

PSC 100W: American Politics

Spring 2007

2:00 to 3:15 TTh

Dr. Susan Buck

Office: 219 Graham, 256-0520

Office Hours: 1:00-1:45 M-Th and by appt.

How to get in touch with me:

Office hours: MW 1:00-1:30, TTh 1:00-1:45 and by appointment. I'm usually in my office by 12:30 M-TH with class every day at 2:00. I can usually stay after class. If I am in my office and the door is open, I am available for discussions about anything from class business to dog training. If my door is closed, I am busy.

Office phone: 256-0520 (on-campus: 6-0520)

E-mail: sjbuck@uncg.edu I don't check e-mail every day, so if your message is time critical, you should call. If you want to discuss something, e-mail is not an appropriate medium, and I prefer that you come in during office hours or call. Because of hand surgery, I cannot send you lengthy replies via email.

Home phone: 545-0645, **only** between 8:00 and 5:00, M-F. If you do not live in the Greensboro calling area, please be sure to include your area code when you leave your phone number, and when you will be available for a return call. Please don't call evenings (after 5:00) or on weekends.

When I need to contact the class, I will use Blackboard either for an announcement or for email. Email from Blackboard goes to your university email address, so be sure to check this if you miss class. If you miss class on a day I return an assignment, I will put the assignment on my door.

Honor Policy: Students are required to abide by the University Academic Integrity Policy for all work in this course. All written work submitted for this course must also include your hand-written signature which indicates that you have followed the Academic Integrity Policy. (If your signature is illegible, also print your name.)

Course Description: Organization and behavior of the institutions, groups, and persons in American national government and politics. *Writing Intensive*

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be familiar with the structure and institutions of American government.
2. Students will apply critical thinking to media reports on political issues.
3. Students' writing abilities will improve, particularly in organizing their own writing, avoiding plagiarism, and practicing correct grammar.

Texts:

1. Jordan, Terry. *The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It*. Naperville, IL: Oak Hill Publishing Co., 2004.

2. Wasserman, Gary. **Basics of American Politics**, 12th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2006.
3. Strunk, William and E. B. White. *Elements of Style*, 4th ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2000. (Any recent edition will do, but don't get the illustrated one.)
4. Additional readings (see syllabus).

Course Requirements

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|----|---|------------|
| 1. | Two exams (the final is not cumulative) | 700 points |
| 2. | Wrong essay, due August 24 | 50 |
| 3. | Written responses to readings, text questions, & current events | 250 |

Class participation will be used to decide borderline grades.

A note about class participation:

Your class participation grade is based on class preparation and contributions to class discussions. Generally this grade is used to decide borderline final grades. However, really superb (or truly dreadful) class participation may move your final grade up (or down) a half letter grade. Don't confuse quantity of participation with quality.

Even if you don't normally keep up with political events, you **MUST** do so during this semester. Read newspapers, magazines, listen to news shows, watch CNN, tune in to NPR or PBS: do whatever it takes to get in-depth information about national and world events. I may give quizzes. If I do, they will count as a "reading response."

Students who arrive late, sleep in class, comb their hair or conduct other personal hygiene business, whisper, crack knuckles (or necks or toes or ankles or whatever), pass notes, or engage in any other disruptive behavior will lose points on class participation. Do I need to mention cell phones?

1. Exams: Exams are usually identification and essay; I will give you a review about a week before the test.

Make-up exams: A make-up for the mid-term will be given only if a genuine emergency forces you to miss the exam and arrangements are made with me in advance or as soon as possible after the emergency. Reservations at the beach do not constitute an emergency. Make-ups for the final exam (genuine emergency) are given on Reading Day.

2. Wrong essay due 23 January

Write on any topic you choose, incorporating as many errors of usage and composition as possible. Identify the errors (using *Elements of Style*) in the right hand margin, by numbering

each error consecutively and then, in the margin, identifying the error by label and page number in *Elements of Style*. BRING YOUR COPY OF *ELEMENTS OF STYLE* TO CLASS. (I realize that *Elements* doesn't cover every possible error, but you should try not to make errors that aren't in *Elements*.)

Page limit: 2 typed, double-spaced pages. Your score depends on the number of errors, but each kind of error only counts once. We will "grade" these in class: plus one point for each type of error, and minus one for each mistake which is not marked or is marked incorrectly. First place gets a gift certificate from Tate Street Coffee House. Students who make a good-faith effort (my call), **follow directions**, and turn the wrong essay in on time will earn full credit.

Sample:

Each student needs to carefully place their punctuation (for example, periods, commas, etc.) within quotation marks.

Written Responses:

These may be handwritten only if they are legible; typing is good and kind to your professor. I will mark for mechanics and grammar.

You don't need to write a response to the general text, but you should write one for every reading (handout and the ones you have to look up). Write a short summary (just the main points – what would you want to remember for the final?) and a response for each reading. If you have normal size handwriting, the summaries should be about a half page, the responses probably about a page. You should avoid comments such as “it was boring” or “I didn't understand it.” These should not be critiques; they are your comments on the readings based on what we have already read or discussed. The purpose is to get you thinking about the material before you come to class.

Before we discuss the *Loving* case, we'll talk about how to read a law case. You should also write a response to this case.

To get the case, go to <http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/> Scroll down to the U. S. Supreme Court and click on it. Scroll down to “citation search” and enter the citation: 388 U.S. 1. You will save some paper if you use the printable version. (Notice the use of italics in case citations!) case: *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967)

If I ask you to write out an answer to one of the questions in the text (see class schedule) or give you a quiz on current events, your grade will count as a written response.

Under NO circumstance will I take a late written response or allow you to make up a class writing or quiz. If you are late to class on the day we have an in-class writing, you will have less time to write than your classmates.

These are all graded on a 10-point scale. I will average them at the end of the course, and that average will be the percentage of 250 point toward your final grade. So, if your average is 8.3, I'll take 83% of 250, which is 208 points toward your final grade.

General Rules for Assignments:

1. Typed assignments should be 12-point or larger font, regular margins.
2. No cover pages or folders or title pages. It wastes trees.
3. Be aware of the dangers of plagiarism. At the very least, I will automatically fail any assignment containing plagiarized material if I feel there has been a deliberate effort to use another's work as your own, and I will reduce the grade of a paper with careless plagiarism.

I know all too well that computers and printers may cause delays, but even if you are late because you had a problem with your computer, or the printer, or compatibility between your system and someone else's, I still won't accept late work.

A Note on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is using the language, ideas, or data of another scholar without acknowledging the source. The faculty view this as an extremely serious offense. **Sanctions for plagiarism range from failing the plagiarized assignment to expulsion from the University.**

There are three central reasons to acknowledge the work of other scholars. First, scholars' works are their professional products. To use them as your own is stealing, and your own work becomes a forgery. Second, other scholars may wish to build on your work or to explore some idea further. If you have provided good documentation, their work is simplified. Third, your source may be wrong. If you use the information without attribution, you are responsible for the error.

Remember: be honest, be helpful, be safe.

Here's the Golden Rule of Citations: **when in doubt, cite.** No one ever got in trouble for too many citations.

Myths:

1. Paraphrasing eliminates the need for citations. FALSE. It only eliminates the need for quotation marks.
2. Any data found in three places is "common knowledge" and needs no citation. FALSE. "Common knowledge" is a pit for the unwary. The safe test is whether an average person

would know this information. Thus, that the Declaration of Independence became official on 4 July 1776 is probably common knowledge, but a reference to *Brown v. Board of Education* needs a citation. Remember the Golden Rule of Citations: when in doubt, cite.

3. Tables, charts, and diagrams don't need citations. FALSE. They are data and their design is creative. Cite!

A Note of Warning: Wikipedia is an open-source website, which means the material you find there is not checked for accuracy. Do not rely on it for definitions and *never* use it as a source in a paper.

Class Schedule (subject to change): **W** indicates the Wasserman text; “Q 1-4 (p. 14)” means you should be prepared to discuss Questions 1, 2 3, and 4 on p. 14 of the Wasserman text in class. I may ask you to write out an answer to one of the questions at the beginning of class. You should also be knowledgeable about current political events.

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| 1 | Jan | 9 | Introduction |
| | | 11 | W Chapter 1; Q 1-4 (p. 14.) |
| 2 | | 16 | <u>The Constitution</u> : W 16-24; Q 1 + 2 (p. 42);
Mee, Charles. “Ratification.” handout (response due) |
| | | 18 | W 24-42, Q 3 + 4 (p. 42.) |
| 3 | | 23 | Wrong Essay due |
| | | 25 | <u>Executive Branch</u> : W 44-64; Q 1 + 2 (p. 83) |
| 4 | | 30 | movie: <i>The God Squad: The Case of the Spotted Owl</i> |
| | Feb | 1 | W 64-83; Q 3 + 4 (p. 83) |
| 5 | | 6 | <u>Legislative Branch</u> : movie: <i>An Act of Congress</i> |
| | | 8 | W 86-108; Q 1 (p. 120) |
| 6 | | 13 | NO CLASS |
| | | 15 | Schroeder, Pat. “Congressional Bull****.” handout
Lewis, Michael. “A Question of Honor.” handout
Nichols, John. “Being Like Bernie.” <i>The Nation</i> 281 (5) 15 Aug. 2005: 15-18.
(3 responses due) |
| 7 | | 20 | W 108-120; Q 1 (p. 151) |
| | | 22 | MIDTERM |
| 8 | | 27 | movie: <i>How Supreme Court Justices are Chosen</i> |
| | Mar | 1 | <u>Judicial Branch</u> : W 124-132; Q 1 (p. 151) |
| 9 | | 6-8 | SPRING BREAK |
| 10 | | 13 | W 132-140 |
| | | 15 | W 140-151 |
| 11 | | 20 | <i>Loving v. Virginia</i> (response due: see directions under “Written Responses”) |
| | | 22 | <u>Civil Rights and Liberties</u> : W 154-165 |

- 12 27 **W** 165-170
 29 **W** 170-180; Q 1, 3 & 4 (p. 181)
- 13 Apr 3 Voters and Political Parties: Movie: *Northern Exposure*
 5 **W** 184-219; Q 1 + 2 (p. 219)
- 14 10 Interest Groups and the Media: movie: *The Unelected: The Media*
 12 **W** 222-234; Q1 (p. 253);
 Steorts, Jason Lee. "Sugar Daddies." *National Review* 57 (13) 18 July 2005: 34-36. (response due)
- 15 17 **W** 234-246; Q 2 + 3 (p. 253)
 19 Eastland, Terry. "Starting Over." *Wilson Quarterly* 29 (2) Spring 2005: 40-47.
 Fisher, Marc. "Essential Again." *American Journalism Review* 27 (5) Oct/Nov 2005: 18-22.
 Alterman, Eric. "Bush's War on the Press." *The Nation* 280 (18) 9 May 2005: 11-20.
 (3 responses due)
- 16 24 **W** 246-253; Q 4 (p. 253)
 26 **FINAL EXAM** (We will not meet during the scheduled examination period.)
- 17 May 1 Although you might think we are supposed to have class on this day, in fact the University is pretending this is a Friday. As we don't meet on Fridays, we don't have class on Tuesday, May 1.