

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 1200**  
***American Government* ONLINE**  
**WINTER SESSION 2012**

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**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to explore the political foundations of American Government. Topics such as democracy, constitutional theory, federalism, civil rights & liberties, interest groups, political parties, campaigns, domestic & foreign policy, and the 3 branches of government (legislative, executive, and judicial) will all be examined. In addition, the applicability of these concepts to various contemporary governmental policies will be explored.

**Requirements:** Students are required to keep up with the reading assignments and regularly check their email accounts and Blackboard for messages. There will also be a couple of (voluntary) *Chat Sessions* offered whereby students can log into the Virtual Classroom and discuss the readings with the professor. **Assessment will include:**

- 2 **ONLINE essay exams (100 points each)**, and
- 2 **Discussion Papers** (3 page, typed, randomly-assigned papers addressing a specific contemporary issue/topic pertinent to the course, **50 points each**)

**Required Texts:**     Sidlow, Henschen, **AMERICA AT ODDS, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.** (2009)  
                                 Principe, **AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, POLICY, & LAW,**  
                                 **2<sup>nd</sup> Ed** (2006)

**Course Objectives**

1. To prepare students for active participation in an expanding global society.
  - A. Students will be provided with a broad working knowledge of the political foundations of American Government.
  - B. Students will be provided with a working knowledge of such fundamental concepts as democracy, federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers, republicanism, and judicial review.
2. To develop critical-thinking skills.
  - A. Students will be provided with opportunities to examine American political life and to evaluate it in light of some of the major developments in American political history.
  - B. Students will be given assignments that require them to develop evaluative criteria for examining political life in America.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will demonstrate their understanding of American politics and government by doing the following:

- A. In an essay or exam, students will explain the differences between certain basic political concepts discussed in class.
  - B. In an essay or exam, students will explain what the underlying foundations are for some of the major concepts in American Government.
  - C. In an essay or exam, students will outline certain concepts, doctrines , and theories as applied to various current political situations.
2. Students will demonstrate they have a working foundation in the basic concepts concerning politics and political thought by doing the following:
- A. Students will analyze a spectrum of political concepts, including Partisanship, bipartisanship, lobbying, campaigns and elections, appropriation, monetary and fiscal policy, and the iron triangle..
  - B. Students will analyze some of the various broad-based movements that give rise to specific ideologies, including those on the radical left and right of the political spectrum.
  - C. In an essay or exam, students will explain how democracy operates within an American Governmental System featuring 3 separate branches, an enormous federal bureaucracy, state and local politics, and foreign policy concerns.

**Reading Assignments & Exam Schedule:**

*The Sidlow/Henschen book includes 17 chapters, each of which are generally 25-30 pages in length. You should plan on reading (and outlining) one chapter per day of that book. In addition, there are 5 chapters of my book that you will be responsible for on the exams.*

**Dec. 27 – 31                      Sidlow (Ch. 1-5)**

**Jan. 1 – 5                         Sidlow (Ch. 6-10)  
Principe (Ch. 3 & 10)**

***ONLINE MIDTERM EXAMINATION (Friday, Jan 6)***

**Jan. 7 – 14                      Sidlow (Ch. 11-17)  
Principe (Ch. 2, 5, & 8)**

***ONLINE FINAL EXAMINATION (Sunday, Jan 15)***