

AMERICAN POLITICS PSI 101
Summer, 2010 Doane College, Lincoln

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Traudt

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

An analysis of American political institutions and behavior.

Course Objectives:

The student will (hopefully!)

- a) understand the basic principles of the American democratic system.
- b) be acquainted with the underlying theories which form American ideologies
- c) gain a historical perspective on the Constitution
- d) develop a knowledge of basic Constitutional organization
- e) develop knowledge of the three branches of government, their purpose and obligations.
- f) be acquainted with social, economic and foreign policy in today's America.

Course Structure:

Three tests and one debate will comprise 25% each of your final grade, Obviously, in an 8 week class, attendance will be important. If you do not think you will be able to attend class regularly, you may want to arraign for an on-line class. If you miss only 2 classes, for instance, that is ¼ of the course!

Tests are multiple choice and short answer generally.

Debates will be chosen the 1st class. You get to pick your topic to a certain extent, within my guidelines.

Course Text:

Tannahill, Neal. Think: American Politics. Longman: Boston, 2010

Course Schedule:

Wk I: 5/24

Ch. 1: A Changing America

Ch. 2: American Constitution

Wk. II: 5/31

Ch. 3 Federalism (skim)

Ch. 15: Civil Liberties

Wk. III: 6/7

Ch. 16: Civil Rights

Debate: Gay Adoption: Should it be legal in Nebraska?

Wk. IV: 6/14

Ch. 10: Congress

Debate 2: Health care reform: Republican plan or Democrats plan?

Wk. V: 6/21

Ch. 11: The Presidency

Ch. 12: The Federal Bureaucracy

Debate #3: Funding for candidates by corporations: good for democracy or bad?

Wk VI: 6/28

Ch. 13: The Courts

Wk. VII: 7/5

Ch. 17: Foreign and Defense Policy

Debate #4: Should the U.S. use torture to interrogate suspected terrorists?

Wk. VIII: 7/12

Ch.16: Social and Economic Policy

Grading Scale:

100-95=A

94-90=A-

89-86=B+

80-85=B

76-79=C+

70-75=C1

66-69=D+

60-65=D

59 and below=F

Academic Integrity Policy:

Doane expects the highest standard of academic integrity. Please note that cheating or plagiarism will result in an "F" for the course.