

# Introduction to American Government

## PSPA 1010 Sec. 800 Online Course

Instructor: Dr. Emily Neff-Sharum

Meet: online

Office: Oxendine 1320 B

Office hours: Email

Email: [emily.neffsharum@uncp.edu](mailto:emily.neffsharum@uncp.edu)

Please check Blackboard regularly.

This course is a survey to American politics on the national level. Students will learn about major concepts and observations of political science as well as develop the tools to become informed citizens. This course will provide an introduction to key principles developed during the constitutional founding, to how American institutions function and why their structure is important, and to the role of behavior (for both political actors and citizens) in American politics for both consuming and using information. This course is intended to provide students a broad understanding of American politics and provide the necessary preparation to excel in upper division American politics courses.

### REQUIRED READING and EQUIPMENT

Harris and Harrison. 2011. *Democracy Now* (condensed). McGraw-Hill: Dubuque, IA. ISBN: **0077532139**

Note: We will be using the companion website, [connect.mcgraw-hill.com](http://connect.mcgraw-hill.com). If you are buying a used book, you will need to purchase an access code on the website. If you have a new book, you should be able to find the information about registering on a card in the front of the book.

**Daily news access-** You can get your news from newspapers, television news, radio, or internet based news. News sources must be from a credible source! Avoid overtly partisan news sources (including Fox news, MSNBC, etc.) If you have questions, please contact me.

**Computer access!** This course relies on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.uncp.edu/>), supplemental reading, and other web based activities. You must check Blackboard regularly. All assignments, quizzes, and exams must be completed on time if it is to count for credit.

### A NOTE ABOUT ONLINE COURSES:

**I will leave each module up on Blackboard for several days. You should clearly note the days that modules open and close. I will NOT reopen modules!** You should expect to be checking and working with Blackboard materials at least two to three times a week. Early in the week to check on assignments and modules for the week, mid week to contribute to the class blogs, and late in the week to comment on other class members thoughts.

When providing responses to your peers, there are a few rules of thumb to keep in mind. First, your comments must be thoughtful and substantive. Simply posting, “I agree with James,” or “Wow! This was an interesting article,” is not enough. Additionally, you must be respectful of others on the course board. Offensive comments will be penalized. Finally, please proofread your comments. Correct grammar and spelling impacts how receptive others are to your comments.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Grades composition:**

Chapter quizzes	45%
Activities and essays	20%
Discussion blog	15%
Midterm exams	10%
Final exams	10%

### **Grading scale—**

100-95 = A	76-73= C
94-91= A-	72-70= C-
90-88= B+	69-67= D+
87-84=B;	66-63= D
83-80=B-	62-60=D-
79-77= C+	59 and below F

**Chapter quizzes—** After reading your chapter, you will have to complete the chapter review quiz. These quizzes are found on the Connect McGraw-Hill website. You will only be allowed a certain number of wrong answers before the quiz will shut down and ask that you go back through the reading. Your grade will be a configuration of your confidence rating for answering a question, whether you got the question right, and how many attempts were taken before completing the quiz.

**Activities and essays— You are required to complete an activity each week.** Each assignment should be well organized, written in clear, concise prose and utilize correct spelling and grammar. Activities are due at the close of each module.

**Discussion Blog-** Each student is required to make a response to at least one blog question posed at the beginning of the module. Each student is required to

respond to at least two comments made by other students. This response must be made before the close of the module.

**Midterm and Final Exam-** Both exams will be short assessments of retention of core concepts.

**DISABLED STUDENTS:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak directly to Disability Support Services (located in the D.F. Lowry Building) and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please contact DSS at 521-6695. The syllabus is also available in alternate formats upon request. Please call the aforementioned number if you desire this.

“When testing accommodations or alternative testing is needed, students are responsible for discussing this issue with the professor to make the appropriate arrangements to have the exam administered. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule exams with DSS at least one week prior to the exam date. Failure to schedule an exam one week in advance may lead to DSS denying the requested time and date for the exam.” For the Exam Proctoring Authorization Form and for more information, visit

[http://www.uncp.edu/dss/students/directions\\_for\\_accesing\\_exams\\_for\\_current\\_students.htm](http://www.uncp.edu/dss/students/directions_for_accesing_exams_for_current_students.htm).

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) found will result in an automatic “F” for that assignment and notification to the appropriate Deans.

From the UNCP Student Handbook: “Plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly presenting someone else’s words or ideas as one’s own. You avoid plagiarism by very carefully acknowledging the sources of ideas you use and by appropriately indicating any material that has been quoted [or paraphrased] (that is, by using quotation marks and properly acknowledging the source of the quote, usually with a clear reference source citation and page number).” If an instance comes up where you are unsure whether or not you should cite, play it safe and cite. Visit <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html> for more information on plagiarism.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1- May 25- June 3**

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 Constitution
- Chapter 3 Federalism
- Chapter 4 Civil Liberties

### **Week 2- June 2- June 11**

- Chapter 5 Civil Rights
- Chapter 9 Elections, Campaigns, and Voting
- Chapter 11 Congress

**MIDTERM EXAM WILL BE OPEN ALL DAY JUNE 12 AND WILL CLOSE JUNE 13 AT 9AM.**

**Week 3-** June 10- June 19

Chapter 12 Presidency

Chapter 13 Bureaucracy

Chapter 14 Judiciary

**Week 4-** June 18-June 27—

Chapter 6 Political Socialization and Public Opinion

Chapter 7 Interest Groups

Chapter 8 Political Parties

**Week 5- June 28- FINAL EXAM**