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Spring 1999

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 the playing of two political games; (3) an assessment of the debate over free speech on campus and (4) an introduction 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%
Group project and paper on campus speech	15%
Midterm examination	30%
Games, Group Analysis Projects and class participation	15%
Final examination	30%

The following books are required and available in the bookstore:

Theodore Lowi and Benjamin Ginsberg, AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (5th brief ed.)

Peter Woll, ed., AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: READINGS AND CASES (13th ed.)

Jonathan Rauch, KINDLY INQUISITORS

G. Calvin Mackenzie, THE IRONY OF REFORM

Microcase Corporation, AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: AN INTRODUCTION USING EXPLORIT (5th ed.)

In addition, all students will begin a Monday-Friday subscription to the NEW YORK TIMES in the bookstore. Its cost for the term is approximately \$30.00.

The two political games we play -- Primitive Politics, based on John Locke's "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 week five 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 chapter's topic? (2) Why are these findings the most important for understanding the chapter's 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 chapter's assigned exercises when analyzing data to answer these questions. Your group should use the computer projection facilities in Willis 211 to present the most significant findings. On the day of a group's 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.

I have created an internet caucus for this class, located at the Carleton web page under "Caucus" and entitled "POSC 122 Schier Spring 1999" You need to log in with your email address and password in order to enter the caucus. The caucus has "threads" or subtopics for each major assignment. You can type in comments or questions directly, or paste them into the caucus from another location, such as Microsoft Word. Use these threads to help each other with the assignments. By interacting over assignment substance, each participant will improve his/her academic performance in the class. I have also created a general conversation thread for other dialogue about course substance. This thread is particularly useful for discussing the news from the TIMES and class readings. I will actively moderate the caucus during the term.

Regarding the TIMES, each class session we'll begin with a ten minute headline summary conducted by two members of the class. Everyone will get his or her chance to summarize the daily news. Be sure to bring that day's TIMES to each class. Since we meet in the late afternoon, you should be able to get it and look it over before class.

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

2. American Principles

Lowi and Ginsberg (L&G) chs. 1 and 2; Woll, 3-9, 40-45, 405-414 and U.S. v. Nixon (handout)

3. Playing Primitive Politics (FIRST PAPER DUE)

Laver handout

4. Federalism and Questions of Equal Protection

L&G, chs. 3&4; Woll, 51-76, 113-120 and 145-161

5. Understanding Popular Politics

L&G, ch. 10; Woll, 165-174

Mackenzie, chs. 1-3

6. Public Opinion, the Media and Elections

L&G, chs. 8&9; Woll, 198-216; handouts

7. The 1996 Elections

Stengel and Pooley, "Masters of the Message;" Scott Keeter, "Public Opinion and the Election;" Anthony Corrado, "Financing the 1996 Elections" (all on closed reserve);

Keeter and Corrado are in the volume edited by Gerald Pomper and should be listed under Pomper on reserve);

8. Interest Groups

L&G, ch. 11; Woll 234-261

9. Playing Entrepreneurial Politics

Laver handout

10. MIDTERM EXAMINATION (April 29)

11. Public Policy and Public Knowledge: A Microcase Example

Microcase, chs. 3&16

12. The Controversy over Campus Speech

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)

13. Class discussion and vote on the Carleton policy

Rauch, chs. 1 and 6, Fish, pp. 120-140, 70-79; Berman, ed., DEBATING P.C., introduction (both on closed reserve)

14. Congress and the Presidency

L&G, chs. 5&6; Woll, 265-271, 331-339, 373-404

***** Campus Speech papers due at Noon, Monday, May 17 at 414 Willis *****

15. Congress vs. President in Policymaking

Mackenzie, chs. 4-5

16. The Supreme Court and Bureaucracy

L&G, ch. 7; Woll, 317-330, 414-429; Mackenzie, ch. 6; Peter Drucker, "Really Reinventing Government" (on closed reserve)

17. Microcase Analysis Reports I

Microcase, chs. 6-11

18. Microcase Analysis Reports II

Microcase, chs, 4, 5, 12-15

19. A New Political Era?

L&G, ch. 14; Mackenzie, ch. 7

YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Write a four to six page defense of the opinions evident in your responses to the questionnaire. Your goal in this 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 tread upon? 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 because 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 Tuesday, April 6. 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, on Thursday, May 6 at class.

- 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)