PS 102: Introduction to American Politics
Dr. James C. Rhoads
Old Main 227
Office Hrs: MWF 12:50-1:50, TR 2:00-3:00 and by appt.
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Course Objectives:
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the study of American national government. We will investigate the Constitution and American federalism; the major branches of government; civil liberties and civil rights; political parties and elections; differing theories on how America is ruled and by whom; the mass media; bureaucracies; the economic system; and America’s role in a global community. It is hoped that the course will stimulate the student to think critically about American politics and his/her place in the political environment.

Course Requirements:
The class will be conducted in both a lecture and discussion format. Students will be expected to participate fully in class discussions. Throughout the course students are required to attend each class and to keep abreast of their reading assignments. During the course of the term three exams and four quizzes will be given. These exams and quizzes will cover material from the assigned readings as well as from class lectures.

Texts:

Grading:
3 Exams at 100 points each........300
4 Quizzes at 20 points each........80
Attendance/Participation..............20
TOTAL POINTS........................400
Letter Grades will be based on this scale:

93%-100%... A  
90-92%....... A-  
87-89%....... B+  
83-86%....... B  
80-82%....... B-  
77-79%....... C+  
73-76%....... C  
70-72%....... C-  
67-69%....... D+  
63-66%....... D  
60-62%....... D-  
0-59%....... F

Student Learning Objectives:
By the end of the term, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of:
1. The foundations and origins of the American system of government
2. The importance of civil liberties and rights
3. The origins of and significance of political ideologies in America
4. The role of public opinion in our democracy
5. The role of the media in our democracy
6. The role of interest groups and political parties in our democracy
7. The nature and significance of the electoral process in our democracy
8. The structure and functions of Congress, the Presidency and the Judiciary
9. The importance of Economic and Domestic Policy in our democracy

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
"Central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community is academic integrity. All members of the Westminster community are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and purposes of the College.
Academic dishonesty is a profound violation of this expected code of behavior." (2018-2019, Westminster College Undergraduate Catalog, p. 60.)
The college has adopted a comprehensive policy on academic integrity. You should read this policy in its entirety. You will find it printed in the College Catalog, in the Student Handbook, and on-line. These policies will be enforced in this class. In addition, the college has now adopted Turnitin.com as an electronic way to assess the originality of student writing. This website may be used in the class for one or more of your writing assignments.
Make-up Policy:
"Absence from an announced examination results in a failing grade for the examination, unless suitable arrangements are made for a special examination. A student who seeks such a privilege should petition the instructor in writing PRIOR to the scheduled examination date. If the instructor considers that the petition should be granted, then a note to the effect is added and the petition is presented to the Dean of the College. The examination may be given only if the Dean also approves the petition. (Westminster College Undergraduate Catalog, 2017-18, p.65)

DISABILITY POLICY

Students who desire some form of accommodation for a diagnosed learning disability or physical problem must inform their instructors at the beginning of each semester (within two weeks) as to the nature of the disability and type of accommodation requested. If the disability or physical problem is diagnosed during the semester, students should inform their instructors immediately of the problem and accommodations needed. Students with disabilities should also inform the Disabilities Coordinator in the Office of Student Affairs, who is available to assist in evaluating the disability and to facilitate communication between the College and the student in considering special accommodations. The type of accommodation provided will depend on the needs of the student, the circumstances of the student’s classes, and the resources of the College. Because of limited resources, final determination of whether an accommodation can be provided will be at the discretion of the College.

Tentative Schedule of Classes:
August 27: Introduction
August 29: US Constitution
August 31: Founding Fathers: You Say You Want a Revolution? Chapter 1

September 3: US Constitution
September 5: Founding Fathers: A Healthy Constitution Chapter 2
September 7: US Constitution

September 10: Federalism
September 12: Federalism
September 14: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights Chapter 4

September 17: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
September 19: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
September 21: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

September 24: Exam Review
September 26: FIRST EXAM
September 28: Public Opinion Chapter 5
October 1: Public Opinion       Chapter 5
October 3: Public Opinion      Chapter 5
October 5: The Media           Chapter 6

October 8: The Media           Chapter 6
October 10: *Truth*            Chapter 6
October 12: *Truth*            Chapter 6

October 15: Parties, Elections & Participation  Chapter 7
October 17: Parties, Elections & Participation  Chapter 7
October 19: Parties, Elections & Participation  Chapter 7

October 22: Interest Groups    Chapter 8
October 24: Exam Review        
October 26: **SECOND EXAM**    

October 31: The Congress       Chapter 9
November 2: The Congress       Chapter 9

November 5: The Congress       Chapter 9
November 7: The Presidency     Chapter 10
November 9: The Presidency     Chapter 10

November 12: The Presidency    Chapter 10
November 14: The Presidency    Chapter 10
November 16: Bureaucracies     Chapter 11

November 19: The Judiciary     Chapter 12

November 26: The Judiciary     Chapter 12
November 28: The Judiciary     Chapter 12
November 30: Policy            Chapter 13

December 3: Policy             Chapter 13
December 5: *Roger & Me*       Chapter 13
December 7: *Roger & Me*/ Exam Review  Chapter 13

**Wednesday, December 12**  **FINAL PERIOD**  11:30am