**Department of Government**

**Dartmouth College**

**Government 3**

**Introduction to the American Political System**

**Spring 2015**

***Professor:*** Amy Semet

***Class Times:*** MWF, 11:15a.m.-12:35p.m.; x hour, Tuesday 12-12:50p.m., Rockefeller 1

***Office Hours:*** I would like to get to know you all, and hope you will come see me during office hours or by appointment. My official office hours will be Tuesday 3-5. I am also available anytime most class days except sometimes Friday afternoon so please email me to set up a time. My office is in 304 Silsby.

***Phone:*** 215-767-0041 (cell)

***Email:*** [Amy.Semet@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Amy.Semet@dartmouth.edu); [semet@post.harvard.edu](mailto:semet@post.harvard.edu)

***Course Objective:*** The goal of this class is two-fold: First and foremost, students will learn how to read scholarly articles and write analytically. While in this particular class we are studying American politics as the subject matter, the skills learned in this class in how to read and decipher scholarly articles will be transportable to other subjects. Moreover, learning how to critically think about an issue and to identify strengths and weaknesses in other’s arguments is a key skill that will be of benefit to you no matter what your chosen career path. We will also have a writing workshop to discuss how to write papers. Secondly, students will gain a greater appreciation of the American political system more generally so that they can become better and more well-informed citizens. Upon completion of this course, students will gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of American politics so that they can better analyze news media coverage of the American political system more generally. Former U.S. Senator from New Hampshire Judd Gregg will visit our class on Wednesday, April 8.

This class will broadly be divided into three parts. In the first part, we will study American institutions and governmental structure: the Constitution, federalism, Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, interest groups, the judiciary and political parties. In the second section, we will shift to understanding political behavior. We will look at elections and voting; we will also learn about public opinion and the media. In the last section, we will cover law-related topics, including civil rights and civil liberties.

***Prerequisites***: None

***X hours:*** The x-hour is on Tuesday 12-12:50. We will use a few of the x-hours early in the semester to build up some classes when people are less busy in case we have to cancel a class later in the semester. X hours may be added if needed.

***Class Requirements:***

***Attendance and panel/class participation (10%):*** Attendance is mandatory at all classes unless there is an approved reason like illness, death in the family, a religious observance or an out of town sporting event if you are a varsity athlete. Attendance, participation and effort will be used as deciding factors if you end up in between grades. Students are also expected to be actively engaged during class, and use electronic devices only for classroom-related exercises or notetaking. You will also be required to attend a paper presentation on the afternoon of June 1.

Although everyone is required to do the readings before class in order to get the most of the class, we will use the panel system to ensure that a few people in the class know that particular class’s readings especially well. You will be “on panel” 2 times over the course of the semester, and you can pick the days you are “on panel” depending upon your interest in the topic and your obligations in your other classes.

When you are “on panel,” you will propose 2-3 questions for discussion; you may also be asked to give a short summary of the readings from the Reader. You should especially note the following when asking questions about the readings from the Reader: What is the theory being tested? How strong is the evidence supporting that theory? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the argument being tested? How does that theory fit in with what we are discussing in class?

The readings and work are more front loaded toward the beginning of the term when students are less busy. There are less readings toward the end of the term so you can work on your papers.

Students are also expected to stay up to date with current events. Students should follow the NYT, Washington Post, etc. feed on Facebook or Twitter. I will post News articles on Canvas.

***Midterm (30%)***: We will have a midterm on or about Wednesday, Apr. 27 (Estimated). The midterm will be in-class; it will consist of IDs, short answer and essay questions. You will have some choice in what questions you answer.

***Research Paper (25%)***: Students will be required to write a research paper of between 7-10 pages double spaced. Students will have a choice on what they would like to do. The proposal for the paper will be due on Wednesday, April 22. Students will be required to submit full drafts of their papers by Friday, May 22, with the final paper being due on Monday, June 1. The draft will count for 20% of the paper grade; you will get points as follows on the draft: check plus (5 points) (very good complete draft requiring minor revisions), check (4 points) (complete draft with good research which requires significant writing revision), or check minus (3 or less points) (poor draft which requires both substantial research and writing revision).

***Final Exam (35%)***: We will have a final exam, similar in format to the midterm on Sat., June 6 at 8AM.

***Textbooks****:* There are two required textbooks for the class which you can get at the Dartmouth Bookstore, Wheelock Bookstore or online.

Ken Kollman, *The American Political System,* 2nd Edition (WW Norton Press 2013 or 2015), with 2014 Election update (“Textbook”); Ken Kollman, *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*, 3rd Edition (WW Norton Press 2014) (“Reader”)

For the textbook, you can get the 2013 or 2015 date; just make sure that it is the second edition. The 2015 just has an update for the 2014 election so it is not crucial if you just get the 2013 version if that version is significantly cheaper. Make sure to get the 3rd edition for the Reader. Please note that we will be using the CORE edition WITHOUT policy chapters; we won't be using the policy chapters so there is no need to buy the bigger book.  Both books are available at a special bundle price on the WW Norton website and at the bookstore.

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/978-0-393-93674-2/>

The Textbook is also available in an electronic version at half the price. You can purchase the e-version at the WW Norton website or on amazon.

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/american-political-system/welcome.aspx>

***Grading Policies:*** Students must take the midterm and final as scheduled unless the student receives advanced permission based on an extenuating personal circumstance or illness verified by the Dean’s Office/Dick’s House. The research paper is due at the start of class on the assigned due date.  Points will be deduced for a late paper. Out of fairness to all students in the class, there will be no extensions except in the case of extenuating circumstances.

***Electronic Device Policy***: Students may also use electronic devices and laptop computers for classroom-related notetaking and exercises. *Other use of computers or electronic devices will result in a lower attendance/participation grade.*

***Academic Honor Principle:*** Students are responsible for understanding Dartmouth’s academic integrity rules. Explanations of the integrity rules and principles can be obtained at [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja](http://www.dartmouth.edu/%7Euja).  Ignorance of the Academic Honor Principle will not be considered an excuse if a violation occurs.  Beyond any penalties imposed as a consequence of an Academic Honor Principle investigation, any student found to have cheated or plagiarized on homework, tests or the research project will receive a failing grade in the class.  Details on citing sources are available at http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources.

***Students with Disabilities:*** Students with learning, physical or psychiatric disabilities enrolled in this course that may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible.

***Religious Observances:*** Should you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the class, please speak with me to discuss appropriate accommodations.

**Institutions**

**Mon., Mar. 30, Tues. Mar. 31 (x hour): Introduction and Constitutional Design**

-Chapters 1 (focus on pg. 9-24), 2

-Reader: Chapters 1.2 (Olson) (skim); 2.1 (Federalist No. 10); 2.2 (Federalist No. 51); 2.3 (Brutus) (skim); 2.4 (Dahl)

**Wed., Apr. 1, Fri., Apr. 3 (Panel Day): Federalism**

-Chapter 3

-Reader:Chapters 3.1 (Federalist No. 39); 3.2 (Riker); 3.3 (*Arizona v. U.S.)* (skim)

**Mon., Apr. 6, Tues., Apr. 7 (x hour), Fri., Apr. 10 (Panel Day): Congress**

-Chapter 5

-Reader: Chapters 5.1 (Mayhew); 5.2 (Fenno); 5.4 (Cox & McCubbins); Krehbiel

“Pivotal Politics” reading to be handed out; Smith and Gamm reading to be handed out

**Wed., Apr. 8: Senator Judd Gregg, former Governor, Senator and U.S. House member from NH, will visit; please arrive to class on time and please bring questions**

**Fri., Apr. 10, Mon., Apr. 13, Tues., Apr. 14 (x hour) (Panel Day): Presidency**

-Chapter 6

-Reader: Chapters 6.1 (Neustadt) (skim); 6.2 (Cameron); 6.3 (Canes-Wrone) (skim); 6.4 (Howell);

6.5 (Kernell)

**Wed., Apr. 15, Fri., Apr. 17 (Panel Day): Bureaucracy and Interest Groups**

-Chapters 7, skim 11 (especially pg. 379-396)

-Reader: Chapters 7.2 (McCubbins & Schwartz); 7.3 (Carpenter); 11.1 (Gilens); Moe reading to

be handed out

**Mon., Apr. 20, Wed., Apr. 22, Fri., Apr. 24 (Panel Day): Judiciary**

-Chapter 8

-Reader: Chapters 8.1 (Rosenberg); 8.2 (*Marbury v. Madison*); 8.4 (*Natl Federation of Independent Businesses v. Sebelius*) (skim)

**Wed., Apr. 22: Research Proposals Due**

**Mon., Apr. 27 (Panel Day): Political Parties**

**-**Chapter 12

-Reader: Chapters 12.1 (Aldrich); 12.2 (Campbell et al.); 16.2 (Bartels)

**Tues., Apr. 28 (x hour): Midterm Review**

**Wed., Apr. 29: Midterm Exam (estimated)**

**Voting, Public Opinion and Behavior**

**Mon., May 4, Tues., May 5 (x hour), Wed., May 6 (Panel Day; Writing Workshop): Voting and Participation**

-Chapter 10

-Reader: Chapters 10.1 (Rosenstone & Hansen); 10.3 (Putnam)

**Wed., May 6 (cont.), Fri., May 8 (Panel Day): Elections**

-Chapter 13

-Reader: Chapters 13.2 (*Citizens United v. FEC)* (skim)*;* 13.3 (McCarthy et al.); 13.4 (*Shelby County v. Holder*); Stimson et al. reading to be handed out

**Mon., May 11, Wed., May 13 (Panel Day): Public Opinion**

-Chapter 9

-Reader: Chapters 9.1 (Lupia & McCubbins); 9.2 (Zaller)

**Wed., May 13 (Panel Day): Media**

-Chapter 14 (skim)

-Reader: Chapters 14.1 (Baum); 14.2 (Abrajano)

**Fri., May 15: Green Key Weekend**

**Mon., May 18, Wed., May 20, Fri., May 22, Wed., May 27 (Panel Day: Criminal Law), Fri., May 29 (Panel Day: Other Constitutional Law Cases): Civil Rights and Civil Liberties/Legal Issues**

-Chapter 4

-Reader: Chapters 4.2 (*Brown v. Board of Education*); 4.3 (*District of Columbia v. Heller*); 4.5

(*US v. Windsor*); 8.3 (*Lawrence v. Texas*); 8.5 (Stohr)

-Other legal readings to be handed out in class (Criminal: *Mapp v. Ohio, Miranda v. Arizona,*

*Gideon v. Wainwright, Furman v. Georgia*; Other Cases: *Griswold v. Connecticut, Roe v.*

*Wade, Planned Parenthood v. Casey, Texas v. Johnson, Engel v. Vitale)*

**Fri., May 22: Research Papers Drafts Due**

**Mon. May 25: Memorial Day**

**Mon., June 1: FINAL EXAM REVIEW; Research Papers Due**

**Mon., June 1, Afternoon: Paper presentation for Quantitative Social Science Program**

**Sat., June 6, 8AM: Final Exam**