

**First Summer Session 2008**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**Political Science 206- 100-M-F 10:00-11:35**  
**American National Government**

**Instructor:** Sarah Whalen Phone: 845-9205  
**Office:** Allen Bldg. 2122 E-mail: sawhalen@tamu.edu  
**Hours:** Monday & Wednesday 12:00-1:00 (in my office)  
Tuesday & Thursday (after class in the classroom)  
Other times by appointment

**I. The Subject: Objectives and Methodology**

This is a course about American National Government.

- A.** The course goals are to:
  - 1. Develop an understanding of the institutions and political processes of the American political system;
  - 2. Encourage critical thinking about political events; and
  - 3. Introduce students to the discipline of Political Science and how political scientists study politics scientifically.
  
- B.** Learning Outcomes. Each student should:
  - 1. Learn the concepts and terms relevant to the study of American politics;
  - 2. Learn to critique and apply major theories in the study of American politics and government; and
  - 3. Understand the promise and performance of American democracy.
  
- C. The method of instruction is lectures and class discussion.**

**II. Required Text**

Jon R. Bond and Kevin B. Smith, *Promise and Performance of American Democracy*, 8th ed. (Wadsworth, 2008). ISBN 0495637556. Custom package with syllabus and graphs available from publisher for \$66.49 here: [http://www.thomsonsites.com/ichapters/micro/?cluster\\_id=2817](http://www.thomsonsites.com/ichapters/micro/?cluster_id=2817) (\$73.00 at MSC Bookstore) [Note: You may buy the book alone without the extra copies of the figures, but if you do be sure it is the 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Previous editions are out of date and do not contain the revisions included in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition.]

**III. Grades**

- A. Exams and Weights:**
  - EXAM 1 (55 questions) 55 pts 27.5%
  - EXAM 2 (65 questions) 65 pts 32.5%
  - EXAM 3 (80 questions) 80 pts 40.0%
  - 200 points
  - Exams are multiple-choice with questions from **both lectures and assigned reading.**
  
- B. Grading Scale:**
  - A 180-200 pts (90-100%)
  - B 160-179 pts (80-89%)
  - C 140-159 pts (70-79%)
  - D 120-139 pts (60-69%)
  - F 0 - 119 pts (0-59%)
  
- C. There is NO extra credit in this class**

#### IV. Miscellaneous Policies:

- A. **Attendance:** You decide for yourself whether to attend class or not. Although I will take attendance on a regular basis, there is **NO EXTRA PENALTY OR REWARD ASSOCIATED WITH ATTENDANCE**. But if you choose not to attend, you are still responsible for everything discussed in class.
- B. **Missed Work and Make-up Policy:** You are eligible to make-up missed exams only if the following conditions are met:
  - 1. You must have a documented **UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZED EXCUSED ABSENCE**, and
  - 2. You must make arrangements for the make-up prior to the exam or by the end of the second working day after the exam is given. If you are unable to make arrangements personally, you should have someone call for you. If I am not in, leave a message at **979-845-2511**.

Make-up work is available only for absences recognized as excused by *Texas A&M University Student Rules* (see section 7.1, <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule7.htm>). Absences for reasons other than those listed in section 7.1 of the University rules are **NOT** excused and make-up work is **NOT** available. If the absence is on the University list as excused, you can take a make-up exam if you have the necessary documentation; if the absence is not on the list as excused, you are not eligible to take the make-up exam. No exceptions.

Exam dates listed on the Assignment page are tentative. Exact exam dates will be announced in class at least a week in advance (except the final exam which is given at the assigned time during finals week). The “regular make-up exam” is multiple-choice and is offered in my office at 4:00 p.m. within two work days after the day the exam is given (e.g., for exams given on a Wednesday, the make-up is the following Friday at 4:00). Students with excused absences who cannot attend the regular make-up are eligible for alternative make-up work to be determined in consultation with the instructor. The typical alternative is an essay exam. The make-up for the final is given on the day after the end of finals week.

- C. **Special Problems and Changing Grades:** The only reason for changing a grade is if I make an error in computation. Special circumstances (e.g. “I’m on probation and need a “C” to stay in school,” “I must have an “A” to keep my scholarship,” etc.) may be important to you. But to be fair to all students, I will not change a grade for any reason except errors in computation.
- D. **Class disruption:** Disrupting class is a serious violation of Texas A&M University rules and regulations. Electronic communication devices such as cell phones and pagers are disruptive if they “beep” during class. If you bring such devices to class, please be sure they are turned off. I will take appropriate action to remove any disruptions from the class.
- E. **Cheating:** The Aggie Code of Honor states: “*An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.*” “As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>) or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”
- F. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Disabilities Services in Room B118 of Cain Hall, or call 845-1637.
- G. The **handouts used in this course are copyrighted**. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class and distributed in class or posted on the class homepage, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class materials, and lecture outlines. Because these are copyrighted, you

may reproduce them for your own personal use, but you do not have the right to sell or distribute the handouts to anyone else, unless I expressly grant permission.

**V. Assignments:**

I have divided the course into 13 topics. We will spend between 1 and 3 class periods on each topic. You should do the assigned reading for a topic before we discuss it in class. **Topic #**  
**Topic Title Reading Assignment from Bond and Smith, *Promise & Performance of American Democracy*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. 2008.** Introduction Read the syllabus

**PART ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

1. The Promise of Democracy Chapter 1
2. The American Constitution Chapter 2; *U.S. Constitution* (Appendix, pp. A-1 - A-12); Federalist #51 (pp. A-23 - A-25)
3. Federalism Chapter 3; Federalist #10, (Appendix, pp. A-17 - A-21)
4. Civil Rights & Liberties Chaps. 4 & 5  
**Exam 1 over Topics 1-4**  
55 multiple choice questions  
Approximate Date: Thursday, June 5, 2008

**PART TWO: CONNECTING CITIZENS TO GOVERNMENT**

5. Interest Groups Chapter 6
6. Political Parties Chapter 7
7. Public Opinion & Socialization Chapter 9
8. Voting Behavior & Participation Chapter 11
9. Nomination & Election of the President Chapter 10 (skip pp. 331-344 on congressional elections)  
**Exam 2 over Topics 5-9**  
65 multiple choice questions  
Approximate Date: Thursday, June 19, 2008

**PART THREE: OFFICIAL DECISION MAKING**

10. Congress pp. 331-344 in Chapter 10, and Chapter 12
11. The Presidency Chapter 13
12. The Bureaucracies Chapter 14
13. The Federal Judiciary Chapter 15  
**Exam 3 over Topics 10-13**  
80 multiple choice questions, **June 30 @10:30 a.m.**