

Political Science 110  
American Political System  
Spring 2013

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**Office Hours: M, W and F 10:00 to 11:00 and by appointment**

## **Course Objectives**

This course is an introduction to the institutions, processes and policies of the American political system. This introduction has the following objectives:

1. To understand the nature of democracy in American and to examine the achievements of the political system in comparison to the ideals of democracy.
2. To develop the students' basic understanding of the fundamental characteristics of American political institutions and processes.
3. To develop an understanding of the conditions of power, particularly economic power, in America.
4. To understand how the conditions of power shape both the priorities of American government and American public policy.
5. To foster students' attention to and participation in public affairs and political events as a necessary requirement of a healthy democracy.

## **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Absences due to participation in legitimate Moravian College extracurricular activities, a doctor's excuse or notification by the Dean of Students Office will allow a student to be excused from class. All other excuses are subject to the instructor's discretion.

## **Academic Honesty**

All students should be aware of their obligations under the Academic Honesty Policy published in the *Moravian College Student Handbook 2011-2012*. A copy of that document can be found at <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic/academic2.html>.

## **Learning Disability accommodations**

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

## **Books**

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*, (Simon and Schuster, 2010)

## **Book Review - Due date 2/22/13**

Upon completing Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson's Winner-Take-All Politics, students will write a book review of the text. This review should address the following questions:

- What is the principal thesis of the book?
- What arguments and evidence are presented to support the thesis?
- What are the strengths of the analysis?
- What are the weaknesses?

In answering these questions, students are expected to make clear and concrete, evidence based observations. This requires more than simply agreeing or disagreeing with the authors. Students need to explain why they agree or disagree and support those assertions with logical argument and empirical observations.

## **Final exam**

The final exam will consist of two essays completed during the exam period assigned by the registrar. Students will be provided with four possible essays in advance of the exam. On the day of the exam, the instructor will select two of the four for students to answer.

## **Research paper - Due date 4/19/13**

Students will write a 10 to 12 page research paper on a topic relevant to the course. The specific paper topic will be selected by the student after consultation with the instructor. The topics that can be selected include anything that corresponds to the topics listed in the course readings section of the syllabus. Students must submit a proposed topic statement by January 28. The statement should be at least one full paragraph in length, indicate the topic to be researched, and include as much detail as possible as to what the student plans to do with the topic.

Note that the research papers are to expository and not persuasive essays. The purpose of the paper will be to identify and explain the essential elements of the issue being researched. The paper will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Clarity of organization and exposition
- Use of evidence to support the principal thesis
- The quality of resources used
- Grammar and language used
- Proper citation

## **Instructor Evaluation**

The instructor will evaluate each student for his or her participation, involvement in and contributions to the course. This portion of the grade will reflect all activities in the course that

William E. Hudson, American Democracy in Peril, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2012)

Edward Greenberg and Benjamin Page, America's Democratic Republic, 4th Edition, (Pearson, 2011)

## EVALUATION OF THE STUDENTS' WORK

The student's final grade will be based on a 300 point system:

Take home essay 1	30 points
Book review	50 points
Take home essay 2	60 points
Final exam	40 points
Research Paper	100 points
Instructor evaluation	20 points

### Take home essays

Students will complete two take home essays. Essays are to be typewritten and will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Does the essay directly respond to the prompt?
- Is the essay clearly and logically organized?
- Are there clear arguments and effective use of evidence to support observations?
- Is there clear and effective use of concepts developed in the course?
- Does the essay incorporate course readings?
- Are course materials and any outside sources used in the essay appropriately cited?

### *Essay 1 - Due date: 2/1/13*

From 1/16 to 1/28, the course will focus on the ideas associated with different theories of democracy and those embodied in the U.S. Constitution. This essay requires students to integrate these materials by making an argument that the Constitution embodies democracy and an argument that the Constitution is undemocratic. To do this, students will need to use elements of the four models of democracy as presented by Hudson and discussed in class. Using elements of these models, students will explain how the Constitution can be characterized as either democratic or undemocratic.

### *Essay 2 - Due date 3/1/13*

From 1/30 to 2/22, the course focuses on the questions of economic power and the presence of inequality in the economy, society and political system. Students will write an essay describing how such inequalities are manifest in both the experience of social class in America and the exercise of political power in public policy. This essay should be at least five typewritten pages and use proper citation.

are not otherwise specified in the syllabus including attendance, participation in class discussions and activities, and other evidence of engagement in class including out of class communications.

## Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Readings are to be completed by the date listed for the class with which they are listed. Additional readings might be distributed in class. Periodically, study questions will also be distributed in class.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
1/14	Introduction	
1/16 – 1/18	Democratic Theory	Hudson, "Introduction" and pp. 121-125
1/23 – 1/25	The U.S. Constitution	Greenberg and Page, pp. A-23 to A-35 and Ch. 2; Hudson, Ch. 1
1/28	Federalism	Greenberg and Page, Ch.3
1/30	American political economy Introduction	Charles Lindblom, "The Market as Prison," <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2130588.pdf">http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2130588.pdf</a>
2/1 – 2/4	Class and inequality	Hudson, Ch. 7; Hacker and Pierson, pp. 1-40
2/6 – 2/8	The Functions of the State: Capital Accumulation	Hudson, Ch. 6 and 15; Hacker and Pierson, pp. 41-91.
2/11 – 2/13	Political Power and the Economy	Hacker and Pierson, pp. 95-309
2/18	The Functions of the State: Legitimation and social welfare	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 16
2/20	The Functions of the State Legitimation and foreign policy	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 17
2/22	TBD	
2/25	Interest groups: functions, costs and methods	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 8;
2/27	Incentives and interest group success	
3/1	Party functions and the two party system	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 9

3/11	Elections and Participation	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 10
3/13	Organization and history	
3/15	The "new Politics"	Hudson, Ch. 5
3/18	Media	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 7
3/20	Presidential power	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 12
3/22	The public presidency	
3/25	President as Chief Executive	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 13
3/27	Institutionalized presidency	
4/3	President and foreign policy	
4/5	President and foreign policy	Hudson Ch. 8
4/8	Congressional functions and organization	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 11
4/12	Congressional representation	
4/15	Committees in Congress	
4/17	Parties in Congress	
4/19	The congressional process	
4/22-4/24	Judicial power	Greenberg and Page, Ch. 14
4/26	Closing	