PART ONE: NUTS AND BOLTS

Introduction:
With the presidential elections of 2012 behind us and the 2016 elections looming, this is an especially important time to learn about the nuts and bolts of American politics and policy. This is an introductory course on institutional structures, political actors, and constitutional debates in American government and politics. We will explore the historical development and founding of the United States, discuss major debates about the structure of our republican form of government, connect the three branches of government to contemporary politics and elections, and critique the American constitutional system. In doing so, we will place ourselves as citizens, activists, and policy-makers within the current American political system, with special attention to the analytical lenses of race and gender in American politics as well as domestic political events during the fall semester.

Please read this syllabus carefully, as taking an online class can be a complex undertaking at first. I have noted due dates in bold type and important things to remember/examples in boxes. Students will be wholly responsible for the content of this syllabus by the end of Week 1 of class, May 30, 2014. Please contact me with any questions as soon as possible!

Required Texts:


These books can be purchased from the campus bookstore or online. Be very careful buying them online, though – if they are shipped media mail, they might not arrive until the class is almost over.
Electronic Readings:
Electronic versions of the readings not from these textbooks can be found on the course's Sakai site, which can be located at http://sakai.rutgers.edu. You can find readings by Week (1, 2, 3, etc) under the "Lessons" tab; you can also find readings under the "Resources" tab.

Course Requirements and Grading:
- 15% Reading Quizzes
- 30% Blog Posts
- 30% Exam I and II (15% each)
- 25% Final Critical Essay

Sakai Website: Students are required to familiarize themselves with the course Sakai site by the second week of classes (http://sakai.rutgers.edu).

Class Organization: Subject matter in Introduction to American Politics is divided by week. Even though we won't meet together as a class you will be expected to have the reading done and the lecture watched by the end of the day on Mondays so you can then write your blog post, read your peers' blogs posts, and post a response. If you fall behind on the reading, it will be difficult to keep up with the rest of the week's assignments.

For each week, I will post necessary materials under the “Lessons” tab. Because this is an intensive summer course, each week will consist of two lectures and reading assignments. Under the tab for the week, you will find:

1. The week’s required readings
2. Prezi lecture presentations
3. Blog post assignment: You will also be responsible for a blog post and response each week (for more information, see “Blog Posts” below).

Additionally, you will be responsible for a weekly reading quiz designed to make sure you understand the readings’ main ideas. Those will be posted under Quizzes on Sakai.

For example, in Week 1 we will be discussing the topics of Revolution and Rebellion and The Constitution. The week's readings and lecture presentation (in Prezi format), as well as any extra credit assignments, can be found under the Week tab. For example, the tab Lessons/Week 1 contains the readings and lectures for both Revolution and Rebellion and The Constitution.

(1) Readings: All readings, except for How Democratic is the American Constitution?, and We the People will be posted as pdf documents online. Your readings can be found under the “Lessons” tab for the appropriate week (for example, the Mason reading can be found under the “Week 1” lesson tab.) Readings can also be found under the "Resources" tab.

(2) Prezi Lecture Presentation: I will be posting Prezi presentations as lectures. The Prezi presentations will have my video lectures embedded in them. Prezi
presentations are dynamic, visual presentations that highlight the most important elements of the reading for this class. Think of them as reading outlines: they are not exhaustive, and they require active reading on the part of the student. I welcome questions and comments on the lecture, which can be found under the “Forum” tab, titled “Lecture Q and A.”

(3) Interactive Blog Posts: Please see description below under “Class Components.” You must complete blog posts activities every week unless otherwise indicated.

Submitting Class Work: All class work will be submitted on the Sakai website. DO NOT EMAIL CLASS WORK TO THE INSTRUCTOR. If it is not submitted on the Sakai website, it will be considered late. Please refer to the instructions on each assignment, which will instruct students on how to submit work on the Sakai site.

Netiquette: As the Internet is ubiquitous in school, at home, and at work, we often overlook how visible our written words, images, and videos are to others. Growing up with these technologies makes them seem natural to all of us—we’ve surfed websites, posted photos to Facebook, and commented on bulletin boards. “Netiquette” is a portmanteau of the words “network” and “etiquette”: much like how our real life, face-to-face interactions require rules of civility and respect (shaking hands and saying hello to meet someone new, or saying thank you, for example), our online interactions also require rules of civility and respect.

In this course, we will be discussing political issues that will garner as many different reactions as there are students in class. As we live during a volatile and dynamic period in American political history, I welcome full student participation and disagreement—specifically participation and disagreement situated in the reading and topics for that class. During all class work, treat your peers and your instructor with civility and respect, no matter the similarities and differences you may encounter.

You are REQUIRED to read the handout titled “Netiquette in Introduction to American Government,” found under the “Resources” tab, initial the page, and email the document to me at kelly.clancy@rutgers.edu by May 28, 2014. This is worth 10 points.

Office Hours and Contact: I am here to help! If you have questions, concerns, or need extra discussion for readings and assignments, I am your resource. Please email me (kelly.clancy@gmail.com) to schedule an appointment for office hours. Office hours may be arranged in the Sakai chat room.

Students can reach me on weekdays, Monday through Friday. Please note that I check my email periodically between 9 AM and 5 PM; depending on the complexity of the question and day it was emailed, allow one to two days for a response, Monday through Friday.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating are taken very seriously at Rutgers University. All statutes of the Academic Code of Conduct apply for this course. A detailed discussion of this policy can be found at http://cat.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html.
PART TWO: ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS COMPONENTS

I. Reading Quizzes (15%)
The readings and lectures for the course will serve as the spring board for the class discussions (via the blogs). Each week, there will be a reading quiz posted on Sakai that will test your understanding of the reading and lectures for the week. The reading quizzes will consist of several multiple choice questions from the readings. After week 1, each reading quiz is due on Monday by 6 pm. The Reading Quizzes will be available online under Tests and Quizzes, and will be timed (you will have 1 minute for each question). You will not be able to take the quizzes late.

II. Interactive Blogs (30%)
In this course, you are required to maintain a blog. The blogs will be the primary platform that you will use to communicate with me and each other. You will be able to access each other’s blogs via the blog tab on Sakai. In addition, I will be blogging along with you – you can read my blog posts at: ( ). I will also write weekly blog posts and I will post other interesting things I come across over the course of the semester.

There are three ways in which your blog will be utilized:

A. Weekly Posts: Each week, I will be posing a question to the class that expands upon the week’s readings. The blog posts will ask you to connect the course material to what is happening right now in American politics.

   Example: our section on the Separations of Power may ask you to write about an example of a recent conflict between the Congress and the President. Our discussion of the Supreme Court may ask you to write a post commenting on a current case in front of the Court.

   These assignments consist of (1) a statement that replies to a question I have posed for that week; (2) a response, which is a reply to one of your peer’s blog posts; and (3) a comment in response what your colleague wrote on your post that addresses the points or issues they raise. I will be following these posts and joining in the conversation by posting comments and questions of my own.

   (1) Blog Post: After reading my question for the week, you will answer with post. Your blog post must be posted online by 6PM every Tuesday. Your post should answer the question to the best of your ability as informed by the week’s readings. Your post must have the following to receive full credit:

   - Your post must be 2—3 paragraphs long. This translates to 200 to 300 words.
   - Your post must be on topic and respond to the question posed by the instructor.
   - Your post must use at least one quote or piece of evidence from the readings that is cited as such.
   - Your post must be checked for grammar and spelling.
   - Your post must be posted online by 6PM every Tuesday. Late posts will not be given credit.
(2) Blog Response: After the blogs have been posted, you will respond to ONE of your peer’s blog posts. **Your response to a peer’s blog post must be posted online by 6 PM every Thursday.** Your response must have the following to receive full credit:

- Your response must be 1—2 paragraphs long. This translates to 100 to 200 words.
- Your response must be on topic and reflect a consideration of your peer’s blog post.
- Your response cannot be a simple agreement or disagreement with your peer’s blog posts (“I agree with Amy that the unilateral executive is a bad thing!”). Add details, expand the point, and make an argument. Simple agreements will receive no credit.
- Your response must use at least one quote or piece of evidence from the readings that is cited as such.
- Your response must be checked for grammar and spelling.
- **Your response must be posted online by 6PM every Thursday.** Late responses will not be given credit.

(3) Follow up response: You must respond to the questions or issues your classmates raised in response to your post.

You will be posting on blogs once on Tuesday and once on Thursday for a total of TWO posts every week (unless otherwise indicated).

B. **Experiential Posts:** In addition to the weekly posts, you will write two posts over the course of the semester in which you critically analyze one of the issues raised in class. Each week, I will post an option for this assignment. You must respond to two of these by the end of the semester.

Example: the week we discuss representation might ask you to watch the movie *Trouble the Water* and analyze the way it reflects the shortcomings of the modern American political system in terms of its treatment of the poor and minorities. The week we discuss social engagement might ask you to participate in an act of civic engagement (such as canvassing, volunteering, or going to a protest), and then reporting your experiences.

a. You must tell me ahead of time when you plan to write on a topic for the week. You can do this by leaving a comment on the assignment post.

b. Be creative with the format of these posts! You can write, post a photo essay, or make a vlog (video blog). If you have questions about whether your idea will meet the assignment parameters, just ask.

C. I’d like the blogs in the class to be fun, interesting, and dynamic. To this end, I would also like you to use your blog to post things you find interesting or worth discussing over the course of the semester. Consider posting political cartoons, clips from shows like *The Daily Show*, newspaper articles, etc. Students who use their blogs in this way will also be eligible to earn extra credit.

III. Exams (15% each)
Exam 1 for this course will be held via Sakai on Week 2. The exam will be posted at 6 pm on Wednesday, June 4, and is due at 6 pm on Friday, June 6.

Exam 2 for this course will be held via Sakai on Week 3. The exam will be posted on Wednesday June 11 and is due by 6 pm on Friday, June 13.

It will be composed of IDs, short answers, and an essay. Midterm Review Sheets will be posted before the exam under the lesson for that week, and optional review sessions will be held in the chat room. The exam will be timed: you will have 90 minutes from when you open the exam to complete it. It will be performed on the Sakai site, under “Tests and Quizzes.” Each exam will be run through turnitin to make sure the work is yours.

IV. Final Critical Essay (25%)
Your final in Introduction to American Government will reflect the last portion of class, How Democratic is the American Constitution? Your critical essay will reflect readings and lectures during weeks 5 and 6. The prompt for the final critical essay will be posted under the “Assignments” tab, and the final critical essay is due no later than 6 PM on Thursday, July 3rd.

PART THREE: CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures and Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week One</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Due: Reading Quiz 1</td>
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<td>3. Lecture: The Constitution&lt;br&gt;Readings: (1) Federalist #10&lt;br&gt;(2) Federalist #51&lt;br&gt;(3) The Constitution, with attention to the Bill of Rights (1st through 10th Amendments), and the 14th Amendment.</td>
<td>When: Reading quiz and Blog Post 1 due by 6 pm on Friday, May 30 Blog Response 1 due by 6 pm on Monday, June 2</td>
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<td><strong>Week Two</strong></td>
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<td>Due: Reading Quiz 2</td>
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<td>(6/2-6/6)</td>
<td>1. Lecture: Separations of Power&lt;br&gt;Readings:&lt;br&gt;(1) LGS Ch. 3&lt;br&gt;(2) LGS—Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Weekly Blog Post 2</td>
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<td>2. Lecture: “The First Branch, Congress”&lt;br&gt;Readings:&lt;br&gt;(1) LGS Ch. 5&lt;br&gt;(2) Fox, Richard Logan. 2010.</td>
<td>Weekly Blog response 2</td>
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<td>Experiential blog post (option 1)</td>
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### Week Three (6/9-6/13)

**1. Lecture: The Executive Branch: The President, Bureaucracy, and Unilateral Power**

Readings:
1. LGS Ch 6
2. LGS Ch 7

Lecture: “The Executive Branch”

**2. Lecture: The Supreme Court**

Readings:
1. LGS Ch 8

**Due:**
- Reading Quiz 3
- Experiential blog post (option 2)
- Exam 2 (Separations of Power, The Congress, The Executive Branch, The Judiciary)

**When:**
- Reading quiz due by 6 pm Monday
- Exam opens 6 pm Wednesday and is due at 6 pm Friday, June 13.

### Week Four (6/16-6/20)

**1. Lecture: Issues in Representation: Race, Gender**


2. **Social Movements, Activism, and the Media**
   (Readings TBD)

**Due:**
- Reading Quiz 4
- Blog Post 3
- Blog Response 3
- Experiential blog post (option 3)

**When:**
- Reading quiz due by 6 pm Monday
- Blog post due by 6 pm Tuesday
- Blog response due by 6 pm Thursday

*Experiential blog post (option 3) due by 6 pm Friday*
| Week Five  (6/23-6/27) | **What the Framers Couldn't Know**  
Readings: (1) Dahl, Chapters 1 and 2  
Readings: (1) Dahl, Chapter 3  
Lecture: “Dahl Chapters 1—3”  
**The Constitution as a Model** | **Due:**  
Reading Quiz 5  
Blog Post 4  
Blog Response 4  
Experiential blog post option 4  
**When:**  
Reading quiz due by 6 pm Monday  
Blog post due by 6 pm Tuesday  
Blog response due by 6 pm Thursday  
Experiential blog post (option 4) due by 6 pm on Friday |
|---|---|---|
| Week Six  (6/30-7/3) | **E lecting the President to Why Not a More Democratic Constitution?**  
Readings: Dahl Chapters 4 and 5  
Lecture: “Dahl Chapters 4 and 5”  
**Prospects of a More Democratic Constitution**  
Readings: (1) Dahl, Chapters 6—8  
Lecture: “Dahl Chapters 6—8” | **Due:**  
Reading Quiz 6  
Experiential blog post (option 5)  
**Critical Essay**  
**When:**  
Reading quiz due by 6 pm Monday  
Experiential blog post (option 5) due by 6 pm on 7/3  
**Critical Essay Due by 6 pm on 7/3** |