

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

PSPA 1010
Section: 006
Introduction to American National Government

Fall 2008
3 Hours Credit
T R 8:00 – 9:15
Business Administration Building Room 218
William Albrecht, Ph.D.
Professor of Political Science & Public Administration

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The instructor pledges to teach this course under the university guidelines for the academic honor code. UNCP has a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. Students pledge to knowingly neither give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming a personal commitment to honor and integrity. You are instructed to read UNCP's Honor Code as found in the 2008-2009 Student Catalog. Included in that publication are rules and regulations governing student rights and responsibilities, the university judicial system, disciplinary sanctions, penalties, violations, and type of offense.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student to:

1. basic concepts in political science.
2. basic principles and history of the constitution.
3. the structure, functions, and relations between branches of the national government.
4. relations between the national and state governments.
5. current public policy issues.

Students are expected to be active participants in class and should be prepared to discuss current in topics in American government and politics. Therefore, members ought to review websites, newspapers, magazines, and journals that will facilitate this process.

Objectives

1. To gain a contextual understanding of major concepts and issues.
2. To encourage critical thinking about implications on an individual and societal level.
3. To develop effective group, written, and oral communications skills.

Textbook (Required)

Patterson, Thomas E. 2008. We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics 7th edition.

Brudney, Kent M. & Weber, Mark E. 2007. Critical Thinking & American Government 2nd edition.

In addition students should have access to a computer, the internet, and a handheld calculator.

TEACHING METHODS

Teaching methods will involve class lectures, pedagogical videos, discussions, and collaborations on oral and written work. Small groups will be formed in order to allow course participants to gain experience with “collective work.” Homework will include online assignments and are based on readings in the textbook.

EVALUATION METHODS*

Final grades will be based on three examinations, one group project, and a semester long series of in-class and online homework assignments.

Evaluation Method		Proportion of Final Grade
Examinations	Exam 1	15%
	Exam 2	20%
	Exam 3	30%
Group Project	Paper (A Collective Grade)	15%
	Presentation (A Collective Grade)	10%
Participation	In-Class Assignments	5%
Homework	Online Assignments	5%

* NOTE: No late work will be accepted under any conditions. This includes exams. However, if either of the first two exams is missed the following exam will be counted as 80% in replacing a missing score. No student may miss more than one exam. No replacement grade will be given for the final exam. You are responsible for all announcements made in class.

Grading Scale

94 -100= A

90 - 93 = A-

87 - 89 = B+

84 - 86 = B

80 - 83 = B-

77 - 79 = C+

74 - 76 = C

70 - 73 = C-

60 - 69 = D

< 60 = F

Examinations

There will be three examinations in this course. The first exam will be approximately 1.25 hours in length of time and consist entirely of multiple choice questions. The second exam will be approximately 1.25 hours in length of time and consist of multiple choice questions and short answer questions. The final exam will last for approximately 2 hours and be comprehensive. Content will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer/essay questions.

Group Projects

Students will be assigned to small groups. All groups will develop a 3-5 page paper on an assigned reading from the text using Patterson's format for Analytical Thinking as a guide. Each week (usually on the last day of class for the week) an assigned group(s) will give a 10-15 minute presentation of their paper. Approximately 5 minutes will be allowed for comments and discussion. Groups must submit a hard copy of their paper one class period in advance to the instructor.

In-Class Assignments & Homework Assignments

Students will complete a series of in-class assignments and homework assignments. In-class assignments will involve assignments from Brudney and Weber (2007). Homework assignments will involve use of the internet. In-class and homework assignments will be discussed further in class.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. William Albrecht
Business Administration Building
Room 244

Office Hours

Tuesday 9:15 - 10:30
Thursday 9:15 - 10:30

And by Appointment

Contact Information

Voice: 521-6822
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ADA Academic Access Statement

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak directly to Disability Support Services and the instructor, as early in the semester (preferably within the first week) as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please contact Disability Support Services, DF Lowry Building, Room 107, or call 910-521-6695 for an appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule lists lecture and discussion topics and required readings for each week. This schedule also includes **homework due and exam dates**. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course schedule if necessary.

Week	Dates	Lectures & Class Discussions/ Readings/ Homework & Exam Dates
1	Aug 21 Aug 21	“Course Introduction” & “American Political Culture” Patterson Chapter 1
2	Aug 26 Aug 28	“Constitutional Democracy” & US Constitution Patterson Ch. 2
3	Sep 02 Sep 04	“Federalism” Patterson Chapter 3
4	Sep 09 Sep 11	“Civil Liberties” Patterson Chapter 4
5	Sep 16 Sep 18	“Equal Rights”; Patterson Chapter 5 Exam 1: September 18
6	Sep 23 Sep 25	“Public Opinion & Political Socialization” Patterson Chapter 6
7	Sep 30 Oct 02	“Political Participation & Voting” Patterson Chapter 7
8	Oct 07 Oct 07	“Political Parties, Candidates, & Campaigns” Patterson Chapter 8
9	Oct 14 Oct 16	“Interest Groups” Patterson Chapter 9
10	Oct 21 Oct 23	“The News Media”; Patterson Chapter 10 Exam 2: October 23
11	Oct 28 Oct 30	“Congress” Patterson Ch. 11
12	Nov 04 Nov 06	“The Presidency & Federal Bureaucracy” Patterson Chapter 12 and Patterson Chapter 13
13	Nov 11 Nov 13	Patterson Chapter 14; The Federal Judiciary Online Homework Due: November 13
14	Nov 18 Nov 20	Public Policy: Economic & Environmental; Welfare & Education Patterson Chapter 15 and Patterson Chapter 16
15	Dec 02 Dec 04	Public Policy: Foreign and Defense Patterson Chapter 17
16	Dec 11 Dec 11	Final Exam 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

GROUP PROJECT AND PRESENTATIONS SCHEDULE

The table below lists the readings for the group projects along with tentative presentation dates and the relevant chapters in the textbook. *All* class participants are expected to have read each and every essay even if they are not presenting.

Dates	Groups	Readings and Associated Chapters in the Textbook
Sep 04	1	<i>What We Love about America</i> by James Carroll Patterson Chapter 1
Sept 11	2	<i>The Mischiefs of Faction</i> by James Madison Patterson Chapter 2
Sept 16	3	<i>The National Idea in American Politics</i> by Samuel H. Beer Patterson Chapter 3
Sept 23	4	<i>A Constitutional Amendment to Ban Flag Burning</i> by Brownback and Feingold Patterson Chapter 4
Oct 02	5	<i>Letter from Birmingham Jail</i> by Martin Luther King Junior Patterson Chapter 5
Oct 07	6	<i>The Iraq Syndrome</i> by John Mueller Patterson Chapter 6
Oct 16	7	<i>Voter Participation and Electoral Competition</i> by Thomas Patterson Patterson Chapter 7
Oct 21	8	<i>GOP Has Lock on South, and Democrats Can't Find Key</i> by Ronald Brownstein Patterson Chapter 8
Oct 30	9	<i>The Lobbying Game Today</i> by Jonathan D. Salant Patterson Chapter 9
Nov 06	10	<i>To Publish, or Not to Publish</i> by Alex Jones Patterson Chapter 10
Nov 13	11	<i>Running for Congress, Staying in Congress</i> by Paul Herrnson Patterson Chapter 11
Nov 20	12	<i>Presidential Power</i> by Richard Cheney Patterson Chapter 12
Dec 02	13	<i>Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Unprepared</i> by "Senate Committee..." Patterson Chapter 13
Dec 02	14	<i>Judicial Interpretation</i> by William Brennan Jr. Patterson Chapter 14