Political Science 102 Introduction to American and California Government and Politics
Section 22672 Mondays 7:00-9:40pm
San Diego State University – Spring 2016
John Mercurio, Instructor
Email: jemercurio@hotmail.com
Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:30
Office: NH-116

- Be sure to put SDSU 102-22672 in your subject line when emailing me, please, and also include, somewhere in your email, your name so I know who you are.

Student Learning Objectives:
1) To show students the importance of questioning and critically analyzing information provided by our government, the media, and other sources.
2) To encourage students to think about the world around them and recognize the pervasiveness of politics.
3) To provide students with the necessary information to make informed decisions, both in the voting booth and elsewhere in life.
4) To facilitate student participation in politics, hopefully with positive results.

Course Readings:
I will be using one main text for this course. That text is Harrison and Harris, American Democracy Now, Fourth Edition (Custom Version), published by McGraw-Hill. The ISBN is 978-1-3084-9063-2. This custom version comes with a login code that is REQUIRED for the class. You need this specific custom edition in order to pass this class, and this book can only be purchased at the SDSU Bookstore or KB Books off-campus (mention that I have this in my syllabus and KB Books will give you $5 off). Any other version of the book will not come with the REQUIRED access code, so you will end up spending approximately another $90 to buy the code anyway. Having the access code is NOT OPTIONAL, so if there is an issue with this, please let me know IMMEDIATELY. There is an e-version of the book available for approximately $90, which you can purchase through the access code registration process in Blackboard (I will go over this in class).

Any other readings will be done via the internet and will be accessed through our course Blackboard page. You are responsible for all dates and reading assignments. Our exam dates will also be listed on this reading schedule, as well as the course calendar.

Graded Course Work:

- Two exams worth 100 points each
- Weekly homework assignments worth 100 points total
- Final exam worth 200 points
- There are a total of 500 possible points

Extra Credit will not be offered in this class. Instead, do well on the course work assigned and you will earn the good grade yourself. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Do not ask.

Course grade is based TOTALLY on points, according to the following scale:
A = 500-463  B+ = 448-438  C+ = 398-388  D+ = 348-338  F = 298 or less
A- = 462-449  B = 437-413  C = 387-363  D = 337-313
B- = 412-399  C- = 362-349  D- = 312-299
This grade scale is a “hard-point” scale, meaning that I do not change people’s grades because you came close to the next higher grade. If you “missed it by one,” then you missed it by one, and will not get the higher grade. No exceptions. Just as I do not knock people down a grade because they “just made it by one,” I will not raise anyone’s grade either. You earn whatever you earn in this class, for better or worse. That is life. Trust me that I am serious about this. I do not care if you need this to graduate, get off academic probation, avoid getting kicked out for academic probation, have a wedding to attend, want to get elective surgery and need this to show your doctor, transfer to another university, get into law school or any of the other myriad of circumstances that I have been approached with over the course of my career. The answer is no. Believe that.

Classroom Requirements:
This class will utilize Blackboard as a course management tool. The syllabus will be available, homework will be done, grades will be posted and announcements made using the Blackboard interface. Make it a habit of checking the website regularly for updates (more than once per week).

Please note: You will have 24-hour access to Blackboard and the McGraw-Hill website. However, you will not have 24-hour access to me. This is only one of many courses I am teaching this semester. I have scheduled office hours that you are welcome to use for questions. I also have my email account where you may send questions, but I do not check my email, or response to emails, after 5:00pm during the week or at all on weekends. Within those parameters, I will try to respond to any emails within 24 hours if at all possible.

Attendance is important, required and expected. If you are not in class, odds are high that your grade will suffer. However, I will not be factoring attendance into account as part of your grade. I simply expect that you will be in class. If you are not, it is your loss.

Punctuality is important to me. I expect to be on time, and I expect to use the whole class period. I expect you to do the same. If, for some reason, I am late in arriving, please stay in class unless an official from the department tells you I will not be there. Otherwise, I will show up eventually and I expect you to be there. If you arrive late, please enter the classroom quietly and sit as fast and quietly as possible. If you have to leave early, please let me know in advance, and again try to avoid causing a disruption.

Do not ask me for copies of the notes; I will not give them to you. Getting the notes is your responsibility. You may post a request on Blackboard in the Discussion Board, and trust in the generosity of your fellow classmates. That may or may not prove to be a good idea, so it is best that you are in class and taking your own notes as often as you can.

If you decide to drop the class, you must take the necessary steps yourself, including filing the required documents with the school. Do NOT rely upon me to drop you, because I might not, and you do not want to get stuck with an "F". Finally, you must attend the first class session of the semester. If you do not, I MAY drop you from the class.

Class format will rely upon lecture, discussion and participation by the class. It is vital that you keep up with the course readings, since we may or may not cover everything in the book during the class sessions. You are responsible for all materials in the textbooks, for the chapters listed in the reading schedule, as well as any material we cover in class. There may be, on occasion, additional readings in the form of handouts or on the web, for which you are also responsible.

Weekly Assignments:
The weekly assignments will necessitate the access code that comes with the course textbook. You can also purchase the access code separately at the beginning of the semester, and that access code entitles you to access to the e-version of the textbook. Either way, you need the access code to complete the weekly assignments. You can access a free, two-week trial e-book and access code if you cannot purchase the book immediately, so there is no excuse for not doing the work from the beginning of the semester.
The weekly assignments for each chapter will become available on Monday mornings at 12:01am, and will be due Friday evenings at 11:59pm. Late assignments are not accepted. The assignment schedule is available on the Reading Schedule below, on our Blackboard Class Calendar, and on the McGraw-Hill website, which you can link to through our Blackboard course.

The assignments include multiple choice questions, videos, charts, and other activities designed to help you gain a better understanding of the materials we are covering. Each week, there will be a LearnSmart flashcard assignment and a Connect assignment (the Connect assignment may be broken into separate auto-graded and manually graded sections); both are required elements. The assignments are assigned 50 points (15 for LearnSmart and 35 for Connect), and after the fifteen weeks are totaled together, I will divide the total by 7.5 to get an average out of 100, and that will become your score for the weekly assignments. Let me repeat: the weekly assignments are worth only 100 points total towards your final course grade.

Examinations:

The midterm exams will be 50-question multiple choice exams with each question worth two points. The exams will each cover a third of the class. The first midterm will cover all of the material from the start of the semester until the first exam. The second midterm will cover everything we do from the first exam until the second exam. These are not cumulative exams. The final exam will be of similar format as the midterms and the multiple choice section will cover everything since the second exam, but there will also be a separate comprehensive element on this exam. The comprehensive part of the final exam will be based on the key terms at the end of each chapter in the ADN book and will be part of a matching section of the final exam, composed of 20 matching questions. Questions in the comprehensive matching section are worth five points each and are the only cumulative element on any exam.

For each of the three examinations, you may bring in one (1) 8.5” x 11” page of notes (front and back). The "cheat sheet" must be handwritten, and you may not photocopy or otherwise duplicate your sheet and give it to another student to use. You may not photocopy or cut-and-paste any portion of your textbook as part of your cheat sheet. You may study with other students, but you must prepare your “cheat sheet” on your own and it must be ONLY your own work. You may not use any other notes, books, or aids during the exams. You will need one (1) Scantron Form #882 for each exam. I suggest taking good notes throughout the course, which requires being in class on a regular basis. You are responsible for knowing ALL of the material. You will turn in the cheat sheet with your exam and I will not return the cheat sheet or the exam to you.

I do not give study guides for the tests. I have posted instructions on how to use LearnSmart as a tool for studying for the exams, and this is posted on our Web Links page in Blackboard.

For the midterm exams, make-ups will be allowed in certain situations, at the discretion of the instructor. For the midterm examinations, exception may be made for emergency situations. However, I must approve the request prior to the exam. Otherwise, no exception will be made except in cases of hospitalization or incarceration which prevented you from requesting a make-up exam. Requests must be made in writing and must be accompanied with appropriate documentation to verify the absence. Make-up exams may be worth a maximum of 90% of the exam grade. For the final exam, no exceptions will be made. You must take the final exam on the date and time scheduled for this section. If you cannot take the final exam at that time, do not take this course with me at this time.

An important note: Please put your name on everything you turn in with your exams. If you do not put your name on your Scantron, cheat sheet AND exam, you will receive no score for that exam. No exceptions. Part of doing the class work is attention to detail. Therefore, make sure your name is on your exams. If it is not, you get a zero and I will NOT change the grade when you come crying to me. FYI.
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. Become familiar with the policy (http://sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html) Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

There are consequences in life, and in this class, for making mistakes:

1) For disruptive behavior, such as outbursts, name-calling, obscenity, cell phone/pager beeping, sleeping or snoring in class, or talking to other students during class, I will issue a verbal warning. Subsequent offenses will result in your being suspended/ejected for the rest of the class period, and possibly longer at my discretion.

2) If another student is disrupting your learning environment, please let me know. To avoid "guilt by association," distance yourself from chronic talkers. Otherwise, you may receive consequences for their behavior.

3) I will do my best to show respect for you at all times. I expect the same in return. I consider disrespectful behavior to include late arrivals, repeatedly coming and going from the classroom, early unexcused departures, and "early packing." This is subject to the same consequences as behavior in #1 above.

4) Students may bring laptops to class, so long as they are used for class work. Distracting behaviors involving computers will result in laptops being banned from the class. Texting which results in students becoming distracted will also not be tolerated.

If you have comments or concerns about the course, first address them to me so that we may work out a mutually acceptable solution. This option is risk free (and likely to bring results) since I do not hold anyone in disregard that has a complaint. If that fails, please address your complaint to Dr. Ronnee Schreiber (594-5208), the department chairwoman. She will give your complaint a full and fair hearing.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.
Reading Schedule: Please do the reading **by** the date listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chapter to Read</th>
<th>Topic We Will Cover</th>
<th>Homework Due Date (due 11:59pm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>First Class ADN 1</td>
<td>Introduction to Course People, Politics, and Participation</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>ADN 2</td>
<td>The Constitution</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>ADN 3</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>ADN 4</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Feb 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22</td>
<td>ADN 5</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Feb 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/29</td>
<td>Exam #1 ADN 6</td>
<td><strong>Covering ADN 1-5, other material covered</strong> Public Opinion</td>
<td>Feb 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>ADN 7</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>March 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>ADN 8</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>March 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>ADN 9</td>
<td>Elections and Voting</td>
<td>March 18</td>
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<td>3/28</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>No Class Meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>ADN 10</td>
<td>The Media</td>
<td>April 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>Exam #2 ADN 11</td>
<td><strong>Covering ADN 6-10, other material covered</strong> Politics and Technology</td>
<td>April 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>ADN 12</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>April 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>ADN 13</td>
<td>The Presidency</td>
<td>April 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>ADN 14 and 15</td>
<td>The Bureaucracy and The Judiciary</td>
<td>May 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>7:00-9:00pm</td>
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I consider this syllabus to be a contract between myself and each of you. Your continued attendance in this class shall signify your acceptance of the terms of this syllabus. If you have any questions or need clarification, I can be reached by email at jemercurio@hotmail.com. Be sure, when emailing me, to put **SDSU POLS 102-22672** in the subject line of the email so I know which class you are attending. Thanks.