

Adult Accelerated Program Session 2008B Wednesday, 6-10 p.m. Room: D229	Tom Jackson Phone; 217-652-5634 E-mail: tjackson@sci.edu
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SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE IN ILLINOIS

PSC 210-70: American Federal Government (*S5 900; PLS 911*)

- I. **Course Description** An introduction to the organization and function of American national government, principles of the U.S. Constitution, operation of the federal system, and institutions of government (Congress, Presidency, and the Supreme Court); the nature of political beliefs and political participation (political parties, interest groups, and voting), and contemporary public policy issues. (3 hours)
- II. **Textbook and Materials**
- Squire, Peverill; Lindsay, James M.; Covington, Cary R.; and Smith, Erica R.A.N.; *Dynamics of Democracy*, 5th Edition, Atomic Dog 2008.
- III. **Mission Statement**
- The mission of Springfield College in Illinois is to provide students the best liberal arts education in the Ursuline tradition of a nurturing faith-based environment. We prepare students for a life of learning, leadership and service in a diverse world.
- IV. **Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes**
- A. Goals:
1. To develop an appreciation for Political Science.
 2. To develop an understanding of the basic concepts and approaches of political science, particularly as it relates to federal government.
- B. Common Student Learning Objectives
1. Know and apply the central concepts of the subject matter. (CK-1)
 2. Communicate effectively in oral and written forms (CS-1)
 3. Seek information and develop an in-depth knowledge base, grounded in research. (PS-2)
 4. Develop good citizenship. (SR-3)
- C. Course-based student learning objectives. (CBSLO)
1. To understand the relationship between cultural ideals and political life in the American republic; (CK-1; SR-3)
 2. To understand Constitutional structures, provisions, and philosophical ideas that shape national governmental and political processes in the United States; (CK-1; SR-3)
 3. To understand the principles and operation of a Federal system and the processes of intergovernmental relations that exist between and among levels of government; (CK-1; SR-3)
 4. To be able to describe formal governmental institutions and legal structures such as the legislature, executive, and judiciary; (CK-1; CS-1; SR-3)
 5. To analyze and evaluate political phenomena such as voting behavior, political protest and dissent, political parties, and interest groups; (CK-1; CK-2; and SR-3)
 6. To develop an understanding of, and skill in, the processes of social scientific inquiry; (CK-1; CK-2)
 7. To understand the role of ideology and its relation to political, economic, and social issues; (CK-2; SR-3)
 8. To learn to make explicit one's values (and ideologies) and to analyze the value judgments that others make about political decisions and government policies; (CK-2; SR-3);) and
 9. To demonstrate an understanding of the capacities and skills needed to participate effectively and democratically in contemporary society (CK-1; SR-3).

V. **Teaching Methods**

Through its requirements, this course will encourage the development of writing and study skills. The lectures and the texts will be used as the foundations of the course.

VI. **Course Requirements**

1. Class participation: (CK-1), (CS-1), (CBSLO-2), (CBSLO-3)

Attendance and participation is required, and students must be prepared to discuss their readings in class to receive full credit for the day's attendance and participation.

Students **must submit a "Three Question Survey" at the end of each class to receive credit for attendance for the day.** For the Three Question Survey the student must provide a response about three topics; 1) what they learned that day, 2) what they were uncertain about 3) what one question they would like answered. This survey provides an opportunity for reflection and understanding for the student, as well as valuable assessment information to the instructor.

Students must produce a written excuse for any classes missed in order to avoid losing attendance and participation points for that absence.

2.. Exams: (CBSLO-1), (CBSLO-2), (CBSLO-3), (CBSLO-4), (CBSLO-5), (CBSLO-6), (CBSLO-7), (CBSLO-8), and (CBSLO-9)

There will be four exams during the semester. Exams must be taken in class on the exam day. **They cannot be made up** unless the student presents a verified medical excuse.

3. Cheating on an exam or paper results in an **automatic failing** grade for that assignment.

4. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. **Intentional plagiarism will result in an automatic failing grade for that assignment.**

Plagiarism is defined as follows: "The deliberate and knowing presentation of another person's original ideas or creative expressions as one's own. Generally, plagiarism is immoral but not illegal. If the expression's creator gives unrestricted permission for its use and the user claims the expression as original, the user commits plagiarism but does not violate copyright laws. If the original expression is copied without permission, the plagiarist may violate copyright laws, even if credit goes to the creator. And if the plagiarism results in material gain, it may be deemed a passing-off activity that violates the Lanham Act." Black's Law Dictionary, 8th ed. (2004), p. 1187. Also useful to establish guidelines for delineating plagiarism is Diana Hacker's definition: "Three different acts are considered plagiarism: (1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words." (A Writer's Reference, by Diana Hacker, Bedford St. Martin's Press, 2003, page 331.) Some instances of plagiarism may, in fact, be violations of copyright law and subject to prosecution. The SCI Student Handbook lists plagiarism as a serious breach of conduct standards and will result in disciplinary action.

VII. **Means of Evaluation of Outcomes**

Evaluation:

1. Evaluations will be made using the following point system:

attendance and participation, submission of "Three question survey": 5 pts. each class
exams 50 pts. each

2. The grade scale is as follows:

A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% E below 60%

VIII. **Topical Course Outline**

	date:	discussion topic:	assignment:
Week 1	March 5	The Dynamics of Democracy, The Constitution and The Social Context of American Politics	Ch.1, 2 & 3
Week 2	March 12	Civil Liberties and Civil Right Test #1	Ch. 4 & 5
Week 3	March 26	Congress and The Presidency	Ch. 11 & 12

Week 4	April 2	The Federal Bureaucracy and The Courts Test #2	Ch. 13 & 14
Week 5	April 9	The Federal System and State Government and The Federal Budget	Ch. 15 & 16
Week 6	April 16	Domestic Policy and Foreign Policy Test #3	Ch. 17 & 18
Week 7	April 23	Public Opinion and Voting and Participation	Ch. 6 & 7
Week 8	April 30	The News Media and Political Parties Test #4	Ch. 8 & 9

IX. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Springfield College in Illinois provides individuals with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities, and services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in college-sponsored programs, activities, and services or to meet course requirements should contact the Director of the Resource Center as early as possible.

X. **Assessment: Classroom Assessment Techniques**

Goals, objectives, and learning outcomes that will be assessed in the class are stated in this syllabus. The instructor will use pre-tests and post-tests, Three Question Survey, and other Classroom Assessment Techniques as deemed necessary in order to provide continuous improvement of instruction. Students are required to take part in all assessment measures.

XI. **IAI statement**

PSC 210 has been approved by the Illinois Articulation Initiative as meeting the criteria stipulated for S5 903. The IAI course description is as follows:

S5 900: American/U.S. National Government I (3 semester credits)

An introduction to the organization and function of the U.S. national government. Includes the U.S. Constitution; the federal system; political behavior; executive, legislative, and judicial powers; and public policy. Policies on acceptance of AP credit vary among academic programs and from institution to institution, so AP credit toward the GECC or major requirements is not guaranteed. In general, a score of 3 or higher on the AP U.S. Government and Politics exam may be considered as equivalent to successful completion of courses approved for S5 900.

Core competencies as outlined for IAI approved Political Science courses include:

Political science deals with the theory and practice of politics and describes and analyzes political systems and political behavior. Upon satisfactory completion of one or more political science courses, students will:

- explain the relationships between political life and the cultural ideas of American democracy;
- describe formal government institutions and legal structures and political behavior and processes;
- describe the political systems of other countries, identify international organizations, and explain the relationships between nations;
- analyze and evaluate political phenomena;
- demonstrate an understanding of and skill in the process of social scientific inquiry;
- make explicit and analyze value judgments about political decisions and policies;
- explain the social-psychological sources and historical-cultural origins of their own political attitudes and values, and analyze critically the personal and social implications of alternative values; and

- demonstrate an understanding of the capacities and skills needed to participate effectively and democratically in society.