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Web page:

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Office Hours:

MW 10:30-11:30, Tu 1:15-2:45

F 11:50-12:50

Fall 2003

POSC 122 Politics in America: Liberty and Equality

The goals of this course are four: (1) a greater understanding of your own opinions concerning political, social and economic issues in the United States; (2) an experiential understanding of the art of politics through playing two political games; (3) an assessment of the debate over free speech on campus and (4) an introduction to the empirical analysis of American politics through group analysis projects featuring data from a Microcase CD-ROM.

Final grades are calculated on the following basis:

Essay on political, social and economic opinions 10% (30 points)

Group project and paper on campus speech 15% (45 points)

Midterm examination 30% (90 points)

Games, group analysis projects and class participation 15% (45 points)

Final examination (self scheduled) 30% (90 points)

300 total points are awarded for work in this class. 270 points (90%) earns an A, 240 points (80%) a B, 210 points (70%) a C, and 180 points (60%) a D.

The following books are required and available in the bookstore:

Theodore Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg and Kenneth Shepsle, AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (7th core ed.)

Peter Woll, ed., AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: READINGS AND CASES (14th ed.)

Jonathan Rauch, KINDLY INQUISITORS

Steven Schier, YOU CALL THIS AN ELECTION

Microcase Corporation, AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: AN INTRODUCTION USING EXPLORIT (8th ed.)

In addition, all students will begin a subscription to the WASHINGTON POST NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION that I will distribute in class. This subscription will cost each student \$10.00.

The two political games we play -- Primitive Politics, based on John Lockes state of nature and Entrepreneurs, involving the pursuit of electoral victory allow you to experience politics in a lively, interactive fashion. One of the short answer questions on the midterm examination will ask you to make analogies between game behavior and actual American politics.

The class also includes two group projects. During weeks six and seven, we will consider the question of campus speech codes. I will divide the class into teams, each assigned with the task of evaluating and, if necessary, revising our college's Statement on Discrimination and Academic Freedom. This component of the course involves two class sessions. Session one involves a lecture on the controversy. Also during session one, the groups will meet and each will decide the appropriateness of the college's statement and which, if any, changes in its text are necessary. Teams will each present their recommendations to the class as a whole during session two. Each team will have twenty-five minutes for their presentation. At the end of session two, the class will decide by majority vote which of the four proposals it prefers. After the class has voted, students must write a 4-7 page paper explaining and defending their personal evaluation of the issue.

During the last weeks of the course, students will work in analysis teams to create group presentations based on their research. I will assign particular groups two chapters from the Microcase text to analyze for purposes of their presentations. Each group will then use their Microcase CD-ROMs to complete the analysis exercises for their two chapters. Then, each group must prepare a thirty-minute presentation (fifteen minutes on each Microcase chapter assigned to them). The presentation must answer three questions: (1) Which findings from each chapter are most important in understanding that chapters topic (2) Why are these findings the most important for understanding the chapters topic (3) In summary, what major new understandings about American politics result from your work on these two chapters *Feel free to go beyond each chapters assigned exercises when analyzing data to answer these questions.* Your group should use the computer projection facilities in Willis 203 to present the most significant findings. On the day of a groups presentation, each group member must hand in completed exercises for the two assigned chapters, along with a one-page report on the activities of each group member in preparing the group presentation. Material from the Microcase text and the student reports will be included in the final examination.

Regarding the POST, we'll have a series of seven news discussion sessions over the course of the class. These will occur during the last 20-25 minutes of class on the assigned days. A group of 4-5 students will lead a discussion of recent events in American politics, drawing upon the WASHINGTON POST NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION and other sources. The Internet features many great sources: the daily political note (with links) at abcnews.com, nytimes.com, latimes.com, cnn.com, foxnews.com, washingtonpost.com, pollingreport.com, politicalwire.com. You are required to examine several of these sites at least twice a week. Discussion groups will draw upon their Internet sources in class. These groups should identify 3-5 major topics from recent media, present information on them from their sources, and encourage class questions and discussion about them. Your participation in a news discussion group and as a member of the class in news discussions figures greatly in your class participation grade.

What follows is a schedule of class sessions by topic. We'll usually spend one day on each topic.

- 1 . Introduction and completion of the questionnaire (9/15)
- 2 . American Principles I: The Founding and Constitutional Structure (9/17)
LGS, chs. 1-2; Woll, 3-9, 41-45

3. American Principles II: Judicial Review (9/19)

Woll, 417-427; U.S. v. Nixon (handout)

4. American Principles III: Federalism (9/22)

LGS, ch. 3; Woll, 50-77

NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #1

5. Playing Primitive Politics -- FIRST PAPER DUE (9/24)

Laver handout

NO CLASS ON 9/26

6. Questions of Equal Protection (9/29)

LGS, ch. 4; Woll, 124-131, 153-160

NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #2

7. Understanding Popular Politics (10/1)

LGS, ch. 11; Woll, 171-9; Schier, introduction and ch. 1

8. Public Opinion and the Media (10/3)

LGS, ch. 9; Woll 207-226

9. Elections (10/6)

LGS, ch. 10; Schier, chs. 3-5

10. Evaluating Electoral Systems (10/8)

Schier, chs. 2, 6, conclusion

NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #3

11. Interest Groups (10/10)

LGS, ch. 12; Woll, 250-273

12. Playing Entrepreneurial Politics (10/13)

Laver handout

13. Movie: The Great McGinty (10/15)

Preston Sturges The Great McGinty, (1940), the first movie in the history of the major Hollywood studios written and directed by the same person. Its based on the true story of Governor William Sulzer of New York, who was impeached and removed from office in 1913 for trying to clean up Tammany Halls political machine. Sturges won the first Oscar ever awarded for Best Original Screenplay for this movie. The funniest political movie Ive seen.

14. MIDTERM EXAMINATION (10/17)

15. MIDTERM BREAK (10/20)

16. Understanding Microcase Analysis I (10/22)
Microcase, ix-xv and chs. 1-3 (not the exercises)
E-MAIL of Microcase group preferences DUE to sschier by 9 AM this morning.
NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #4
17. Understanding Microcase Analysis II (10/24)
Read over the Microcase chapters assigned to your analysis group and come to class with questions about the data you will analyze for your group reports
18. The Controversy over Campus Speech (10/27)
Rauch, chs. 2, 3 and 5; Stanley Fish, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS FREE SPEECH AND IT'S A GOOD THING, TOO, pp. 11-19, 102-119, 296-298; Paul Berman, ed., DEBATING P.C., pp. 225-230 (both on closed reserve)
19. Group Assessment of the Carleton Policy (10/29)
Rauch, chs. 1 and 6, Fish, pp. 120-140, 70-79; Berman, ed., DEBATING P.C., introduction (both on closed reserve), Woll, 104-115
NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #5
20. Class Discussion and Vote on the Carleton Policy (10/31)
Group proposals due at my office at NOON today, email to sschier acceptable
21. The Design and Performance of the Presidency (11/3)
LGS, ch. 6; Woll, 275-287
22. Congress: Representation and Policymaking (11/5)
LGS, ch. 5; Woll, 344-353, 381-417
- ***Campus Speech Papers Due at My Office at Noon on Thursday, November 6***
23. Congress vs. President in Policymaking (11/7)
Schier, High Risk and Big Ambition (handout)
Bertram Johnson, A Stake in the Sand (on closed reserve)
NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #6
24. The Design and Performance of the Supreme Court (11/10)
LGS, ch. 7; Woll, 430-444
25. The Bureaucracy: The Titillating Subject (11/12)
LGS, ch. 8; Woll, 330-344; Peter Drucker, Really Reinventing Government (closed reserve)
NEWS DISCUSSION GROUP #7
26. Microcase Presentations: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Media and Political Participation (11/14)

Microcase, chs. 4-5, 7-8 (do not do the exercises)

27. Microcase Presentations: Public Opinion and Elections, Parties and Interest Groups (11/17)
Microcase, chs. 6, 9, 10-11 (do not do the exercises)

28. Microcase Presentations: Congress, Presidency, Courts and Bureaucracy (11/19)
Microcase, chs. 12-15 (do not do the exercises)

YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Write a four to six page defense of the opinions evident in your responses to the questionnaire. Your goal should be to convince me of the reasonableness of the pattern of your opinions evident in each of the sections of the questionnaire. The first section concerns individual rights and liberties, the second a variety of social issues, and the third a number of economic issues.

You should first examine your responses to each of the sections and try to discern a pattern. For example, when do you want the state to intervene in the social life of the nation The economic life What personal liberties must the state not restrict What are the compelling reasons for this degree of state intervention Next, you should examine how your responses in each of the sections relate to each other. For example, are you more in support of state social intervention than economic intervention or vice versa Why

Some of the questions may concern topics with which you may not be familiar and willing to venture much of an opinion. If so, do not be afraid to admit your lack of exposure to such matters in your paper. Rather, try to make sense of the opinions that you do hold. If you find several questions about which you do not hold clear views, try to explain why you have not had occasion to develop them.

You are graded on the quality of the arguments you use to defend your positions. You should not dwell too much on one or a few questions; a justification for your overall tendency is what counts here. Also, do not explain your views in terms of personal background -- for example, that the reason you are an economic conservative is that your parents are economic conservatives. Instead, support your views by presenting sound arguments why another person should seriously consider adopting them.

You should conclude your paper by explaining why you identified yourself as liberal, moderate or conservative, and Democrat or Republican and how this self-identification relates to your pattern of answers.

Your paper is due at class on Wednesday, September 24. You should type it or write it in double-spaced longhand. If writing in longhand, assume a length of eight to twelve pages.

ANALYSIS GROUP PROJECTS

Here is the list of group projects. You need to examine the Microcase text and give me your top four

choices, written in rank order, via e-mail (to sschier) by 9 AM on Wednesday, October 22.

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (chs. 4&5)

Public Opinion and Elections (chs. 6&10)

The Media and Political Participation (chs. 7&8)

Parties and Interest Groups (chs. 9&11)

Congress and the Presidency (chs. 12&13)

The Bureaucracy and the Courts (chs. 14&15)