POSC 111 (Hybrid)
American National Government

Early Fall 15/11
August 17 – October 10, 2015

Course Description
Survey of the American political system, with emphasis on the Constitution, governmental structure, the political process and the economic system.
Prerequisite: None

Class Day and Time: Thursday, 5:15 pm – 8:15 pm, Bldg 1803, RM 264
This is a hybrid course which is defined as an online course supported by a weekly in-seat class. Our class will consist both in-seat and online instruction through various resources, discussion and homework. Please note that we will meet every week, unless otherwise noted.
You are expected to attend every class. If you know prior to the beginning of the session that you will miss more than one in-seat class, it is strongly recommended that you wait to take this course at another time.
The online portion of our course is located in D2L. You will access the course through CougarTrack.

Textbooks
Textbooks for the course may be ordered from MBS Direct:
- online at http://direct.mbsbooks.com/columbia.htm
- by phone at 800-325-3252
For additional information about the bookstore, visit http://www.mbsbooks.com.

Course Overview
By the end of this course you will not only understand the institutions and processes of politics in America, you will also have learned how to access political information and ways that you can participate in the political system.

Technology Requirements
Participation in this course will require the basic technology for all online classes at Columbia College:
A computer with reliable Internet access,
a web browser,
ability to watch an online video, such as on YouTube,
Acrobat Reader,
Microsoft Office or another word processor such as Open Office.
You can find more details about standard technical requirements for our courses on our site.

Course Objectives

- To survey topics related to American government.
- To increase awareness of political issues.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

- Explain Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Courts.
- Explain the U.S. Constitution’s structure and its primary provisions.
- Identify significant Supreme Court decisions interpreting the Bill of Rights.
- Describe the development of American federalism and explain its current application.
- Explain the impact of interest groups on American political decision making.
- Explain American political parties, their development, and their significance.

Grading

Grading Scale

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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>720 – 809</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>630 – 719</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions (Online)</td>
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Schedule of Graded Assignments

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<th>Points</th>
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<td>Discussion 1</td>
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<td>Friday/Sunday</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion 3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Friday/Sunday</td>
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## Assignment Overview

### Readings (Before Class)

All readings and lecture review should be completed **prior** to coming to the in-seat portion of class. I encourage you to take advantage of the self-study resources available in the course.

You should utilize the information from the readings and incorporate it into all assignments within the course.

### In Class Activities

During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.
Discussions (Online)

Discussions are an integral part of this course and represent a significant portion of the final grade. Discussion activities are designed to help extend your learning into the real world and bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Discussion topics will be based on the chapter material defined in the weekly course schedule. You are encouraged to interact with your classmates in all discussions. Additional online discussion topics may be introduced as needed. I encourage you to make your initial post prior to the in-seat class. By doing this, you will formulate your understanding of the material and be better prepared to participate in our In Class Activities. You will need to post your initial response by 11:59 pm CT (Central Time) on Friday each week and respond to at least two classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Although you need to respond to at least two peers, per question, I also assess the quality of your responses. “I agree,” is perfunctory, not engaging and will not receive full credit. For the benefit of all of those persons reading responses, keep your personal agendas, attitudes, and grudges in check. This course touches on some very sensitive issues and sometimes responses made in public are simply uncalled for and inappropriate. This course is not the place for you to unload the ‘chips’ on your shoulders, or rant against your peers, your professor, or any other person or group. My hope is that we don’t have those kinds of exchanges this term.

Disagreement can be healthy, but only if it’s done tactfully and constructively. Conventions of professional etiquette, which include courtesy to all students, will be observed online and the equivalent will be observed in the classroom setting. Offensive, inflammatory wording and personal attacks will not be tolerated. In a diverse population as these classes are, we cannot force our personal values and beliefs on others. Civility and sensitivity are expected in all our communications.

Internet Activities (Online)

Each week you will have an Internet Activity to help you become more familiar with documents and events that shaped America. You will be provided resources to review, summarize, and respond to in a brief paper. Your assignment must be submitted as .doc or .rtf format.

Submit your responses to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday (except for Week 8 which ends on Saturday).

Dropbox Assignments (Online)

There are three short paper projects, 2-4 pages in length, required in this course. For these papers you will be provided the topic to research. Additional information about the topics and paper expectations can be found in the Content area.

Submit your papers to the appropriate Dropbox by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday of the week they are due.

Midterm and Final Exams (In Class)

There will be a Midterm Exam and Final Exam during Weeks 4 and 8, respectively. The exams will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and written responses.

These exams will be completed during the in-seat portion of our class during Weeks 4 and 8.

Course Schedule

Week 1: The Foundations of American Politics

Readings (Before Class)

- Chapters 1-2
• CQ Researcher on Re-examining the Constitution

In Class Activity 1
During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.

Discussion 1 (Online)
Every day we see the terms 'liberal' and 'conservative' used to describe politicians, parties and policies, so it is important to understand what these terms mean. What ideas or policies are associated with liberals? Which are associated with conservatives? Choose two policies or ideas that you mentioned and research how each side would justify its stance and critique the other side. Which arguments on these issues do you find most persuasive?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates' posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Discussion 2 (Online)
Politics are not found only in your textbook, the things that we will learn about are being acted out each day in the world around us. As we go through the course, I'd like you to be aware of current issues in contemporary American politics. Major newspapers, such as the New York Times, Washington Post or the Christian Science Monitor provide the most in-depth coverage. Websites, such as Politico and ProPublica are good, too. This week, I'd like you to begin by familiarizing yourself with website devoted to fact-checking claims by politicians: FactCheck.org http://www.factcheck.org/ sponsored by the Annenberg Foundation for Public Policy and Politifact: http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/ sponsored by the St. Petersburg Times. Visit these websites and explain one article or report from each. Share your reaction. Had you heard about any of the claims being fact-checked? If so, were you surprised by the result?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates' posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Internet Activity 1 (Online)
Instructions for this assignment can be found in the course content area under Week 1.

Make sure to provide proper source information for the stories you decide to discuss. Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Week 2: Federalism and Civil Liberties

Readings (Before Class)
• Chapters 3-4
• CQ Researcher article on Religion and Law
• CQ Researcher article on Government Surveillance and privacy

In Class Activity 2
During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.

Discussion 3 (Online)
What is the proper boundary between church and state? Should the first amendment be interpreted strictly so that no one’s rights are infringed by government sponsorship of religion – or should it be interpreted loosely to recognize that the U.S. is a very religious country? On the matter of religious
freedom, what are the appropriate boundaries? Under what circumstances, if any, should religious freedom take precedence over the law? Illustrate your answer with specific examples. Review the CQ Researcher article on Religion and the Law before you answer.

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates' posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Internet Activity 2 (Online)
Complete instructions can be found in the course Content area under Week 2.
Make sure to provide proper source information for the stories you decide to discuss. Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Week 3: Civil Rights and Public Opinion, Voting
Readings (Before Class)
- Chapters 5 and 8
- CQ Researcher on Voting Controversies

In Class Activity 3
During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.

Discussion 4 (Online)

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates' posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Dropbox 1 (Online)
Your first dropbox assignment topic is "Political Socialization." You can find additional information in the Content area.
Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Week 4: How Citizens Participate: Interest Groups and Political Parties
Readings (Before Class)
- Chapters 6 and 7

Discussion 5 (Online)
One type of interest group are those associated with gun-control. This is an issue over which intense lobbying takes place by interest groups, most notably the NRA (National Rifle Association) and Handgun Control, Inc. Read about gun-control in your text and then check out their websites: NRA.org and BradyCampaign.org. Consider the arguments raised on both sides and respond to the question: Are tougher gun control laws necessary?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates' posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.
Discussion 6 (Online)

Why have third parties never really taken off in America? Would you like to see a third party alternative to the Democrats and Republicans? If yes, what would you look for in such a party? Do you think the Democrats and Republicans will ever face a viable third party challenge? Please submit your initial answer by midnight Sunday.

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Internet Activity 3 (Online)

Visit the websites of some small American political parties and answer some questions about them. Complete instructions can be found in the course Content area under Week 4. Make sure to provide proper source information for the stories you decide to discuss. Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Midterm Exam (In Class)

The Midterm Exam will be completed during the in class session this week. The exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and written responses.

Week 5: The Political Spectacle: Campaigns and the Media’s Impact on Politics

Readings (Before Class)

- Chapters 9 and 10
- CQ Researcher on Non-profit Groups and Partisan Politics
- CQ Researcher on Media Bias

In Class Activity 4

During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.

Discussion 7 (Online)

Briefly explain how the Electoral College works. What do you think of the Electoral College? Does it serve any useful function? Does it need to be scrapped? Check out some Electoral College websites and explain what supporters and detractors have to say. If you think we need an alternative, what would you recommend?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Discussion 8 (Online)

Read your text and the article in the Content area from CQ Researcher concerning non-profit groups and campaign finance. To what extent, if any, should the financing of campaigns be regulated? Why or why not? Consider issues such as limits on individual campaign contributions, limits on donating to one’s own campaign, limits on donations to political parties (soft money), the ability of unions and corporations to donate to campaigns (Citizens United decision) and whether or not donors to political campaigns and causes should be made public (dark money).

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Internet Activity 4 (Online)

Visit the websites of some small American political parties and answer some questions about them. Complete instructions can be found in the course Content area under Week 4.
Make sure to provide proper source information for the stories you decide to discuss. Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Week 6: Political Institutions I: Congress and the Presidency

Readings (Before Class)
- Chapters 11 and 12

In Class Activity 5
During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.

Discussion 9 (Online)
One of the way in which Congress observes the principle of “majority rule with respect for minority rights” is the Senate filibuster. Over the years the filibuster has become an increasingly used tool by the minority party. Do some of your own research on the filibuster. Describe how lawmakers use the filibuster. Do the rules for the use of the filibuster need to be changed? Why or why not? Should the filibuster be seen as an important protection for the minority or a significant obstacle to getting things done?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Internet Activity 5 (Online)
Information and resource for Internet Activity 5 can be found in Week 5 of the Content area. Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Week 7: Political Institutions II: Bureaucracy and Judiciary

Readings (Before Class)
- Chapters 13 and 14
- CQ Researcher on Health Care

In Class Activity 6
During the in-seat portion of our class, we will have various discussions and activities that will be graded. You must be present and actively participate at the in-seat class in order to receive these points.

Discussion 10 (Online)
Visit the Hoover Institution’s "uncommon knowledge" website [http://www.uncommonknowledge.org/800/822.html] and view the debate there entitled "The High (and Mighty) Court" – you may view the debate by downloading video of it if you wish or you may simply read the text of the debate which is provided on the webpage. After doing this, answer the following questions: Do the Courts have too much power to make policy from the bench? Consider issues such as abortion, equal access to education, the use of religious symbols in public schools, etc. Should decisions on controversial issues like these be made by Courts or by Legislators? Why?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

Dropbox 2 (Online)
Your second Dropbox assignment topic is "Issues". You can find additional information in the Content area.
Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

**Week 8: Public Policy: Domestic and Foreign**

**Readings (Before Class)**
- Chapters 15 and 16
- CQ Researcher on Government Spending
- CQ Researcher on Health Care

**Discussion 11 (Online)**
What are some of the problems with U.S. health care policy? How was the Affordable Care Act (ACA) designed to address these problems? Why have many conservatives been opposed to the ACA? How would you assess the impact of the ACA so far?

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Saturday.

**Discussion 12 (Online)**
Given all the topics and issues we have examined over the past eight weeks, what issue do you believe is of the greatest importance to the United States of America? While this is your opinion, make sure to back it up with facts and references.

Your initial post is due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. You must respond to at least one classmates’ posts by 11:59 pm CT on Saturday.

**Internet Activity 6 (Online)**
Government Spending. Follow the instructions in the Content area for Week 8. Make sure to provide proper source information for the stories you decide to discuss. Submit your paper to the appropriate Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm CT on Sunday.

**Final Exam (In Class)**
The Final Exam will be completed during the in class session this week. The exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and written responses.

**Course Policies**

**Student Conduct**
All Columbia College students, whether enrolled in a land-based or online course, are responsible for behaving in a manner consistent with Columbia College’s Student Conduct Code and Acceptable Use Policy. Students violating these policies will be referred to the office of Student Affairs and/or the office of Academic Affairs for possible disciplinary action. The Student Code of Conduct and the Computer Use Policy for students can be found in the Columbia College Student Handbook. The Handbook is available online; you can also obtain a copy by calling the Student Affairs office (Campus Life) at 573-875-7400. The teacher maintains the right to manage a positive learning environment, and all students must adhere to the conventions of online etiquette.

**Plagiarism**
Your grade will be based in large part on the originality of your ideas and your written presentation of these ideas. Presenting the words, ideas, or expression of another in any form as your own is plagiarism. Students who fail to properly give credit for information contained in their written work (papers, journals, exams, etc.) are violating the intellectual property rights of the original author. For
proper citation of the original authors, you should reference the appropriate publication manual for your degree program or course (APA, MLA, etc.). Violations are taken seriously in higher education and may result in a failing grade on the assignment, a grade of "F" for the course, or dismissal from the College.

Collaboration conducted between students without prior permission from the instructor is considered plagiarism and will be treated as such. Spouses and roommates taking the same course should be particularly careful.

All required papers may be submitted for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers may be included in the Turnitin.com reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. This service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

A plagiarism tutorial is located in the content area of the D2L website. Additionally, work that was completed in a prior course and submitted in the current course will not be accepted.

Non-Discrimination

There will be no discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, ideology, political affiliation, veteran status, age, physical handicap, or marital status.

Disability Services

Students with documented disabilities who may need academic services for this course are required to register with the Coordinator for Disability Services at (573) 875-7626. Until the student has been cleared through the disability services office, accommodations do not have to be granted. If you are a student who has a documented disability, it is important for you to read the entire syllabus before enrolling in the course. The structure or the content of the course may make an accommodation not feasible.

Attendance Policy

Attendance for a week will be counted as having submitted a course assignment for which points have been earned during that week of the session or if the proctoring information has been submitted or the plagiarism quiz taken if there is no other assignment due that week. A class week is defined as the period of time between Monday and Sunday (except for Week 8, when the week and the course will end on Saturday at midnight). The course and system deadlines are all based on the Central Time Zone.

Email

All students are provided a CougarMail account when they enroll in classes at Columbia College. You are responsible for monitoring email from that account for important messages from the College and from your instructor. You may forward your Cougar email account to another account; however, the College cannot be held responsible for breaches in security or service interruptions with other email providers.

Students should use email for private messages to the instructor and other students. The class discussions are for public messages so the class members can each see what others have to say about any given topic and respond.

Late Assignment Policy

A hybrid class requires regular participation and a commitment to your instructor and your classmates to regularly engage in the reading, discussion and writing assignments. Although most of the communication for this course is asynchronous, you must be able to commit to the schedule of work for
the class for the next eight weeks. You must keep up with the schedule of reading and writing to successfully complete the class.

Course Evaluation
You will have an opportunity to evaluate the course near the end of the session. A link will be sent to your CougarMail that will allow you to access the evaluation. Be assured that the evaluations are anonymous and that your instructor will not be able to see them until after final grades are submitted.

Additional Resources

Orientation for New Students
This course is offered online, using course management software provided by Desire2Learn and Columbia College. The Student Manual provides details about taking an online course at Columbia College. You may also want to visit the course demonstration to view a sample course before this one opens.

Technical Support
If you have problems accessing the course or posting your assignments, contact your instructor, the Columbia College Helpdesk, or the D2L Helpdesk for assistance. Contact information is also available within the online course environment.

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<td>800-231-2391 ex. 4357</td>
<td>877-325-7778</td>
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Online Tutoring
Smarthinking is a free online tutoring service available to all Columbia College students. Smarthinking provides real-time online tutoring and homework help for Math, English, and Writing.
Smarthinking also provides access to live tutorials in writing and math, as well as a full range of study resources, including writing manuals, sample problems, and study skills manuals. You can access the service from wherever you have a connection to the Internet. I encourage you to take advantage of this free service provided by the college.
Access Smarthinking through CougarTrack under Students->Academics->Academic Resources.