

WELCOME LETTER FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE 1200

American Government

Hello! My name is *Dr. Michael Luis Principe* and I will be your professor for this course. My academic background includes earning a **J.D.** from the University of Washington School of Law and a **Ph.D.** in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Before coming to WPU in 1998, I taught constitutional law, international law, and criminal procedure in a number of law schools. Besides teaching public law and political theory in the Political Science Department, I am **Director** of both the new *WPU Legal Studies Program* and the *WPU Summer Program at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge University, England*. If you have questions about either of these programs, please feel free to ask me.

This course will be divided up into weekly reading assignments. **Course Assessment** will include two (2) three-page, typed, randomly-assigned Discussion Papers (50 points each) and two (2) ONLINE Examinations (100 points each). The *Discussion Papers* are not research papers. Instead, they are opportunities for you to critically and creatively assess an important topic in the course, using the course readings as support for “your” perspective. The *Exams* will each include 2 essay questions and they will be available on Blackboard from 9am to midnight on the scheduled days. Once you have first accessed them, you will be given 2 hours to complete them. If you have a conflict with the exam dates, it is your responsibility to rearrange your schedule to sit the exam. **Please check the Course Syllabus for the scheduled exam times and reading assignments.**

In addition to the reading assignments, I will: (1) offer a number of voluntary Chat Sessions at different times during the semester (and post the days and times for them in the "Announcements" section of Blackboard) and (2) post various **Outlines &/or Questions** on Blackboard for you to review & consider in relation to the reading assignments.

If you have questions about the course or the study of law in general, and don't wish to discuss it within the framework of a Chat Session, please feel free to email me (principem@wpunj.edu).

DO KEEP IN MIND that the most important skill to have in an ONLINE course is self-discipline. It is imperative that you keep up with the reading and writing assignments if you want to do well in the course.

The following books are assigned for this course should now be available in the WPU Bookstore:

- 1) Sidlow, Henschen, *America at Odds, 6th Ed.* (2009)
- 2) Principe, *American Government, Policy, & Law, 2nd Ed.* (2006)

“IF” you have never taken an ONLINE course, it is essential that you contact the WPU Computer Helpdesk immediately for information on how to successfully complete the course (access Blackboard, take exams, etc.). It is **your** responsibility to learn/know these things at the beginning of the course....

How to Access Blackboard:

To log on to Bb point your web browser to <http://bb.wpunj.edu> and click the Login button in the upper left. Then enter your username and password in the spaces provided and click login again -- you'll find your course Bb sites listed on the right.

Some things to be aware of as you work with Blackboard:

1. You probably won't find all your courses listed; the only ones that will appear are those that have been activated by the professor teaching the course. Professors who don't use Blackboard will not activate their courses.
2. Your username is comprised of your lastname and firstinitial, usually appended with a numeral. If you don't know your WPUNJ system username password you can use the Username lookup link at <http://bb.wpunj.edu> , or go to it directly at: <http://www.wpunj.edu/username>
3. If you are already logged in to the WPUNJ system through WPCconnect you won't have to re-enter your username and password -- just click the first login button.
4. Blackboard documentation can be found in two places: at Bb Home, <http://bb.wpunj.edu>, before one logs in, and in the Blackboard Support tab after one has logged on.
5. You can always obtain Bb help by using the Problem Report form at <http://bb.wpunj.edu> , or by going to it directly at: <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/> .

WPUNJ Student Email:

To access WPUNJ Student Email point your web browser to <http://wpconnect.wpunj.edu>, enter your username and password, then select the **Mail** tab. If you are logging on for the first time you'll be asked to set your time zone and language.

Blackboard courses will use student email; third-party email addresses will not work on Bb

I look forward to working with you, Professor Principe