participation in class discussions are a vital part of this course. Your questions and comments will never be judged by your political opinions.

First Exam (25%)
- The first examination may consist of geography map of the US, some sets of multi-choice, matching, short answers, etc.

Second Exam (30%)
- The second examination may consist of geography map of the US, several sets of multi-choice, matching, short answers, and one essay question.

Third Exam (30%)
- The third examination may consist of geography map of the world, several sets of multi-choice, matching, short answers, and one essay question.

Optional Research (up to 10% BONUS)
- Option 1 (5%) During the course of the semester, students may write one short (3-pp., single-spaced) paper with the theme of “The Impact of Globalization on US Politics: Case Study of Pennsylvania (or any part of Pennsylvania).” Although paper must be submitted before the end of the Thanksgiving Break, early submission is encouraged. Please see attached paper requirements and possible topics.
- Option 2 (5%) During the course of the semester, students can publish any form of writing in any local or national newspaper. For example, students are encouraged to write a brief (100-150 word) “letter to the editor” that states your views on some political issue. This letter may comment on an article, which you have read in that paper. Email this “letter to the editor” to the instructor after your submission. Only the published writing can be eligible for 5% bonus. Unpublished writings will not contribute any point to your final grade.

All exams will be administered in class. Students will be able to make up exams only if they provide the documentation of illness, accident, etc, and notify instructor not later than 24 hours after the exam. If a make-up exam is necessary, its time and place will be declared by the instructor.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with Bloomsburg University’s policies on academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated.

Class attendance is mandatory. Unexcused lateness and early retreat are not accepted. Remember to turn off cell phones and any other “noisy” electronic devices during class.
Paper Requirements (Optional Research)

For those students who want to develop research capabilities and choose the optional research, you must write one 3-pp. short papers focusing on the topics like foreign trade, immigration, information and communication technology, cultural exchange, environmental protection, organized violence or global terrorism, etc.

All papers must be typed and printed out for submission. All text must be single-spaced. The recommended font size is 12 point regular. The recommended font is Times New Roman in all cases.

Sample #1: Impact of Immigration and Ethnicity on US Politics: Case Study of Bloomsburg.
In the first page, students may provide a brief history of the four waves of immigration to the US carefully identifying the sending countries which defined each era; students should also discuss the political culture of these immigrants when they arrived and as they became established in American society. In the other 2 pages, students may extend the above discussions to your case study of Bloomsburg or any part of Pennsylvania by explaining how immigration changes the local politics historically or currently. Students should use figures and facts to make some strong arguments in their case study.

Sample #2: Impact of the Media on US Politics: The Case Study of Pennsylvania.
The purpose of this paper is to address the positive and negative impacts of mass media (newspapers, radio, television, the Internet, etc) on Americans’ participation in politics. The paper may provide a brief historical evolution of the primary media platforms and how each has shaped political culture in the US. The main focus of the paper may, however, focus on the current relationship between politicians, news media, and the consumer (i.e., citizens) and how democracy is being affected by this new relationship. Students may extend the above 1-page discussions to your case study of Pennsylvania or any part of Pennsylvania by explaining how the evolution of media (information and communication technology) changes the local politics historically or currently. Students should use figures and facts to make some strong arguments in their case study.

Paper (5%) will be graded according to the following metrics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Creativity</th>
<th>Use of English</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your ideas, your arguments and your text must be your own. Everything which is not your own must be noted.

In writing for political science courses, cheating is most likely to take the form of plagiarism. Plagiarism is when writers use other people's words or ideas and do not give them credit. Use footnotes or endnotes to give credit for direct quotes, paraphrased quotes, or borrowed ideas. I will explain how to use footnotes and endnotes in class, in section, and in handouts.

If you don't know what footnotes or endnotes are...Ask!

Do not copy other people's old papers. Do not copy or buy papers or sections of papers from the web or other sources.