

AMS 226
American Government and Politics
 Fall 2011

Instructor:	Syinat Sultanalieva, M.A.
Class:	T, Th; 9:25 – 10:40, 1 / 309
Course ID:	02157
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Course Description:	<p>This is a 3-credit course describing why and how the American government was formed, what changes keep the political system vibrant and effective, and how citizens participate in dealing with today's issues. Politics and policy is a vital, fascinating process that affects people's daily lives and this course will provide you with the tools to understand politics as an evolutionary process where history matters. This course will help you understand the structure and functioning of American government, compare them with the policy of other countries including your own one and see how and why your active participation in political processes counts.</p> <p>The course also helps to develop student's critical thinking and research skills. So in addition to lectures there will be discussions and students' presentations.</p>
Course Objectives:	<p>There are two primary objectives in this course.</p> <p>First, students will be introduced to the basic processes and themes of the U.S. government and politics. Second, students will develop their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through analyzing, comparing, examining, and interpreting political processes and events in American society and their influence on the policy and development of other countries.</p>
Course Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance & Participation Policy: Students are expected to attend every class and be on time. Only THREE medical records are accepted. Or other three important reasons if I'm informed beforehand. Your participation and enthusiasm are essential. "Always-silent", "back-corner" students will get no points. Be well prepared for class and <u>read</u> assigned material in advance. Quizzes: Students will write several quizzes on readings and films during the semester. Quizzes will be held occasionally and without a prior notice. It's your responsibility to be always prepared for a quiz. Midterm and Final Exams: Exams will include multiple-choice, matching, short-answer, and essay questions. You may bring to the exam one A4 study sheet with whatever information you wish on it. These study sheets may be prepared in conjunction with other students. But they must be in your own handwriting. They may not be typed. They may not be photocopies. Violators will not be allowed to use the sheets on the exam. If you miss an exam, you may have a make-up exam later by a special appointment. Research Project: Every student has to choose a topic for research on American government and politics during the second week of the semester. The work on the project will be divided into several stages, the result of each stage must be presented to the instructor and it will influence the grade. The final paper has to be 5 – 8 pages long (Times New Roman, font size 12, 1.5 lines spacing). Presentation: Every student shall deliver a presentation on his or her Research Project. You have to present when you are scheduled. Postponements are possible only in exceptional cases and the other person must present instead of you on the scheduled day. It has to be settled with me in advance. Extra Credits: In order to develop your critical thinking and analysis skills I strongly encourage you to present a critical issue concerning the American government and/or its internal or external politics. The choice of topic must coincide with the general topics covered in class, however, the point of view presented must be a critical assessment of them. Should you choose to earn these extra credits, please, turn to me and I will help you with readings and offer a guidance as to the general direction in which you can conduct your original extra research. Presentation has to be with PowerPoint, 10 – 15 minutes long (not longer). It is 30 points maximum. You may present maximum 2 bonus presentations. Course Readers: Students have to return course readers in a good condition during the

	examination week and put their signature in the registration list. If the course reader is not returned at the final exam, the grade will be lowered by 10% (50 points) automatically without any exceptions.		
Grading:	Attendance & Participation	– 10% (50 points)	500 – 476 A 475 – 456 A- 455 – 426 B+ 425 – 401 B 400 – 376 B- 375 – 356 C+ 355 – 326 C 325 – 301 C- 300 – 276 D 275 – below F
	Quizzes	– 15% (75 points)	
	Midterm exam	– 20% (100 points)	
	Final exam	– 20% (100 points)	
	Research Project	– 25% (125 points)	
	Presentation	– 10% (50 points)	
	Total	– 100% (500 points)	
Readings:	1. Bardes , Barbara A., Mack C. Shelley II, Steffen W. Schmidt. 2008. <i>American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials</i> . Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.		
	Electronic Course System http://e-course.auca.kg . Keyword: BARDES		
Daily Syllabus:	1.	Introduction	
	2.	The Democratic Republic a) Politics and Government b) Democracy and Other Forms of Government c) Fundamental Values d) Political Ideologies e) Changing Face of America	Ch. 1, pp. 1-26
	3.	The Constitution a) Colonial Background b) Articles of Confederation c) Drafting the Constitution <i>US Constitution</i>	Ch. 2, pp. 27-43
	4.	The Constitution a) Ratification b) Bill of Rights c) Altering the Constitution <i>Key Constitutional Concepts</i> <i>Our Constitution: A Conversation</i>	Ch. 2, pp. 44-57
	5.	Federalism a) Three Systems of Government b) American Federalism c) States' Rights d) Dispute over the Division of Power e) Politics of Federalism	Ch. 3, pp. 77-106
	6.	Civil Liberties a) Bill of Rights b) Freedom of Religion c) Freedom of Expression d) Freedom of Press e) Right to Assemble and to Petition the Government <i>US Bill of Rights and Constitutional Amendments</i>	Ch. 4, pp. 107-127

7.	Civil Liberties a) Matters of Privacy b) Rights of the Accused vs. Rights of Society c) Death Penalty	Ch. 4, pp. 128-144
8.	Civil Rights a) Civil Rights Movement b) Gender-Based Discrimination c) Immigration and Civil Rights d) Affirmative Action e) Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities f) Gays and Lesbians g) Rights and Status of Juveniles	Ch. 5, pp. 145-188
9.	Public Opinion and Political Socialization a) Defining Public Opinion b) Political Socialization c) Voting Behavior d) Measuring Public Opinion e) Public Opinion and Political Process	Ch. 6, pp. 189-218
10.	Interest Groups a) Types of Interest Groups b) Interest Group Strategies c) Regulating Lobbyists	Ch. 7, pp. 219-246
11.	Political Parties a) History of US Political Parties b) Three Faces of a Party c) Minor Parties in US Politics d) Mechanisms of Political Change	Ch. 8, pp. 247-282
12.	Campaigns, Elections, and the Media a) Nomination Process b) Election Campaign c) Financing the Campaign d) Conduct of Elections e) Voter Turnout and Legal Restrictions <i>Road to Presidency</i>	Ch. 9, pp. 283-304
13.	Campaigns, Elections, and the Media a) Media and Politics b) Primacy of Television c) Media and Political Campaigns d) Government Regulation of the Media <i>Unprecedented: 2000 Presidential Election</i>	Ch. 9, pp. 305-334
14.	The Congress a) Functions of Congress b) Powers of Congress c) House-Senate Differences d) Congressional Elections e) Committee Structure f) How a Bill Becomes Law g) The Budget <i>Understanding Government: The Legislative Branch</i>	Ch. 10, pp. 335-370

15.	<p>The President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Becoming President b) Roles of the President c) Presidential Powers d) Impeachment <p><i>Understanding Government: The Executive Branch</i> <i>Inside the White House</i> <i>Echoes from the White House</i></p>	Ch. 11, pp. 371-393
16.	<p>The President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Executive Organization b) The Vice Presidency <p><i>Understanding Government: The Executive Branch</i> <i>Air Force One</i></p>	Ch. 11, pp. 394-404
17.	<p>The Bureaucracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Nature and Size of Bureaucracy b) Organization and Staffing of Bureaucracy c) Bureaucratic Reform d) Bureaucrats as Politicians and Policy Makers e) Congressional Control of the Bureaucracy <p><i>Understanding Government: The Executive Branch</i> <i>Ambassador: Inside the Embassy</i></p>	Ch. 12, pp. 405-432
18.	<p>The Bureaucracy</p> <p><i>CIA: The Shocking Stories Behind the Headlines</i> <i>Inside the FBI</i> <i>Inside the Pentagon</i></p>	
19.	<p>The Courts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sources of American Law b) Federal Court System c) Supreme Court at Work <p><i>Understanding Government: The Judicial Branch</i></p>	Ch. 13, pp. 433-447
20.	<u>Presentations</u>	
21.	<p>The Courts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Selection of Federal Judges b) Policy Making and the Courts c) What Checks the Courts? <p><i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i></p>	Ch. 13, pp. 448-462
22.	<u>Presentations</u>	
23.	<p>Domestic and Economic Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Policy Making Process b) Health Care c) Poverty and Welfare d) Immigration e) Crime in the 21st Century f) Environmental Policy g) Economic Decision Making h) Politics of Taxes i) Social Security Problem j) World Trade 	Ch. 14, pp. 463-504
24.	<u>Presentations</u>	
25.	<u>Presentations</u>	

26.	Foreign Policy a) Foreign and Defense Policy b) Morality vs. Reality in Foreign Policy c) Challenges in World Politics <i>Uncovered: The War on Iraq</i>	Ch. 15, pp. 505-521
27.	<u>Presentations</u>	
28.	Foreign Policy a) Foreign Policy Makers b) Congress Balances the Presidency c) Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy d) Major Foreign Policy Themes <i>Fahrenheit 9/11</i>	Ch. 15, pp. 522-540
29.	<u>Final Examination</u>	

* This schedule is subject to adjustment and change without prior notice.