

POL 390 Virtual
American Government: Promise vs. Performance
Tentative-Subject to Change/Revision

Prof. Michael Milakovich
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Course description: American politics and government have undergone major changes during our 230 years as a Constitutional Democratic Republic. From our founding as a rebellious breakaway colony of the British Empire, to our beginnings as an agrarian economy, through the industrial revolution, the Depression and War Years to the present day global economy and Internet revolution, our political and governmental institutions have undergone major changes. That process is guided by institutions such as the presidency, Congress, Supreme Court and states and local governments as well as individual elected representatives. Our subject for this course is an assessment of how promises made individual politicians, political parties and representative bodies are fulfilled by governmental institutions. This course explores the American political system with an emphasis on the federal bureaucracy and national government institutions. Topics include the U.S. Constitution, separation of powers, federalism, participation, the presidency, public opinion, Congress, political parties, and the conduct of elections. Current social, economic, foreign, and military policies are discussed. We study the original 18th Century design of our government under the Constitution and evaluate whether or not the current system of checks and balances, overlapping powers, federalism and judicial review adequately responds to 21st Century challenges, demands, and threats.

Instructor: Michael E. Milakovich (Ph.D. Indiana; B.A. UC-Santa Barbara) an internationally-recognized scholar and tenured professor of political science and public administration at the University of Miami. He has authored or co-authored 15 books, published numerous articles, chapters, and reviews in referred journals and developed online courses in American Government, Public Policy, Public Administration, and Digital Government. He served as an officer in the United States Army and in the Army Reserves from 1965-1984.

Grades: Five quizzes, five essays and a cumulative final will be given. Each quiz consists of objective multiple-choice questions, based on the text, class lectures and discussions. Class attendance, participation, book reports, student presentations, and discussions will count in determining your final grade. No make-ups will be given without prior approval and a signed statement from a licensed U.S. health care provider that illness prevented the student from taking the exam. No incompletes will be given unless you are earning a passing grade and have a medical condition or emergency, which prevents you from finishing the course.

Required reading: STUDENT STUDY GUIDE: 2015-2016 Edition
Supplement: The Economist; New York Times; or
Daily national newspaper of your choice
Weekly news magazine (Newsweek, Time, etc.)

Suggested: (Newest editions)

See Also, Annotated Bibliography and References –Student Study Guide

MODULE 1: U.S. HISTORY, POLITICS and GOVERNMENT: Who gets what, when and \$how much...?

8/27: Introduction, concepts, overview and questions about politics and government, trust and knowledge; American political cultures

1. U.S. Political History

8/31- FIRST QUIZ (Module 1) Available on Blackboard

9/2: Today's Isms and Competing Ideologies

2: ISMs and IDEOLOGIES

9/8 Assignment 1.2 Essay

MODULE II: STABILITY AND CHANGE

9/9: Federalism and the Constitution

3. Constitutional Foundations, Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

9/14 Assignment 2: Citizenship Essay

9/16: The American Dilemma and The American Dream

4. Unresolved Issues

Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations

9/21- SECOND QUIZ (Module 2)

MODULE III. CHANGE PROCESSES

9/23 : Public Opinion and Socialization

5. Public Opinion and Socialization

10/1 : Interest Groups Organization

6. Interest Groups and Factions

Assignment 3: Trust

MODULE IV: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

7: 10/8 : Political Parties, Candidates and Campaigns Mass Media/Participation/Campaigns,

8: 10/15: Elections, Voting; Mass Media and the Internet

10/13: ASSIGNMENT 4: Democracy

10/19 Quiz 3: MODULES 3 and 4

MODULE V. GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

9: 10/22: Congress/Interest Groups

10: 10/ 29: Presidency and Executive Branch

11/10 - QUIZ 4 Module 5

11/17 ASSIGNMENT 4: Leadership

MODULE VI: BUREAUCRACY AND THE COURTS

11: 11/ 5: Bureaucracy and Public Administration

12: 11/12: Courts and Judicial Branch

12/1 – Quiz 5: Module 6

MODULE VII. OUTCOMES: Results of the Political Process

13: 11/19: Social and Domestic Policy

14. 12/3 : Economic and Energy Policy

ASSIGNMENT 5: Public Policy Implementation

15. National Security and Foreign Policy

16. Course Wrap-up and Review

TBA- Final Exam (all previous)

*Chapter numbers may vary slightly with different editions of textbooks.