



SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

MADRID CAMPUS

GVT 110 M1 – INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS

Instructor Information:

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Course Information:

Catalog Description: An introduction to the American political system and constitutional framework. Our focus will be on actors and institutions, including the role of the Presidency, the Congress and the Judiciary in the political process. Contemporary public issues will be discussed, as will the role of political theory in shaping American democracy. Attention will be given to the role of the media, public opinion, political ideology, political parties and interest groups within the national political system.

Instructor's Additional Course Description: A clear understanding of the US democratic system will allow us, as citizens, to engage throughout our lives in meaningful political and social participation. For this reason, we shall endeavor to engage in a current analysis of democracy in its historical and cultural context. This class will encourage insightful analysis and understanding of governmental processes and how they affect our lives directly, as citizens.

Prerequisites: None.

Credit Hours: 4.

This course follows the US Federal Government's Credit Hour definition: "An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence that reasonably approximates no less than:

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

For full up-to-date statement:

https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/files/downloads/POLICIES/Pp111_Policy_On_Credits-And-Degrees.pdf

To complete this course, students will need to dedicate, at a minimum, the following amount of time to the listed activities:

Assignments/Activities	Engagement Estimate	Engagement Hours
Course Readings	428 pages x 8 minutes per page	57
Review Power Points	52 PP x 30 minutes per PP	26
Research Question	6 hours preparation	6
Midterm Exam	8 hours preparation	8
Literature Review	15 hours preparation	15
Homework assignments	16 hours preparation	16
Research Project	12 hours preparation	12
Final Exam	12 hours preparation	12
Class Attendance	3 hours x 15 weeks	45
TOTAL		197 HOURS

Textbook/Course Materials:

- *Gateways to Democracy 4th Edition* (2018), by John G. Geer, Richard Herrera, Wendy J. Schiller, Jeffrey A. Segal, Boston: Cengage Learning (available as an E-book).
- *On Democracy* (2015) by Robert Dahl, New Haven: Yale University Press (Multiple copies on reserve in the Library).

Other Recommended & Reference readings:

- *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* Second Edition (2003) by Robert A. Dahl, New Haven: Yale University Press. E-book.
- *The Federalist Papers* (1987 [1788]) by A. Hamilton, J. Madison & J. Jay, New York: Penguin.
- *Who Stole the American Dream?* (2012) by Hedrick Smith, New York: Random House.
- *Analyzing American Democracy: Politics and Political Science*, 2nd Edition (2016) by Jon R. Bond & Kevin B. Smith., N.Y., Routledge.

Human Behavior and Societies Goals and Objectives:

Goals	Objectives	Assessments
1. Upon completing this course students will understand the interaction and relationships among people, institutions and the social environment.	1. Students will be able to assess core social science ideas, arguments, analytical concepts and literature.	In class assignments or quiz
	2. Students will be able to identify how distinct groups, interests and/or institutions interact locally and/or globally with each other.	Research presentation and Blackboard assignments
	3. Students will be able to analyze the political, economic and/or cultural impact of the subject matter.	Blackboard assignments
	4. Students will be able to understand that the social institutions and cultures are social constructions.	Research presentation and Blackboard assignments
2. Upon completing this course students will understand the role of theory and research in social science analysis.	1. Students will be able to examine the theoretical and empirical findings of the relevant social science literature.	Midterm exam and Blackboard assignments
	2. Students will be able to assess the merits of prevailing schools of thought within a specific social science discipline.	Final exam
	3. Students will be able to identify how a specific social science discipline understands and analyzes complex social phenomena.	Midterm and final exam

Goals	Objectives	Assessments
3. Upon completing this course students will know how to apply a social science approach to the study of the social world.	1. Students will be able to apply social science concepts to the study of a specific case or trend, local group or institution.	Oral presentation and Blackboard assignments
	2. Students will be able to employ relevant social science methodology (qualitative and/or quantitative) when completing course assignments.	Blackboard assignment
4. Upon completing this course students will understand how learning and experiences inside and outside the classroom are connected and interdependent.	1. Students will be able to examine how learning and experiences inside and outside the classroom are connected and interdependent.	a guest speaker will be invited to share real world experience or a politics simulation activity
	2. Students will be able to assess the merits of prevailing social science theory and research as they relate to real world challenges.	a field trip, guest speaker, or political observation activity will be included as class participation.

GVT 110 Course Goals & Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will know/understand	Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to	How the student will be assessed on these learning objectives:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The US system of government, including its structure and key features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key actors, events and forces that define today's democratic system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating knowledge of the subject through participation in class discussions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key historical moments and issues faced by the US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret political situations in light of contrasting theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard assignments on the readings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US influence and interaction with other democracies globally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare and contrast weaknesses and strengths of various historical perspectives on the US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral presentation of research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical insight into today's democracy and its challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a capacity to analyze democratic issues today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roots of the US democratic system in its historical context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze media and readings in order to develop critical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final exam

Assignments/Exams/Papers/Projects:

Students will be evaluated in the following areas:

- Blackboard assignments relating to the readings
- Quizzes
- Exams: Midterm and Final
- Oral presentation of research on a topic agreed with instructor.

Selected assignments in this course may be used by our accreditation team for institutional assessment purposes and will be handled confidentially.

Grading/Evaluation:

Midterm exam: 25%

Final exam: 25%

Oral presentation in class (scheduled in November): 25%

Teacher's evaluation of the student's participation in class discussions, blackboard discussions, and quizzes: 25%

Late assignments will be graded 5% down for each day delayed (24 hours).

Course and Classroom Policies:

We shall seek to make this class open, respectful and engaged. Please come prepared to participate in each class session, and help to create an environment of respect for all religions, ideologies, ethnic groups and gender identities.

Courtesy towards each other is expected. Therefore, no food or drink (except water) should be brought into class. Please refrain from using cell phones or laptops in class. Please be on time to class; those arriving once teaching has begun will have it counted as half an absence. It is expected that students will remain in the classroom throughout the class meeting (except for emergencies).

The Madrid Campus requires regular attendance. Absences will affect your grade, and a portion of your final grade will depend on your participation in class. All required assignments are to be submitted on time. In deference to your punctual peers, assignments that are late will be marked down.

If a problem arises regarding attending a class session or delivering work on time, please speak to the instructor beforehand. Minor allowances can be made if enough advance notice has been given.

Participation/Attendance Policy:

The SUMC Student Handbook states the following:

Once a student is registered for a course, attendance at every meeting of every class is expected, including those held in the first week of the semester. A maximum of two unjustified absences is permitted. Each additional absence will cause the final course grade to be lowered by one-third of a letter grade, i.e., from A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.

Excessive absences in a course will have a negative effect on the final grade. When a student is absent, the quality of his or her work in a course will deteriorate since material missed in class sessions can rarely be made up satisfactorily, even though the student remains responsible for that work.

Please note that even when a student has a justified reason for missing class, such as illness, the negative academic impact on learning will be the same as if the absence were for spurious reasons.

Any absence due to illness should be justified by a note from the student's physician or other health professional confirming the day(s) on which the student was unable to attend class. A written excuse from a student's host parent or residence supervisor is also acceptable.

In the event that a class meeting is unexpectedly cancelled, students will be expected to continue with readings or other assignments as originally scheduled. Any assignments due or class activities (e.g., a quiz, exam or presentation) planned for such a cancelled class are due at the next class meeting unless other instructions are communicated.

Disability Statement:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in my classroom.

If formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at the main Campus in Boston so that I am notified of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. Check the ODS web site at www.suffolk.edu/disability for information on accommodations.

Student Resources:

SUMC provides a range of student services, both academic and personal. To learn more about course-related tutorials and academic workshops, refer to the SUMC Student Handbook, Section 2 "Academic Policies and Services". Section 5, "Living in Madrid", contains information on the medical and mental health resources, including an English-speaking therapist, available to you.

Midterm Review:

At midterm, around week 7, you will be given a midterm grade based on your progress to date and performance on assignments, quizzes and midterm exam. Midterm grades of C- or below will be reported to the Madrid Campus Academic Standing Committee, with an explanation of what I believe has contributed to that grade: excessive absences, poor time management or study skills, lack of effort, difficulty with the course material or with writing or language skills, etc. The Academic Standing Committee or I may contact you to suggest strategies for addressing these difficulties. I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours so we may discuss how you can be successful in this class.

Academic Misconduct:

www.suffolk.edu/about/mission-history/policies-procedures/academic-misconduct-policy

Suffolk University expects all students to be responsible individuals with high standards of conduct. Students are expected to practice ethical behavior in all learning environments and scenarios, including classrooms and laboratories, internships and practica, and study groups and academic teams. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, use of unauthorized electronic devices, self-plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, and other types of academic misconduct are treated as serious offenses that initiate a formal process of inquiry, one that may lead to disciplinary sanctions.

Student work will be thoroughly examined for academic integrity and may be scanned using plagiarism detection software. A faculty member suspecting academic misconduct will contact the student using the Suffolk email address to schedule a meeting and will make all effort to do so within five business days of detecting the incident. During the meeting, the faculty member will present the documentation that led to suspected academic misconduct. Resolution of the incident will be according to the procedures outlined in the SUMC Student Handbook.

Academic Grievances Policy:

www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-student-cas-sbs/grievances-academics

Course Schedule:

The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.

WEEK	General Topic of lesson	Readings or Other Assignments Due
1	Introduction to the course. Overview, topics & expectations.	Please come prepared with some US political news on recent events
2	What is democracy? How did it come about? Democratic goals.	<u>Readings:</u> Dahl (On Democracy book) Chapters 1, 2 & 3 & Blackboard Discussion
3	What does democracy produce?	<u>Readings:</u> Dahl, Chapters 4 - 7 & Handout on Voting
4	The Constitution and establishment of US Government.	<u>Readings:</u> Dahl, Chapter 8, & Geer et al., Chapter 2 w/ Blackboard discussion
5	The Division of Powers & Federalism	<u>Readings:</u> Geer et al., Chapter 3 & Blackboard
6	The Presidency – the Executive	<u>Readings:</u> Geer et al., Chapter 13
7	Congress - the Legislative Branch & Midterm review class	<u>Readings:</u> Geer et al., Chapter 12
	Midterm exam in class	Selected readings and research guidance
8	<i>How to do an oral presentation</i> & The Courts – the Judicial Branch	<u>Readings:</u> Geer et al., Chapter 15
9	Civil Liberties & Civil Rights	<u>Readings:</u> Geer et al., Chapters 4 & 5
10	Political Participation, Voting & Elections	<u>Readings:</u> Geer et al., Chapters 10 & 11 & Blackboard discussion
11	Class presentations	Oral presentations begin Movie: Lincoln

WEEK	General Topic of lesson	Readings or Other Assignments Due
12	Interest groups & political parties	<u>Readings</u> : Geer et al., Chapter 8 & 9 & Blackboard discussion
13	Public opinion & the media	<u>Readings</u> : Geer et al., Chapter 6 & 7.
14	Contemporary issues & Review session	Handout & Modelling Game
15	Final Exam	