Political Science 150 - American Government and Politics

Spring 2014 Short Term

Dr. William J. Mark

Required Text:


If you purchase your textbook from the bookstore it contains the Korey textbook in the back of the book. If you purchase on line you will have to get both the Bardes textbook and the Korey textbook separately. Any recent edition of either textbook will be OK but you may have to look around a page or two to find the material I reference in the notes.

Course Description:

This course is a survey of the institutions, process, and problems of the American National Government and the California State Government. Emphasis is on the development and principles of the American Constitution, the mechanics of democratic politics and policy-making, and the nation's and the state's contemporary challenges.

Examinations:

There will be a total of 4 exams. Every exam counts since I do not drop any grades. If you look at the schedule you will see when the exams are scheduled. All the exams except the final exam will be part multiple choice (80 points) and part essay (20 points) Questions will come from the on-line lecture material and the textbooks practice quizzes. Each of the exams is worth 100 points. A 50 point typed response to one of 6 questions will be submitted to me at the end of the semester. This is discussed below.

You will be taking all your exams in the TLC. You must make an appointment to take the exams. Be prepared to show a picture ID. And, once you begin an exam you are not permitted to leave. Please don't wait until the last day as “stuff” happens. There is a process to be able to take the exams at some location other than the TLC. You must secure an approved proctor who agrees to monitor you while you take the exams. This process must be arranged thru Kim Haglund in the TLC. She can be reached at 1 661-362-3349. Be aware that this process takes about two weeks to arrange.

Course Instructions and Strategy. There is an document with this title that explains in detail how the course works and how, where, and when to take the exams. Be sure to read this document very carefully.

Paper Requirements

I will notify you when the topics for the paper can be accessed. You may choose from the list of 6 essays to write your essay. Three of these choice will be the questions you responded to on the three exams. The other three are based on the discussion board questions. See the page entitled
Instructions for Paper for complete details on this. These are to be a minimum of 1000 words. But, remember, since you are doing this outside of class you should try to produce something that impresses me. At any time you have questions please e-mail me. I do not read drafts of your papers, so what you submit on the day of the final (or before if you have it done) is what I grade.

Discussion Board

Every week there will be a discussion question posted. You will be required to respond to each of the discussions in a meaningful way. This will be purely subjective on my part to determine what is "meaningful". Each discussion board question that you respond to is worth 5 points and the last one will be worth 15 points. There are no partial points. If I think your response was meaningful you get the total points. The discussion board questions are only open for a certain amount of time and once they close that is it. If you miss a question there are no make-ups so watch for the announcements that a question has been posted.

Grading. I grade strictly by the points. I don’t adjust if you are even one point away from the next grade up because that leads to all kinds of problems because someone who was two points away wants considerations since the person who was one point away received some and the whole thing gets totally out of control. So, I repeat, I do not adjust grades – you get what you earned.

Course Points and Grading Scale

The following outlines the possible points:

| First exam       | 100 points |
| Second exam      | 100 points |
| Third exam       | 100 points |
| Final exam       | 100 points |
| Paper            | 50 points  |
| Discussions      | 50 points  |

Total 500 points

100 points Grading Scale:

100 - 90 = A
89 - 80 = B
79 - 70 = C
69 - 60 = D
59 and below = F
Course Grading Scale:

500 - 450 = A
449 - 400 = B
399 - 350 = C
349 - 300 = D
299 and Below = F