

Adrian HS College Government Course Syllabus Fall Semester 2016

Political Science 120 – American National Government

Southwest Minnesota State University

AHS Room 105

Instructor: Mr. Jason Berghorst

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Prep Time/Office Hours: 7:30-7:50am, 2:30-3:45pm

SMSU Political Science Department Mission Statement

Political Science provides students with opportunities to understand and explain political phenomena ranging from the behavior of individual citizens to relations between nation-states. We seek to foster an empirical understanding of political institutions and processes, and an awareness of the moral and ethical implications of political action.

Course Overview

Political Science 120: American National Government is a survey course in American government and politics that offers a broad study of the nation's formal and informal political institutions, the U.S. Constitution, intergovernmental relations, electoral politics, various debates about governance and politics in the United States, and the role of citizens in the American democracy. It also examines how governance is conducted in other nations in comparison to American processes. This course is for those with little background in the study of government, as well as those interested in advanced study of political science or related fields. It satisfies Liberal Arts Core requirements and is an important springboard for advanced courses in Political Science and Public Administration.

Course Format

The format of this course includes lectures, quizzes, exams, and the discussion of extensive assigned readings, which are designed to reinforce each other. Students are expected to read all assignments in advance of the related lecture and be prepared to answer questions about and actively discuss the content of the readings. Students are also expected to read and pay attention to current events, especially news related to government policies and politics. Election 2016 will be a major focus of this course and must be followed closely by students.

Course Objectives

1. Students will identify and demonstrate the importance of political science research questions.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of normative and empirical political analysis.
3. Students will identify strengths and weaknesses of government policies.
4. Students will critically evaluate political claims based on careful scrutiny of the underlying argument and evidence.
5. Students will demonstrate an awareness and concern for their role as citizens in a republic based upon the rule of law.
6. Students will recognize and demonstrate an understanding of their rights, duties, and opportunities as engaged citizens within their community, nation, and world.

Course Requirements

This is a college-level course and will be administered by the instructor as such. Conversely, it is offered to high school students in a high school setting with certain necessary requirements that remain in effect. With this balance in mind, the following requirements and procedures will be followed in this course:

1. Attendance is vital and expectations for your attendance are greater than for non-college courses. Implications for absences may be greater as well. If you are absent, you are solely responsible for obtaining information from the lecture and discussions while you were absent. If you know in advance of your absence, you must let the instructor know as soon as possible.
2. All assignments must be turned in or submitted on time and exams must be taken on their assigned date. Students will be encouraged, and may be required, to submit some assignments or complete quizzes electronically. Work submitted electronically will be due at midnight at the end of the date it is due.
3. In the event of an unexpected absence, any assignments are due the day that you return and any scheduled exam will be taken on the day that you return. If an assignment is due or examination is scheduled for a date you will be absent, you must turn in the assignment or complete the examination before your absence when possible.
4. Late work will be accepted the next day with a 25% reduction to the grade. Assignments more than one school day late will not be accepted and will receive a score of 0.
5. If a student is absent or has printer problems, submitting the assignment electronically before midnight at the end of the day it is due will eliminate consequences for late work.
6. AHS policies regarding the following remain in effect in this class: cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used, seen or heard in class unless specific permission is granted by the instructor; no food, drink, or gum in the classroom (water with a sealed top may be brought on occasion with instructor approval), internet use is for class-related and school-appropriate websites only (no social media sites).
7. Students are asked to use the 500 (North) hallway to travel to and from this class. Students must be to class on time to avoid a tardy.
8. Any and all copying, plagiarism and other forms of cheating (both providing and receiving parties) will result in a 0 for the assignment or examination and may result in school and college consequences that may lead to a failure of the course.

Course Grading

Grading for this course will follow the AHS grading scale. Grades will be based on chapter quizzes, three exams, a major paper, debate/political analyses responses, and a group project.

Email Communication

Students will be required to use their school-issued email addresses (@isd511.net) and Google Drive accounts for electronic communication with the instructor and to receive, access and submit some materials for the class. Check your school email frequently for this purpose!

Any Other Questions?

Students and parents are strongly encouraged to talk to the instructor if there are any questions or concerns about this course throughout the semester! Communication is vital!