ADPO1041.01  Fundamental Concepts of American Politics

Credits: 4
Fall, 2017

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Office: St. Mary’s Hall South, Ground Floor
Office Hours: Prior to & after class
Telephone: 781 239-1065 (please, not after 9:30 p.m.)
Schedule: Wednesdays, 6:15 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.
Room:

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description
Fundamental concepts of understanding political life are introduced by studying American government and politics. The focus is on constitutional arrangements, political ideas, political institutions and processes, and public policies.

Course Objectives
1. The student will have an understanding of the workings of the U. S. governmental and political systems.
2. The student will be able to discuss the above in a coherent, knowledgeable manner.
3. The student will be able to apply material from the course to contemporary events.
4. The student will demonstrate knowledge, skill and competency as appropriate to an introductory course on American politics.
5. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge as appropriate to the field of American politics and government.
Grading: (see CANVAS modules for breakdown):

Class Attendance and Participation (appropriate participation!): 10 points
Midterm Exam: 40 points
Final Exam: 50 points

WCAS Grading System
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Text(s)/Readings (Required)
Klein, Joe. Politics Lost
Natoli, Marie D. Understanding American Government, 7th ed. (cited as “Text)
Natoli, Marie D. American Prince, American Pauper: The Contemporary Vice Presidency and Presidential Relations, 2d. ed. (cited as “Natoli”)
Riordan, Edward, ed. Plunkitt of Tammany Hall

Recommended Reading:
DeTocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America

Course Assignments (readings, exercises and/or experiences)

This semester, this course will run in a hybrid format. This means that approximately half of the course will be in-class (face-to-face) meetings and the other half will be online. Both parts are equally important, but the format gives us the opportunity to do different things, as you will see.

We will meet face-to-face for the several weeks of the course. There are many reasons for this: to allow registration to “settle down,” to allow you to get the flow of
Regardless of whether a session is in-class or online, the expectation is that all assignments will be completed as scheduled. With the online sessions, submission of materials are during a definitive time frame and it won’t be possible to go into that module after the stated deadline. This means that the points allotted for that module will be forfeited.

Students are expected to complete the ALL out of class course assignments, whether for in-class or online sessions. See CANVAS for submission dates.

NOTE: The closing of the online module/topic is when you should begin your work for the next class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Exercises/Experiences</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>WEEK 1: TOPIC I (in-class)</td>
<td>Introduction to Course, U.S. Values, Political Culture</td>
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<td>and other assignments on CANVAS</td>
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<td>Key terminology</td>
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<td>Economic vs. Political Systems</td>
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<td>The Constitution and Constitutionalism</td>
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<td>9/6</td>
<td>WEEK 2: TOPIC II (in-class)</td>
<td>Text. Chs. 1, 2</td>
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<td>Separation of Powers</td>
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<td>Federalism</td>
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<td>9/20</td>
<td>WEEK 4: TOPIC IV (online)</td>
<td>Political Parties, Media and Campaigns</td>
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<td>Text, Ch. 5 (pp. 155-175) Riordan, in its entirety</td>
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<td>and other assignments on CANVAS</td>
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<td>9/27</td>
<td>WEEK 5: TOPIC V (in-class)</td>
<td>Complete Klein, Politics Lost</td>
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<td>Political Parties, etc. (cont.); Discussion of Klein</td>
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10/4    WEEK 6 MIDTERM EXAM (in-class) -- first half of class

DUE:

TOPIC VI, Congress, Part 1 – second half of class Text, Ch. 8 10/4

10/11   WEEK 7    TOPIC VI, part 2 (online)
          Congress, Part 2

Text, Chs. 13, 14 10/11
and other assignments on CANVAS

10/18   WEEK 8    TOPIC VII, part 1 (in-class)
          The Presidency, Vice Presidency, and the Executive Branch

Text, Chs. 9, 10 10/18
and other assignments on CANVAS
Begin Natoli

10/25   WEEK 9    TOPIC VII, part 2 (online)
          The Presidency, Vice Presidency, and the Executive Branch

Text, Chs. 15, 16 10/25
and other assignments on CANVAS
Complete Natoli

11/1     WEEK 10: TOPIC VIII, Part 1 (in-class)
          External Influences:
          Interest Groups, Resources, the Powerful and the Powerless

Text, Ch. 5 11/1
and other assignments on CANVAS

11/8     WEEK 11: TOPIC VIII, Part 2 (online)

See CANVAS 11/8

External Influencers: Corporations

11/15    WEEK 12: TOPIC IX (in-class)
          The Courts
          Judicial Review
          Rights and Liberties

Text, Chs. 11, 12 11/15
and other assignments on CANVAS

11/22    WEEK 13: Thanksgiving Holiday – no classes

11/29    WEEK 14: TOPIC X, Part 1 (online)

See CANVAS 11/29

The Individual and Society: Civil Disobedience
Elements of “Civil Disobedience”

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Excerpts from Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”

“Final Paper” is due online. Details to be announced.

GRADE COMPOSITION:

Online components: 60 points (a total of 10 for each of the modules)
Class participation and Attendance: 10 points
Midterm Exam: 20 points
Final Paper: 10 points

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1) NO laptops, cell phones, taping devices, etc. will be permitted in class. If you use any of these you will forfeit 5 points of your total grade for each offense.
2) Class attendance is imperative if you are to be able to follow the materials. Everything builds on what came before it.
3) Although we all occasionally get delayed, the expectation is that class will begin promptly at 6:15 p.m.
4) There will be absolutely, positively NO make-ups for any of the work and NO INCOMPLETES for the course.
5) All of the work you do for the course must be your own; plagiarism is a serious offence and will result in a failing grade for the entire course.
6) Deadlines: Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly. NO late exams will be permitted; NO grades of “Incomplete” will be assigned.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Important Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s
obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.