

PO 101 Honors: American Politics

Summer 2- 2014
On-line

Dr. Elizabeth Stiles
email: estiles@jcu.edu

Time/place: Canvas asynchronous but using
The calendar and time operational in the greatest city in the world, Cleveland OH

phone: 397-4671 -I check this rarely

No office hours but email me anytime! I will check messages during the class at least once a day during the week (often times more often but you need to give me 24 hours to respond).

Class Goals and Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should possess:

1. a broad knowledge of attributes and institutions of American Politics that are necessary to full, informed participation as an American citizen; and
2. Demonstrate academic and intellectual skills: critical analysis; academic writing; and oral communication.
3. Be engaged in and aware of local, national and global politics.

Required Readings:

*Canon, Coleman and Mayer, The Enduring Debate. 6th edition (yes you need the 6th edition). W.W. Norton and Company, New York.

*Read the news! (see www.nytimes.com, www.USAToday.com, www.Washingtonpost.com, www.cleveland.com for local)

Recommended Reading:

I have placed a couple basic American politics books on reserve in the library. The required textbook is primary readings. If you have no or very little knowledge of American politics, you might want to go read through the relevant chapters of these books.

Grading:	1 midterm	20 %
	1 final cumulative exam	20
	1 5-6 pp. paper	20
	Leading class discussion board on paper topic	20
	Discussant on discussion board	10
	Class participation	10

Grading Scale:

93-100	A	77-79	C+
90-92	A-	73-77	C
87-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-86	B	60-69	D
80-82	B-	Below 60	F

Grading Policies:

Lectures

The professor will post some shorter video lectures designed to help students understand the fundamentals of American politics (class goal 1), to highlight certain critical debates within American government (goal 2) and be able to apply the concepts to current classic and contemporary examples from local and national politics (goal 3). Students should watch them as the material will certainly show up on the midterms, the final and will also help students successfully write their papers and participate in the online discussion.

Missing Exams

The exams are designed to assess students on class goals 1-3. The professor will post essay prompts which pull together the themes of the class. Successful exams will demonstrate knowledge of and ability to analyze course readings and to interpret key political events using those readings. Students will complete 2-3 page essays in open note, open book format and email them to the Professor by the designated time. Failure to take an exam when circumstances are not extraordinary will result in a grade of zero for the exam. No make-up exams will be given for students who miss the exam for no reason or for reasons that are less than extraordinary.

Paper and Presentation Guidelines

Students will write a 5-6 pp. paper (12 point font, Times New Roman font, double spaced) on the readings that they have signed up for. On the week they have signed up as presenters, they will present their topic to the class on Canvas discussion board and lead a class discussion. If there is more than one presenter on a given topic, the presenters can work together or they don't have to. However, they should at minimum coordinate their presentations so as not to overlap. If you overlap, both presenters will be penalized.

The Paper

The paper should not be a summary of the reading. Rather, the student should find a common theme or important question in the Canon readings as a basis for the paper. Since finding a common theme is perhaps the hardest part about writing a paper, students are **STRONGLY** encouraged to discuss this with the professor in advance. If you don't do that and the professor finds your theme or question inadequate, then you will get a bad grade on the paper and, by extension, on the discussion.

The best way generally to write a paper, after identifying the theme or important question, is to discuss the way that the authors address the theme or question. If your question has to do with the proper relationship in a federalist society between the nation and the states, for example, tell us how authors x, y and z answer the question or help us to consider the question. You should also critically assess the authors' answers or approaches and make a gesture at least towards answering the question yourself. Answering the question yourself could be simply agreeing with one of the authors but you could also stake out your own position on the issue. If you end up agreeing with one of the authors, I need to see some independent reasoning of some sort in the writing process. In other words, merely summarizing author x and agreeing with him/her for the same reasons he/she gives is not that impressive. So if you do that, show some other independent thought (for example, additional reasons you agree, other lines of logic that could get you to author x's conclusion, evidence that you see the weak points in author

x's argument even though you overall agree). Also, are there issues in the news today that relate to the theme that you are discussing? Does this theme relate to discussions in previous weeks? Bring that to the class' attention.

The Presentation

Presentations should be based off the papers and designed to stimulate class discussion. To stimulate class discussion, the presenters should come up with 2-3 questions about the main points of the readings that the class can discuss (also the questions in the back of the debates should be used). Presenters will be evaluated on the quality of their questions, their ability to engage the class in discussion, their ability to tie the readings together around common themes. Students are encouraged to relate their themes to previous course discussions and/or relevant current events. Students are not expected to cover every detail or every theme of every reading. Find some main points that interest you in the readings and then base your presentations off of that. Students are once again encouraged to discuss their questions with the instructor in advance of class. The presenter should post his or her paper to Canvas to help stimulate class discussion. He or she may also post relevant political topics and ask for class discussion on them within the context of the class topics.

Discussant

In addition to presenting, you will also act as discussant one time during the semester (when you're not writing your paper). To act as discussant, you should read the paper that the presenter sends you and prepare 2-3 comments designed to help the presenter improve his/her paper, either by clarifying their thinking (e.g. you seem to contradict yourself in your paper. In paragraph one you say people are capable of recognizing and pursuing their own interests but in paragraph 3, you imply that they are not. Is that true or am I missing something?) and/or their writing (e.g. the way that you structure your paper here makes it confusing to the reader. I suggest that you reorganize it along the following lines. Another e.g. you say that Congress is a broken branch. Can you provide evidence to support that statement?). You will receive a grade here based on the quality of your comments and the effort you make to help the reader improve his/her paper. **Discussant comments should be sent to the presenter and cc:ed to professor by Friday 5 pm.**

Participation

Students must attend class regularly, almost always in fact, to get a passing participation grade. But furthermore, students are expected to participate in class discussions, especially in student presentations. A large portion of this class is built around the student discussions and for that to succeed, students must participate. If students want a top grade for participation, they must not only participate, they must offer comments about the readings that show that they have read and thought about them.

Grading rubric for leading discussion board:

A Questions are quite thoughtful, including making connections to previous class discussions, readings, adopted social movements and/or current events.

Moderation/facilitation skills above average such that class is engaged and challenged and connections are made to course general themes and previous discussions, preparation exceptional. Moderator synthesizes individual posts with respect to the general class themes. Excellent writing skills.

B Questions are thoughtful, moderation/facilitation skills are adequate, well-prepared. Excellent writing skills.

C Questions are relevant but not designed to incite discussion or thought on the part of the class. Moderation/facilitation skills are weak. Preparation is adequate. Good writing skills.

D Questions are ill-thought out or generic. Little facilitation or moderation skills. Preparation is minimal.

F Doesn't lead the discussion or hasn't prepared any questions or is not adequately prepared. Not knowledgeable on the topic. May be poorly written.

Grading rubric for participation on discussion board (not leading):

A Student posts thoughtful and insightful comments in a timely fashion (within 24 hours) and follows up on any return comments by students. References made as applicable to previous class discussions. Student refers to other comments made previously and when posting again, brings in discussion from other students made between original and follow up posts. Student comments on every discussion and every group project at least once. Student makes at least 2 strong comments on each discussion.

B Student posts interesting posts within 24 hours that are timely and show solid understanding of the readings, referencing and responding to other student comments and follows up on any return comments by students. References made as appropriate to previous class discussions. Student comments on every discussion and every group project at least once. At least 1-2 reasonably strong comments per discussion board.

C Student makes interesting posts within 48 hours and display adequate understanding of reading assignments and other students' posts. Follow up on other student posts generally consistent. At least 1 comments during the class on each discussion topic).

D Student makes posts within 48 hours that do not demonstrate that s/he is doing the reading and/or responding to other posts. At least 10 comments during the entire class but not on every discussion board.

F The following are examples of reasons that merit a failing grade for participation. Student does not post or makes posts that do not demonstrate that s/he is doing the reading and/or responding to other posts. Posts not made within 48 hours. Fewer than 10 posts during the entire class.

Weekly Tasks

Based on the previous sections, this is how you should go about your week.

*Saturday-Wednesday: Do the weekly readings and watch lecture videos. Its summer school and only 5 weeks long so there will be more readings each week. It's key to do the readings in order to meet the course goals and in order to be successful in the course.

*Saturday-Wednesday: Is it your turn to write a paper and lead a discussion? If so, while you're doing the readings, think of a theme on which you can write your paper. Discuss it with Dr.Stiles via email. Write a draft of the paper.

*Wednesday: Is it your turn to write a paper and lead a discussion? If so, **today is the deadline!** Post your paper draft and a discussion question by 5 pm Wed. You can take your biggest insight from your paper and use it to start a discussion if you want. Or post something different related to themes in the reading that you think will spark discussion.

*Thursday: Everyone check Canvas for the papers and prompts posted by the discussion leaders. Make a thoughtful, well-informed comment for each discussion going that week.

*Thursday: Is it your turn to write a paper and lead a discussion? If so, follow up at least twice a day Thurs and Fri and once Saturday to see and respond to new comments and if necessary generate a new discussion.

*Friday: Check discussion boards and make more comments (presenters check twice, everyone else check once). Is it your turn to be discussant? If so, email your helpful comments to the presenter by noon Friday. Comments should focus on helping the presenter improve his or her paper.

*Is it midterm week? If so, midterms due Wednesday at 5.

*Is it finals week? Instructions to follow.

*Saturday: Check boards one more time and start the new reading. The presenter for the previous week should email the professor the final draft of his or her paper by 5 pm (note: so based on the discussion and on discussant help, the person writing the paper can revise and improve his or her paper before submitting the final draft. It is not required to change the paper but it usually makes the paper stronger to revise after discussion and discussant assistance).

College Wide Policies:

Policy on Documentation and Accommodation of Disabilities:

In accordance with federal law, if you have a documented disability (learning, psychological, sensory, physical, or medical) you may be eligible to request accommodations from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). To make a request for accommodations, please contact SSD Director Allison West at (216) 397-4967 or visit the SSD office, located in Room 7A, on the garden (lower) level of the Administration Building. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive so it is best to register with SSD at the beginning of each semester. Only those accommodations approved by SSD will be recognized by your instructors. Please contact SSD if you have further questions.

Policy on Academic Honesty:

For the full JCU policy on academic honesty, please see the 2013-2015 Undergraduate Bulletin, pp. 110-112. Academic honesty, expected of every student, is essential to the process of education and to upholding high ethical standards. Cheating, including plagiarism, inappropriate use of technology, or any other kind of unethical behavior, may subject the student to severe academic penalties, including dismissal.

All work submitted for evaluation in a course, including tests, term papers, and computer programs, must represent only the work of the student unless indicated otherwise. Material taken from the work of others must be acknowledged. Materials submitted to fulfill requirements in one course may not be submitted in another course without prior approval of the instructor(s).

Concerns about the propriety of obtaining outside assistance and acknowledging sources should be addressed to the instructor of the course before the work commences and as necessary as the work proceeds.

Policy on Mutual Respect:

John Carroll University is committed to fostering ethical and moral values that are consistent with Jesuit and Catholic traditions. Among the central values of the University are the inherent dignities of every individual as well as the right of each person to hold and to express his or her viewpoint. When these views conflict it is the obligation of members of the community to respect other perspectives.

The University welcomes students, faculty, staff, and visitors from diverse backgrounds and it works to ensure that they will find the University environment free of discriminatory conduct. It is unacceptable and a violation of University policy to harass, abuse, or discriminate against any person because of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

Stop Bias:

As a member of the JCU community, you have an obligation to take an active role in fostering an appreciation for diversity and inclusion and sending the message that bias-related acts will not be tolerated.

Please report incidents of bias, whether intentional or unintentional, against any person on the basis of an actual or perceived aspect of their identity, including actions that occur in classrooms, to the Bias Response Team.

The Bias Incident Reporting Form is accessible at <http://sites.jcu.edu/bias/>.
 Questions about bias can be directed to Terry Mills, Assistant Provost for Diversity and Chief Diversity Officer (tmills@jcu.edu); Danielle Carter, Director, Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion, 216.397.1505.

Schedules of Readings, Assignments and Exams

Note: This schedule is approximate and subject to change.

Date: Week of	Subject	Assignment	Presenters and tentative dates
Week 1	Political Culture, Founding/Constitution and Federalism	Canon chs. 1-3	
Week 2	Civil liberties and rights, Congress, Presidency	Canon chs. 4-6	
Week 3	Bureaucracy, Federal Judiciary	Canon chs. 7 & 8	Midterm due Wed 5 pm
Week 4	Public Opinion, Elections and Voting, Political Parties	Canon chs. 9-11	
Week 5	Groups and Interests, Public Policy	Canon chs. 12&13	Final due TBA