COURSE SYLLABUS

PLS 130: Basics of American Politics-3 credits
PLS 130 001N-Class Number 17416
Instructor: Martha L. Burns, MA, PP
Faculty web page: http://www.tcc.edu/faculty/webpages/MBurns/
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Description and Course Objectives
Basics of American Politics teaches the basics of the operations of Congress, the presidency, and the federal court system. It includes an examination of civil liberties, civil rights, due process concepts, elections, political parties and interest groups.
At the conclusion of the semester’s study, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of basic principles of representative democracy and understand basic terms such as federalism, republic, constitutional government, liberalism and conservatism. Students will be able to identify the forces and factors which shaped the original constitution and those which continually modify it today.

RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS CLASS

Required Textbook

Additional Resources that may be required:

- LOTS OF ENERGY, ORGANIZATION, TENACITY, AND PERSEVERANCE. Getting through all this material in 10 weeks is difficult for me, and I know it will be difficult for you too. I cover the same material and give the same assignments in 10 weeks that I cover in 16 weeks.
- Thomas, legislative information on the internet, a service of the Library of Congress: http://thomas.loc.gov/ (Note: we may access the Constitution, The Declaration of Independence, selected chapters of The Federalist Papers, and various information on the political process through the Thomas website.).
- Various newspaper web sites as assigned, which can be accessed through TCC’s data base (http://www.tcc.edu/lrc/indexes/index.htm) or through the selected newspaper’s web site.
- Various political party web sites and web sites related to political happenings.

Additional Requirements:

- Computer/technical skills necessary to open, input data, save, and send electronically documents with Microsoft Word.
- Computer hardware and software that allows you access to TCC’s Blackboard site and your VCCS email account, both of which you will need to access frequently, possibly daily, for announcements and assignments. Due to the potential of virus potential, ONLY the VCCS email account will be used for email communication between each student and the instructor. FOR PRIORITY HANDLING, ALWAYS TYPE PLS 130 Online IN THE SUBJECT LINE WHEN SENDING ME AN EMAIL.
- Familiarization with the procedures for enrolling and participating in an on-line course, as stated on TCC’s online learning site at http://www.tcc.edu/students/dtls/.

Class Requirements: THIS SUMMER CLASS IS A TEN WEEK CLASS AND WE WILL COVER THE SAME MATERIALS AND DO THE SAME ASSIGNMENTS THAT I DO IN A 16 WEEK CLASS. It's difficult for me; it will be difficult for you too. Keep up on the chapter readings and all assignments. I do not give any extra credit or make-up work.
DISTANCE ED ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Each student will participate on Blackboard (Bb) Discussion Board (DB) by answering my weekly assigned questions, using the Dye textbook as a reference, and/or by responding to questions and responses posted by classmates. YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED TO MAKE SEARING COMMENTS THAT REFLECT A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OR THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. Rather, your discussions and comments should reflect your knowledge of the Dye text, a curiosity of how your government operates, and thoughtful reasoning on the interaction between We the People, the branches of government, and various stakeholders. You will post your comments in the Discussion Board each week for the other students and Professor Burns to respond to. All students and the instructor will participate in a discussion of the comments and/or answering the questions. Distance Ed attendance and participation through the discussion board are 20 percent of the student’s grade.

QUIZZES: Each week’s readings will be subject to an open book quiz, which will be accessed through the Assignment folder in Bb. The quiz will be timed and you will be allowed a set number of minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes are 20 percent of the student’s grade.

CURRENT EVENT PAPERS (2 TOTAL): The instructor will assign a current event issue for each paper for the student to relate to the materials covered in the Dye text. You will relate the article to Dye by choosing one or more topics studied in the Dye text and then discussing how the current event relates to the chosen topics. You must refer clearly to the Dye text in your paper, and also cite the pages you are referencing, and again, you must relate the current event article to those chosen topics.

All papers must be a minimum of two pages and a maximum of four pages and are to be turned in as a Microsoft Word document, in 12 point font, double spaced, with one inch margins on all sides of paper, paper size is to be 8-1/2” x 11”. To set margins in a Microsoft Word document, go to File > Page Setup and then select the Margins tab. Set the Top, Bottom, Right and Left boxes to 1” and be sure to click “OK” before exiting that panel.

Student’s name, the due date and “PLS130-Summer 2011” are to be typed on a separate cover page and the cover sheet is not included in the required two to four pages.

You must submit the paper using the Bb Assignments folder.

If you are using the most current Word software in which the document type ends with “X” you must save the document as a Word .doc. Any other word processing system, such as Word Perfect, must also be saved as a Word.doc file. If you do not know how to do this, go to your internet search engine and type in “How do I save a doc.x file [or whatever the file extension is on your software] to a .doc file?” and you will find instructions.

Papers are 20 percent of the student’s grade.

All papers are due as per the syllabus or assignment. No late papers will be accepted and there will be no make up work or extra credit for any missed work.

PROCTORED MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAM: The open-book mid-term exam will be cumulative from materials covered in Dye, Chapter 1-9 and will come from the Dye text. The open-book final exam will come from Dye, Chapters 10-16 and will also come from the Dye text. Each exam will be timed and each exam is 20 percent of the student’s grade.

To insure academic integrity, I require students to attend two proctored activities for each online course. The proctored experience requires you to attend the proctored activities and identify yourself with picture ID to a designated college representative, which generally occurs at the college’s campus testing centers, or if you are in a distant location, by arranging proctoring at an accredited college or university, or with your command’s education director. Contact me by email for further assistance, and/or if you know who will proctor your exams, have them email me their contact information at mburns@tcc.edu.

If you are in Tidewater, you will take the exams at the Norfolk Campus Testing Center. Please check their web site for instructions at the following link: http://www.tcc.edu/wd/ilab/
IMPORTANT: Political discussions should take place in a polite and civil environment and be an informed conversation with a mind open to receive the vast experiences of Americans’ cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. Be prepared to share your own informed beliefs and experiences and to listen to and converse with your peers without fear of ridicule or censure. To that end, familiarize yourself with the college’s policy on “Expectation for Civility and Safety” and “Student Conduct” from the TCC Student Handbook, (http://www.tcc.edu/forms/handbook/): all expectations for civility, safety and honesty in your academic work in this class will be expected and enforced.

Method of Evaluation:
Attendance and participation through discussion board 20 %
Quizzes 20 %
Current event (2 total) 20 %
Mid-term exam 20 %
Final exam 20 %

I DO NOT GIVE EXTRA CREDIT OR MAKE UP WORK

GRADING:
90-100=A
80-89=B
70-79=C
60-69=D
BELOW 60=F

I DO NOT GIVE EXTRA CREDIT OR MAKE UP WORK

COURSE SCHEDULE--NOTE: the due dates are deadlines, after which the assignment will not be accepted, read, or graded. You can do the assignment ahead of the deadline.

Week 1, May 23:
Due week of May 23rd, read Dye Chapter 1;
Due by 5/28, 11 p.m. quiz for chapter 1;
Due by 5/29, 11 p.m. Discussion Board (DB) for chapter 1, no book necessary for this DB.

Week 2, May 30:
Due by 5/30: read Dye Chapter 2
Due by 6/04, 11 p.m. quiz for chapter 2
Due by 6/05, 11p.m. DB for chapter 2

Week 3, June 06: **Note: this week there will be two chapters**
Due by 6/06, read Dye chapters 3 & 4
Due by 6/11, 11 p.m. quiz for chapters 3 & 4
Due by 6/12, 11 p.m. DB for chapters, 3 & 4

Week 4, June 13: **Note: this week there will be two chapters**
Due by 6/13, 11 p.m. read Dye, pages that have The Constitution of the United States, and Dye chapter 5 & 6
Due by 6/18, 11 p.m. quiz for chapters 5 & 6
Due by 6/19 11 p.m. DB for both chapters 5 & 6

**DUE BY 6/20, 11 P.M., CURRENT EVENT PAPER ONE RELATED TO SELECTED TOPIC(S) IN CHAPTERS 1-6**
Week 5, June 20:
**DUE BY 6/20, 11 P.M., CURRENT EVENT PAPER ONE RELATED TO SELECTED TOPIC(S) IN CHAPTERS 1-6**
Due by 6/20, read Dye chapter 7  
Due by 6/25 11 p.m. quiz for chapter 7  
Due by 6/26 11 p.m. DB for chapter 7

Week 6, June 27: **Note: this week there will be two chapters and you have to take the mid-term exam between 6/27 and 7/2**
Due by 6/27, read Dye chapters 8 & 9  
Due by 7/02, 11 p.m. quiz for chapters 8 & 9  
Due by 7/03 11 p.m. DB for chapters 8 & 9  
Due by 7/02, 5 p.m., mid-term exam: **NOTE: The open book mid-term exam on chapters 1-9 will be available from 6/27 until 7/2, 5 p.m., subject to Testing Center days and hours of operation. CHECK WITH THE TESTING CENTER FOR DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION, AS IT IS A HOLIDAY WEEK.** The exam will be taken at the Norfolk Testing Center, if you are in the Tidewater area. If you are out of the area, you will take the exam as per the instructions above in the section “PROCTORED MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAM.”**

Week 7, July 04:
Due by 7/4, read Dye chapter 10  
Due by 7/09 11 p.m. quiz for chapter 10  
Due by 7/10 11 p.m. DB for chapter 10  
**DUE BY 7/11, 11 P.M., CURRENT EVENT PAPER TWO RELATED TO SELECTED TOPIC(S) IN CHAPTERS 7-10**

Week 8, July 11: **Note: this week there will be two chapters**
Due by 7/11, read Dye chapters 11 & 12  
Due by 7/16 11 p.m. quiz for chapters 11 & 12  
Due by 7/17 11 p.m. DB for chapters 11 & 12

Week 9, July 18: **Note: this week there will be two chapters**
Due by 7/18, read Dye chapters 13 & 14  
Due by 7/23 1 p.m. quiz for chapters 13 & 14  
Due by 7/24 11 p.m. DB for chapters 13 & 14

Week 10 July 25: **Note: this week there will be two chapters and you have to take the final exam between 7/25 and 8/02**
Due by 7/25 11 p.m. read Dye chapters 15 & 16  
Due by 7/30 11 p.m. quiz for chapters 15 & 16  
Due by 7/31 11 p.m. DB for chapters 15 & 16

**FINAL EXAM:** Your open book final exam on chapters 10-16 will be available from July 25 8 a.m. until August 02, 12 p.m. (noon) subject to the Norfolk Testing Center hours. The exam will go offline at 12 p.m. Please check the testing center’s hours and instructions on their web site at the following link: [http://www.tcc.edu/wd/ilab/](http://www.tcc.edu/wd/ilab/).

August 02 is the last day of instruction, including exams:
From TCC’s web site:

May 23  Classes begin

May 26  Last day to add or change for a ten-week course

May 30  Memorial Day (college closed)

June 1  Summer 2011 Graduation Application Deadline
        (Applications not received by the deadline will be processed the following term.)

June 2  Last day to drop for tuition refund from a ten-week course

July 4  Independence Day  (college closed - classes made up August 2)

July 5  Last day to withdraw without academic penalty from a ten-week course (See Note)

August 2  Last day of instruction (includes examinations)

Tuesday, August 2, is the make-up day for Monday, July 4, and represents the final
Monday of the Summer 10-week session.

Note:  Students who wish to withdraw without academic penalty should contact a counselor to determine the
appropriate procedure and date.  Withdrawals through completion of sixty percent of a session will result in a W
grade.  After sixty percent of a session is completed, a withdrawal will result in a grade of F in a credit course or a
grade of U in a developmental course, except under mitigating circumstances that must be documented by the
instructor and approved by the academic dean.  Dynamic Session classes have unique refund and withdrawal dates.
Please contact the Enrollment Services Office for procedures and dates.