Course Title: **PSC 101: Introduction to American Government**

Instructor: David Fleming  
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Class Information: Fall 2013  
Section 01  
MWF 8:30 – 9:20  
Johns Hall Room 109  
Course Website: FU Moodle (courses.furman.edu)

Office Hours: Monday 10:30 – 11:30  
Thursday 12:00 – 1:00  
and BY APPOINTMENT

Required Course Materials:


2 Green Books (for the midterm and final exams)

Other materials distributed by the instructor in class or on Moodle

Students are expected to read a major national newspaper on a daily basis (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or *The Wall Street Journal*).

Course Description:
This course provides an introduction to the study of American politics. First, we will examine the historical and constitutional foundations of American politics. Next, we will focus on major political institutions, including Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the judicial branch. In the third part of this course, the role of citizens in American democracy will take center stage. We will examine why people do (and do not) participate and how this may influence policymaking. Lastly, we will discuss the outcomes of the American political system.

While this class includes the nuts-and-bolts of the American political system, you will also learn how to think like a political scientist. This course provides a foundation for future political science classes, as well as for your participation in the political system as an informed citizen.
Assessments:
Assessments in this course measure both factual and analytical learning. Students will be expected to apply what they have learned in class to current political events. All assignments should be completed on your own.

There are 5 assessed activities:

1. **Topic Assignments**
   - 7 of 11 500-word reflection papers = 25 Points

2. **Midterm Examination**
   - Multiple choice, identification, short essay = 20 Points

3. **Research Paper**
   - 6-9 page (double spaced) research paper on a topic of your choice = 15 Points

4. **Cumulative Final Exam**
   - Multiple choice, identification, short essay = 25 Points

5. **Class Participation & Assignments**
   - Quizzes, informed/insightful participation, etc. = 15 Points

Total = 100 Points

**Grading:**
- 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-
- Below 60: F

Incompletes will only be given in extremely rare circumstances and are up to the discretion of the instructor.

**Academic Dishonesty**
Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. In instances of academic dishonesty, students will be given an automatic 0 on the assignment (at a minimum) and will be prosecuted under Furman’s academic guidelines. In my time at Furman, I have failed students in my courses for academic dishonesty. In this course, I reserve the right to use turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Once submitted, your papers will become part of the online database.

According to university policy, “students, faculty, and administrators are expected to promote a culture of academic integrity. Students have the ultimate responsibility for knowing Furman’s policy and expectations regarding academic integrity, and for behaving honorably in their academic work. Ignorance of what constitutes academic misconduct is not an acceptable defense for violating the community standard.” If you have any questions about academic dishonesty or proper citation techniques, please contact me. More information on academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism is available at: http://www.furman.edu/integrity.
Attendance/Late Work Policies
Good performance in this class requires consistent attendance and participation. Every student is allowed three unexcused absences. For each day above three that the student is absent, the student’s final grade will drop by one-third of a letter grade. Excused absences must be cleared by the Dean’s office, and I must be notified beforehand. If you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for any announcements and material covered during your absence, and you should get notes from another student in class.

All work is due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late. A paper handed in after class on the due date will be penalized one-third of a letter grade.

Students in Need of Special Accommodations
Students in need of special accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services and should meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

Community Standards
This is a discussion-based course. Political discussions can sometimes grow contentious. All students and the instructor must be respectful of the views or opinions of others in the classroom. If you ever feel that the classroom environment is discouraging your participation, please contact me and we can work to fix it.

A respectful and participatory classroom also means that students should be focused on the class material and discussion. All cell phones or PDAs must be turned off before class begins. You may not record any part of the class unless you have received permission from the instructor. Disruptive behavior, including the misuse of computers, will not be tolerated. Students who do not follow these rules will receive low participation grades.
THE SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS
ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Course Schedule
All assignments and readings are due on the date listed below.

Thinking like a Political Scientist
Wed. Aug. 28: Introduction
Fri. Aug. 30: Readings: CGH: Chap. 1; KPS: Chap. 1

FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Constitutional Foundations
Mon. Sept. 2: No Class: Labor Day Holiday
Wed. Sept. 4: The Constitution
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 3, The Constitution
Fri. Sept. 6: Ratification
   Readings: CGH: Federalist No. 10 (Appendix 2), Federalist No. 51 (Appendix 3)
Mon. Sept. 9: Federalism
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 4

Political Culture
Wed. Sept. 11: The American Creed
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 2
Fri. Sept. 13: Due: Political Culture Assignment (1/11)

Civil Rights and Liberties
Mon. Sept. 16: Being a Political Scientist
   Class in the Computer Lab
Wed. Sept. 18: Civil Liberties
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 5
Fri. Sept. 20: Civil Rights
   Due: Opinions on Civil Rights & Liberties Assignment (2/11)

INSTITUTIONS

Congress
Mon. Sept. 23: Structure and Lawmaking
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 11
Wed. Sept. 25: Representation
   Due: Member of Congress Assignment (3/11)
Fri. Sept. 27: Redistricting
   Readings: Additional Readings on Moodle
   Due: Redistricting Game Assignment (4/11)

The Executive Branch
Mon. Sept. 30: The Presidency
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 12
**Due:** Listen to podcast (Moodle)

Fri. Oct. 4: The Bureaucracy  
**Readings:** CGH: Chap. 14  
**Due:** Current Events Assignment (5/11)

**The Courts**  
Mon. Oct. 7: Organization of the Federal Judiciary  
**Readings:** CGH: Chap. 13  
Wed. Oct. 9: Judicial Decision-making  
Fri. Oct. 11: **MIDTERM EXAM**

**THE PUBLIC**

**Public Opinion**  
Mon. Oct. 14: No Class: Fall Break  
**Readings:** CGH: Chap. 6; KPS: Chap. 5  
Fri. Oct. 18: Party Identification  
**Readings:** KPS: Chap. 2  
Mon. Oct. 21: No Class  
**Readings:** Public opinion poll articles (Moodle)  
**Due:** Public Opinion Readings Assignment (6/11)  
Fri. Oct. 25: Political Socialization  
**Readings:** Article on Moodle

**Political Participation**  
Mon. Oct. 28: The Paradox of Political Participation  
**Readings:** CGH: Chap. 7  
**Due:** Political Socialization Assignment (7/11)  
Wed. Oct. 30: Voter Turnout  
Fri. Nov. 1: Young Voters & Civic Engagement  
**Readings:** KPS: Chap. 6

Mon. Nov. 4: Election Outcomes  
**Readings:** KPS: Chap. 8  
Wed. Nov. 6: A Recap: The 2012 Election  
**Readings:** Election readings (Moodle)
The Media
Fri. Nov. 8: The Media and Politics
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 8
Mon. Nov. 11: Information Sources
   Due: Media Coverage Assignment (8/11)

Political Parties
Wed. Nov. 13: The Two-Party System
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 9
Fri. Nov. 15: Parties in the Electorate

Political Polarization
Mon. Nov. 18: MOVIE NIGHT (6:00pm-8:00)
Mon. Nov. 18: Elite vs. Mass Polarization
   Due: Searching for Polarization Assignment (9/11)
Wed. Nov. 20: Readings: KPS: Chap. 3

Interest Groups
Fri. Nov. 22: Pluralism
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 10
   Due: Interest Group Analysis Assignment (10/11)
Mon. Nov. 25: Collective Action Problems
Wed. Nov. 27: No Class: Thanksgiving break
Fri. Nov. 29: No Class: Thanksgiving break
Mon. Dec. 2: Civic Organizations
   Due: Research Paper (Electronic and paper copy)

Public Policy
Wed. Dec. 4: Domestic Policy & Agenda-Setting
   Readings: CGH: Chap. 15
   Due: Budget Game Assignment (11/11)
Fri. Dec. 6: Policy Analysis

Mon. Dec. 9: Review for Final

Final Exam: Thursday, December 12, 8:30am – 11:00, Johns Hall, Room 109
(The final exam time and date are nonnegotiable, so make your travel plans accordingly.)