

Rappahannock Community College
US Government II – PLS 212 633
Distance Learning
Mr. Matt Brent, Instructor
Spring 2012



Contact Information:

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Text: Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato, *American Government: Roots and Reform*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009.

Course Description: Teaches structure, operation, and process of national, state, and local governments. Includes in-depth study of the three branches of the government and of public policy.

Course Credit: 3 credit hours

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to understand the United States government's institutional framework, to understand how politics and government interact, and to express ideas effectively, working with that body of knowledge.

Methods of Instruction: This course will involve various instructional methods, including, but not limited to, lecture, discussions, analysis of events, interactive exercises and course readings.

Blackboard: This course will utilize blackboard as a means of instruction throughout the semester. In addition, blackboard will be used for course announcements in the event of an emergency such as extended campus closings. Should the college close, blackboard will be used as a means of instruction.

Instructor Availability: Because the course does not physically meet, the instructor can be reached via phone and email. I will respond to any messages or emails within 24 hours.

Readings: It is a requirement to read the associated chapters of the text as the course progresses. The assignments in class will pull not only from the lectures, but also from the readings. Reading assignments are indicated on the course schedule.

Honor Code: Rappahannock Community College has an Honor System whose purpose is to strengthen the student's foundations for academic achievement by establishing guidelines for personal conduct. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of the rules and to monitor the activities of their peers with respect to the Honor Code and report any violations thereof (Reference the Student Handbook).

Attendance Policy: Generally, students are required to attend all classes for which they are registered except in the event of illness or unavoidable emergency. Specifically address excused/unexcused absences, late arrival/early departures that do not meet the criteria of "Faculty Reporting of No Shows and Withdrawal for Nonattendance" and how it affects the grade.

Gradable Assignments:

Assignment Description	Points
Introductory Activity	25 points
Discussions	150 points
Quizzes	200 points
Letter to the Editor	25 points
Issue Analysis	100 points
Documentary Review	100 points
Issue Presentation	200 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Total	1000 points

Grading Scale:

900-1000 points -	A
800-899 points -	B
700-799 points -	C
600-699 points -	D
Below 600 points -	F

Students must earn at least 600 points to pass the course with a “D”. However, please keep in mind that a “C” is almost always the minimum grade required for a course to transfer to another college or university.

Current Events: Following local, national and world events is crucial to understanding and applying knowledge obtained in a political science course. Please make every effort to follow the news. Watching daily news broadcasts, reading newspapers, and even following the news online are all great sources of information.

Essays: I firmly believe in the importance of being both well spoken and well written. Developing your writing skills will aid you tremendously both in your academic and professional careers. To help you develop your abilities as a writer, you will be required to author essays on a variety of topics throughout this course. Essays must be typed. They must be double spaced with 1 inch margins on all sides. Please use Times New Roman or Arial font, size 12. A cover page is not required.

Rough Drafts: Because I want you each to become excellent writers, I will gladly offer advice and comments on any essay in draft form. I ask that a minimum of three days be given for me to review and return your draft. Rough drafts are not a requirement, but they are encouraged.

Issue Presentation: You will be tasked with creating a multimedia presentation advocating your stance on an issue. More information on this assignment will be presented in class.

Examinations: As a part of this course you will be required to complete a midterm and final exam. Each of these exams will be multiple choice. A study guide will be posted before the exam to help you prepare. Due to RCC/VCCS Policy, all online courses must have at least two exams in the campus testing center. As a result, both of your exams will be held in one of the testing centers.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given to accompany each unit of study. Each quiz will consist of ten multiple-choice questions based on the readings, lectures, and other material presented in the course.

Class Participation: Students who participate in class get the most out of class. It is important for each student to make an effort to participate in the various activities and discussions of the course.

Discussions: Students will be required to answer discussion questions relating to course topics and continue in such discussions by replying to their classmates. Such discussions serve to bring the topics alive and make them applicable to current and past political environments.

Late Work: Turning in assignments late is highly discouraged. If an assignment is submitted late, it will receive a deduction of 10 percent per week. Assignments may NOT be turned in after three weeks have passed, unless there are extraordinary circumstances involved which have been discussed with me. If you are having difficulties meeting deadlines, please see me and we will discuss your options.

Faculty Reporting of No Shows and Withdrawal for Nonattendance: Students who are registered for a course but do not attend or make contact with the instructor during the drop/add period must be reported to the Admissions and Records Office. The “no show” students will be dropped from the course roster by the Admissions and Records Office.

Up until the withdrawal date for the semester, students who stop attending a course, miss more than 20 percent of the class, or fail to maintain contact with the instructor, must be withdrawn by the course instructor.

Student Withdrawal from a Course: A student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty and receive a grade of “W” up until the last day to withdraw (March 23rd). For withdrawals after this date, the student will receive a grade of “F” except under mitigating unavoidable circumstances which must be documented.

Cheating: Representing the work of another person as your own, in any form, will not be tolerated. Any unapproved external aid used in examinations is prohibited. Rappahannock Community College has an Honor System, the purpose of which is to strengthen the student’s foundation for academic achievement by establishing guidelines for personal conduct. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the rules found in the College catalog, to monitor their peers’ activities with respect to the Honor Code, and to report any violations thereof. **Cheating or plagiarizing are serious academic offenses and will not be tolerated. Students found cheating or plagiarizing will receive a failing grade.**

Student Conduct: It is imperative to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. A few guidelines will help to meet this goal. Because the course is conducted online, it is important to observe general online etiquette.

Basis for Evaluation and Revision of Course: Students in synchronous classes will be provided with an anonymous survey questionnaire at the end of the course that will ask each student to evaluate the instructor and the course and make comments and suggestions. Asynchronous class surveys are completed online. Survey results will be used to revise and improve the course.

Special Request: It is important to RCC that all students have a learning environment that is conducive to their needs. Therefore, any student who feels that they may need some type of accommodation in order to make this class a successful setting, should go to the Counseling Office on either campus for information about applying for services and accommodations. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability and recommended accommodation for that disability. For additional information refer to “Student Services” on the RCC website.

Class Schedule

Dates	Topics & Assignments	Chapters
Jan 9 – 15	Course Introduction <i>Assignments: Introductory Discussion</i>	
Jan 16 – 22	Civil Rights <i>Assignments: Discussion 1, Quiz 1</i>	Chapter 5
Jan 23 – 29	Civil Liberties <i>Assignments: Discussion 2, Quiz 2</i>	Chapter 6
Jan 30 – Feb 5	The Policy Making Process <i>Assignments: Letter to the Editor</i>	p. 596 - 609
Feb 6 – 12	Public Opinion <i>Assignments: Discussion 3, Quiz 3</i>	Chapter 11
Feb 13 – 19	Healthcare Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 4, Quiz 4</i>	p. 609 – 626
Feb 20 – 26	Environmental Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 5, Quiz 5, Issue Analysis</i>	p. 626 -633
Feb 27 – March 4	Midterm Exam	
March 5 – 11	Economic Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 6, Quiz 6</i>	Chapter 18
March 19 – 25	Education Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 7, Quiz 7, Documentary Review</i>	Instructor Provided Readings
March 26 – Apr 1	Foreign Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 8, Quiz 8</i>	Chapter 19
Apr 2 – 8	Immigration Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 9, Quiz 9</i>	Instructor Provided Readings
Apr 9 – 15	Drug Policy <i>Assignments: Discussion 10, Quiz 10</i>	Instructor Provided Readings

Apr 16 – 22	Issue Presentation Work Week <i>Assignments: Issue Presentation</i>	
Apr 23 – 29	Course Wrap Up, Sharing of Presentations	
Apr 30 – May 7	Final Exam	