PSI 101 American Politics

Fall 2012 Doane College, Grand Island

Instructor: Peter Kortum

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Office Hours: By appointment

Time & Location: 6:00 P.M. on Thursdays, Doane College – Grand Island.

Course Description: An analysis of American political institutions and behavior.

This course fulfills the Doane Plan political science requirement. This course is required for Public Administration Major.

Credits: 3 hours

Course Objectives:

The student will:

a) Understand the historical foundations of American politics.
b) Be acquainted with the influence on American politics from the media, interest groups, and political parties.
c) Be acquainted with current policy issues within the American political system.
d) Develop critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate and analyze the issues in American politics.

Methods of Instruction:

1. Lecture
2. In class debates and discussion
3. Video of relevant political topics
4. Formal presentations by students with accompanying class discussion.

Grading and Assessment of Student Performance:

40% Written Topic Paper and Oral Presentation. This is a five to ten page report on a current piece of federal or state legislation, regulation, or major policy issue. An analysis template will be used that examines several domains or themes common to political issues. In addition, the student will present their findings in a 15 minute oral presentation that will be followed by classroom discussion. The topic is to be agreed upon by the student and instructor.

10% Presentation on Interest Groups. Each student will report on a specific political interest group. A checklist will be used as a guideline. Only one presentation for any one interest group, so first come first served on your selection.

20% Written Exams. The written tests will combine pre and post testing and open book tests.

30% Miscellaneous Projects and Class Participation. This portion combines weekly topic projects, assigned debate positions, and general classroom participation. The student will be evaluated for their analysis skills, ability to support their position, and level of class participation.

Grading:

- 95-100 = A+
- 90-94 = A
- 85-89 = B+
- 80-84 = B
- 75-79 = C+
- 70-74 = C
- 65-69 = D+
- 60-64 = D
- 59 or less = F

Academic Integrity: The Doane College Academic Integrity policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of others’ ideas and words without proper citation or sources is plagiarism and will result in penalties to be determined by the instructor and/or the dean of undergraduate studies.

Attendance Policy: If a student misses one class the only requirement is to turn in any assignments by the opening of the next scheduled class. If a student misses more than one class, additional assignments will be administered to confirm to the instructor that the student thoroughly understands all of the learning objectives.

Advance Assignment: Prior to our first meeting, read Chapters 1 and 2.