

# American National Government

790:201:03

Tuesdays and Thursdays

11:30-12:50pm

Smith 246

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**Instructor:** D. Morrison-Santana

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1:00-2:00pm (Hill 720) or appointments available upon request

**Course Description:** This survey course will introduce students to how the American government functions, its different bodies and their purposes, and current issues. By breaking down each department, students will gain an understanding of the inner-workings of the White House, Congress, the Courts and other departments in the U.S. government. It will also explore the role of public opinion, the media, and international image. The aim of this course is to get students to critically think about how government functions and what issues it currently faces.

**Readings:** \*\*\* All available on Blackboard \*\*\*

Please make sure you have access to the course on Blackboard as soon as possible so that you are able to get the materials needed to successfully complete the course.

## **In-Class Projects:**

There are two in-class projects that require group work and a presentation. Rubrics for the presentations and groups will be assigned the second week of class.

## **Newspaper Article Essay:**

See page 3 of this syllabus for full rubric.

## **Pop Quizzes:**

There will be 4 pop quizzes randomly during the semester. The quizzes will be on the readings due that day to make sure that students are doing the required readings as they are designed to supplement class lectures. They will be given at the beginning of class. The lowest quiz score will be dropped. **Students cannot make up a missed pop quiz for any reason.**

## **Grading:**

Attendance/Participation – 20% (200 points)

In-Class Project - 10% (50 points each – 100 points total)

Newspaper Article Essay - 10% (100 points)

Pop Quizzes – 15% (50 points each – 150 points total)

Tests – 20% (100 points each – 200 points total)

Final Exam – 25% (250 points)

----- 100% - 1000 points total

A = 930 – 1000

B+ = 890 – 929

B = 850-889

C+ = 800 – 849

C = 750 – 799

D = 700 – 749

F = 699 - below

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

- 1. Attendance** is mandatory for this course and will be taken each class. Missing classes without proper documentation (i.e. a doctor's note) will affect your participation grade. Any student who misses **eight** or more sessions through any combination of **excused** and **unexcused** absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a fellow student on what you missed (do not email me asking what you missed). Excessive lateness will also affect your grade.
- 2. No personal technology devices allowed in class.** This means no cell phones, iPads, laptops, or any other kinds of electronic devices (unless needed for medical reasons, with the proper documentation). If you are caught using your phone or another device, you will lose participation credit for the day. Continuous use of these technologies will result in being asked to leave the classroom and lose participation credit for the day.
- 3. Academic Dishonesty:** Taking the words and ideas of another and presenting them as your own without proper use of citation constitutes plagiarism and it is considered grounds for receiving an "F" for the course and suspension/expulsion from the university. All students are required to uphold the honor code. Please see Rutgers' Academic Integrity Policy.
- 4.** Students should present official medical or legal documentation if they cannot fulfill any part of the course requirements. Exceptions will only be made under extraordinary circumstances such as serious illness and/or legal obligations.
- 5. Open Communication:** I am always available to help you succeed in this course. You may see me during my office hours or reach me through email. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.
- 6. Your grade** is your responsibility and is non-negotiable. If you need a specific grade for your GPA, financial aid, academic standing, personal reasons, etc., you need to earn that grade by following the guidelines presented in this syllabus. Please do not contact me after the semester asking/begging for a better grade.
- 7.** All students are required to sign the **Rutgers Honor Code Pledge**. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment."
- 8.** Please be **respectful** of everyone in the class, including me. If you are being disrespectful, you will be asked to leave.

## Newspaper Article Assignment:

There are many critical international issues happening in the world today that are directly related to historical events or eras we've discussed in this class. For this assignment you must find a recent news article (from a credible source – email me if you are unsure of a source) about a current event (written within the last year) and write a paper about how the article relates to an event or era discussed in this class. This is not an informative paper, but rather you must use critical thinking to discuss how the current event is related to the history we've discussed and how it differs. Compare and contrast the present with the past using course readings, lectures, and outside sources, if necessary, to supplement your paper. Any supplemental sources should not be the main focus of your paper; your analysis of the newspaper article chosen is.

Cite everything with **footnotes** (with full bibliographic information in them).

\*\*\* Your answer must be about 5 pages (no more, no less), typed, DOUBLE SPACED, and 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins. You will be graded on content, grammar, punctuation, and following directions. Remember, these two papers are 20% of your final grade; they should be well-thought out responses with a beginning, middle, and end in each. \*\*\*

**These papers are due on Tuesday, 4/16 (by 11:59pm)**

**LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED for any reason. No exception.**

### **Guidelines:**

- Be specific. I want you to really think about your articles and your responses to them and how they fit into our course.
- Avoid replacing arguments with examples. Use examples to illustrate a general claim, not as a replacement for them. Examples by themselves tend toward selection bias and hasty generalizations.
- I am interested in content, not clever rhetorical flourish. Thus, avoid filler material... DO NOT USE BLOCK QUOTES FROM THE ARTICLES OR READINGS. Direct quotes should be no longer than 2 sentences, MAXIMUM.
- **IF YOU DO NOT CITE, EVEN WHEN YOU PARAPHRASE, IT WILL BE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARIZED PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED EITHER BY AN F ON THE PAPER OR THE COURSE AND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN.**
- PROOFREAD YOUR PAPER. You will be marked off for typos, punctuation errors, and/or major disorganization.
- The heading of your paper should be your name ONLY.
- 1-inch margins all around
- The paper is to be 5 pages long. Not less, not more. (No cover page).

**\*\*\* SUBMIT YOUR PAPER THROUGH TURN-IT-IN ON BLACKBOARD \*\*\***  
(I will not accept it any other way)

Spring 2019 - American National Government Schedule (subject to change)		
DATE	TOPIC	READINGS DUE
T 1/22	Introduction	
TH 1/24	American Revolution	Declaration of Independence
T 1/29	Constitution	"Constitution of the United States of America"
TH 1/31	Federalism	Federalist Papers (1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 87)
T 2/5	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	"Public Opinion and Political Socialization"
TH 2/7	Interest Groups	"Interest Groups: Voice of the People or Nuisance?"
T 2/12	The Media	Trust and Mistrust of the Mainstream Media ( <b>Media Presentations</b> )
TH 2/14	The Media pt. 2	<b>Media Presentations (continued)</b>
T 2/19	Civil Rights Movement	"Letter from Birmingham Jail"
TH 2/21	Civil Rights Movement pt. 2	Excerpt from <i>When They Call You a Terrorist</i>
T 2/26	Political Parties	(Links on Blackboard) - <b>Party Presentations</b>
TH 2/28	Political Parties pt. 2	(Links on Blackboard) - <b>Party Presentations (continued)</b>
T 3/5	Campaigns & Elections	"Presidential Election Process"
TH 3/7	Campaigns & Elections pt. 2	"U.S. Trails Most Developed Countries in Voter Turnout"
T 3/12	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
TH 3/14	What is the current state of the Union?	TBA
3/16 - 3/24	<b>SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES)</b>	
T 3/26	Congress	House.gov; Senate.gov (links on Blackboard)
TH 3/28	Congress pt. 2	Current legislation (subject to change during the semester)
T 4/2	The President	"The Executive Branch"
TH 4/4	The President pt. 2	TBA
T 4/9	The Bureaucracy	"What is Bureaucracy?"
TH 4/11	The Courts	"Court Role and Structure" and "Comparing Federal and State Courts"
T 4/16	The Bill of Rights	Madison Speech Proposing the Bill of Rights *** <b>Newspaper Article Essay Due</b> ***
TH 4/18	Domestic Issues	U.S. Economy at a Glance (subject to change)
T 4/23	Domestic Issues pt. 2 - Guest Lecturer Dr. Alejandro Santana	TBA
TH 4/25	Foreign Policy Issues	"Why is the U.S. moving its embassy to Jerusalem?" (subject to change over the course of the semester)
T 4/30	Foreign Policy Issues pt. 2	Trump-Korea Summit (subject to change over the course of the semester)
TH 5/2	Review for the Final Exam	