

Political Science 1050: American Government

University of North Texas, Spring 2007

Professor

Mathieu Turgeon
Wooten Hall 136
565.2335
turgeon@unt.edu
M W 9:30-11am

Teaching assistant

Meagan Williams
Wooten Hall 337
891.6807
mlm0350@unt.edu
M W 8-10am

Description

This course introduces students to the processes of American politics. It focuses on the actors rather than on the functioning of the American political institutions. We will first consider the role of the mass publics and that of the linkage institutions (the media, interest groups, and political parties) in shaping American politics. We will then follow with a section covering the basics of American campaigns and elections. Finally, the last section of the course will be dedicated to public policy (domestic, economic, foreign, and defense policies).

Required Texts

- 1 Fiorina, M., P. Peterson, B. Johnson, and S. Voss. 2005. *The New American Democracy*. Pearson Longman (4th Edition). LOOSE-LEAF VERSION; ISBN:0321416864
- 2 Cox, G. 2005. *Processes and Policies in American and Texas Politics: A Workbook for Political Science 1050*. University of North Texas Press (6th edition).

Assignments and Grading

There will be two midterm exams (each worth 25% of the final grade), a final (worth 30%), and five workbook assignments (each worth 4% of the final grade). Questions on the exams will be drawn from the readings and the lectures. The final exam is not cumulative. The midterm and final exams are multiple choice questions.

Make-up exams for the first and second midterms will be offered only for **documented absences** and **family emergencies**. *ALL* make-up exams will be scheduled during dead week on **April 30**. Note that make-up exams are essay questions NOT multiple choice.

Workbook assignments are due at the beginning of class on the **date specified in the course schedule**. Workbook assignments turned in 10 minutes after class has started will be considered late and be penalized at **10 points per business day** up to three business days, at which point no credit will be awarded for that assignment. Workbook assignments should be stapled and done on the pages in the workbook. These assignments are **NOT** group projects.

Students will receive an assessment quiz on the first day of class and another one toward the end of the semester (**May 4**). The second assessment quiz will be worth 5 bonus points toward your final so don't miss it! Class evaluations will also take place on **May 4** during the review session for the final exam. Finally, note that extra credit will **NOT** be offered under any circumstances and that plagiarism and cheating will be pursued according to university policies.

Classroom Policies

Attendance is expected of all students but is not required (except for TAMS students). If a student misses a class, he or she is the sole responsible for any consequences. Cell phones and food are not permitted in class.

Course Schedule

1 Intro and the New American Democracy

January 17-22: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 1.

***January 17: Assessment quiz**

2 Mass Political Behavior

2.1 Public Opinion

January 24-29: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 5 and Cox p.1-6.

2.2 Political Participation

January 31 - February 5: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 6 and Cox p.29-36.

***February 7: Workbook Assignment #1: Chapter III: Voting and Other Forms of Political Participation**

***February 7: Review for Exam 1**

****February 9: Exam 1**

3 Linkage Institutions

3.1 The Media

February 12-16: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 9 and Cox p.61-68.

***February 19: Workbook Assignment #2: Chapter V: The Political Role of the Media**

3.2 Interest Groups

February 19-23: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 7 and Cox p.75-82.

3.3 Political Parties

February 26 - March 2: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 8 and Cox p.11-18.

***March 5: Workbook Assignment #3: Chapter II: The U.S. Party System in Comparative Perspective**

4 Campaigns and Elections

4.1 Presidential Elections

March 5-9: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 10 and Cox p.43-52.

***March 12: Workbook Assignment #4: Chapter IV: How Elected Officials Get That Way**

4.2 Congressional Elections

March 12-16: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 11.

***March 19-23: Spring Break**

***March 26-28: Movie: "The War Room"**

***March 30: Review for Exam 2**

****April 2: Exam 2**

5 Public Policy

5.1 Domestic Policy

April 4-11 (**NO CLASS ON APRIL 6 (Easter)**): Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 18 and Cox p.93-100 and p.111-118.

5.2 Economic Policy

April 13-18: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 19 and Cox p.125-132.

***April 20: Workbook Assignment #5: Chapter IX: The Federal Budget: Policies, Processes, and Priorities**

5.3 Foreign and Defense Policy

April 20-27: Read Fiorina et al. Chapter 20 and Cox p.143-150.

****April 30: Make-up exam day**

***May 4: Assessment quiz (5 bonus points!), class evaluations, and review for final exam**

****May 7: Final exam, in class at 10:30am**