About This class:

This quarter we will develop an understanding of the underpinnings and functions of the American political process. We will consider the history and philosophical origins of the American political process, the role of individualism in the development of political thinking (ideology), how various groups and individuals function within the political process, and how history, philosophy, individuals, and groups meet in the institutions of governance (Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts). Ultimately the purpose of this course is to explore what the American political process is and, most importantly, why it is the way that it is, and the contemporary problems that confront us as citizens. We will have a special focus on the political environment confronting the incoming Obama Administration.

Grades:

Your grade this quarter will be based on:

- 20%—Midterm Exam (Take Home Exam Due 2/2/09)
- 25%—Final Exam (11:30-1:20, Wednesday, 3/18/08)
- 20%—The Average of Chapter Quizzes (see online course schedule)
- 15%—Weekly Response Blog
- 20%—Class Participation

Explanations of the Exams, Final Exam, and the Weekly Discussions AND a detailed class schedule are available online in the Bb classroom.

Honors Learning Contract Option:

This class may be taken for honors credit by special contract between the student, the instructor, and the Honors Director in which you agree to complete work above and beyond the regular assignments. Contracts allow you to enhance your experience in this course and can include the exploration of a subject that you enjoy in greater depth through service learning, creative projects, library research, laboratory projects, consultative research in business, industry, or local governmental agencies.

Please see me as soon as possible if you are interested in creating an Honors Learning Contract for this class.
Required Texts, other Materials, and Technologies:

Text:


Other “readings” will be assigned as the quarter progresses and will be available through the course site on Blackboard. **You should also be reading a newspaper on a daily basis.** Arts & Letters Daily (www.aldaily.com) is an excellent place to start.

Email and Blackboard:

A **functioning and current email address** for use in class communications is required (make sure that your Blackboard account has the updated address). Successful completion of student responsibilities in this class requires access to Blackboard. You are expected to monitor class activities (discussion boards, etc.) on a daily basis and to successfully complete any class assignments posted there. Login instructions and technical support are available at http://online.edcc.edu.

Course tasks:

**Midterm and Final Examinations:**

Exams in this class will be essays designed to test 1) your command of the themes and ideas of the course and 2) your ability to integrate those ideas and themes with real world concerns. Questions will be drawn from class readings, class lectures and discussions. Specific criteria will be available via the course Blackboard site as the exam dates approach.

**Blog:**

Writing is about thinking and application and you will be assigned questions to respond each week. These questions will be drawn directly from the readings, lectures, and class discussions and will require reflection and thoughtful expression on your part. You will not be able to make up missed blog questions for any reason. All of the rules of good academic writing apply here including proper use of language, grammar, spelling, and citations. Think of these as “little papers”.

**Quizzes:**

20% of your course grade this quarter will be based on the average of online multiple-choice quizzes. Here are some things you should be aware of:

- There will be 15 quizzes plus an optional end-of-quarter "Opportunity Quiz"
- Each quiz will have 25 questions randomly drawn from each chapter
- These quizzes are considered open-book and open-note
- You will have no more than 30-minutes to complete and submit each quiz (late submissions will not be accepted by the system and I will not hand-grade them)
- You will have three attempts at each quiz and only the highest score will be recorded
- Your overall quiz average will be based on the best 14 out of 15 quizzes and, if you take the Opportunity Quiz", will drop your second lowest score as well
- Network and Computer problems and or glitches are no excuses for missing quizzes. Make the time to take your quizzes in the Campus Computing Labs if your home computer and/or network is unstable
- Make sure you take and successfully submit the "Practice Quiz" before attempting one of the real quizzes. This quiz does not count towards your final grade.
Class Participation:
As a student, I found that one of the most effective ways of learning something is simply sitting and talking about the ideas and class readings with my friends, classmates, professors, and colleagues in the classroom, the student pub or coffee shop, and even online. While not a substitute for reading, talking about ideas brings multiple understandings and perspectives to the table. By talking we make the ideas our own instead of leaving them as disconnected “facts” in our minds. We link things together and invent new ways of thinking about things that solidify our understanding.

We will be doing something similar in this class. Talking complements your reading by forcing you to exercise your understanding of the material. It is an effective test of your command of the language of theory. My goal this quarter, and this is why I grade so heavily in this area, is to help you make this material “your own” by working with you to develop the skills for informed talking and questioning. I expect you to actively participate in lectures, discussions and exercises rather than remaining mute.

Bottom-Line? Make sure you are prepared!

The College-Wide Abilities:
There is a heavy emphasis on cultivating the EDCC College Wide Abilities, specifically: Critical Thinking, Written and Oral Communication, and Group Interaction skills.

Accommodation for Disability:
If you require an accommodation for a disability please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, MLT 159, 425-640-1320, ssdmail@edcc.edu during the FIRST week of the quarter to document your accommodation. Disability accommodations will not be retroactively applied.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:
I expect you to uphold the standards of Academic Honesty and Conduct set forth in the Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities Handbook. Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating, misrepresentation, or plagiarism, is not tolerated at any level. Please do your own work. Plagiarism, collusion in the writing of papers, and cheating on examinations will result in your failure for the assignment and, in all probability the course, and referral to the Associate Dean of Students for disciplinary action. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to become familiar with and abide by EDCC regulations and standards of conduct regarding attendance, course work, and classroom discipline. To pick up a copy of the Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities Handbook go to the Student Programs Office [TU 108]. See the Princeton University Academic Integrity site for a useful discussion [http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/index.html]. Note: Ignorance of this regulation is not a valid defense.

How to be successful in this class:
READ the Assigned Material. Re-read if you have to but make sure that you know what each reading is about and think about how it fits into the larger picture of politics that we are developing.

Ask Questions! I cannot stress the importance of this enough. Learning is all about seeking answers, often to questions that do not have answers. Raise them in class or online but, by all means, raise them.

Come to class on time and ready to work. I do not regularly take attendance. This is college and you are free to make an adult choice. Recognize, however, that choices are always accompanied by consequences. You will not succeed in this class without participating in ALL class activities PERIOD. Repeated or numerous absences will adversely affect your grade so please make an effort to be in class,
on time, every week. It is equally important that you are online regularly to participate in course activities. Similarly, you should be able to focus.

**Do your work!** Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading materials and current issues and thoughtfully formulate your statements and questions. While your opinions do matter please treat them as starting points for the discussion rather than ending points. Show that you have been listening and thinking about course activities and materials—this is one way of demonstrating your learning—by integrating course concepts, ideas, and evidence into your arguments. Most importantly, get your work done and submitted on time. Procrastination IS NOT your friend.

**Show respect for others in the classroom and on the discussion board and recognize that moral indignation does NOT a good argument make.** You hold strong opinions. That is great, so do a great many of us. But the validity of an argument is not gauged on your level of passion, but rather on the competence of your argument. Since your passion does not make you right you’ll need something more. So read, research, investigate, and think before you speak or post. The use of ad hominem (against the person) attacks against those who hold positions that you dislike or disagree with will not be tolerated.

**Cultivate the ability to shift perspective.** Put another way: keep an open mind and learn how to walk a mile in someone else’s shoes. This is Critical Thinking in action and it sounds much easier than it actually is BUT the ability to do this is critical to understanding the various arguments we will be working with this quarter. It is also a critical skill in work and life that you will be called upon to exercise by your partners, employers, and community. Listen to what others have to say.

**Seek outside help when necessary.** This includes visiting the Writing Center, the EdCC Library, and my office hours. You are encouraged to help each other via the course discussion boards.

**Speak up in class.** Even if you come to class every day sitting quietly will not assure a good class participation score. In fact, you will receive no higher than a “70%” in this area (often well below the class mean). This is actually quite easy. Ask a question about something you have read or something you are curious about. Do talk, but be mindful of the quality criteria outlined above. How you say is as important how much you say.

**Running Start Students:**

I hold Running Start students to the same standards and expectations as all college students, including all student privacy rights outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). No special concessions are made for attendance of high school events (prom, sports, other classes) when they conflict with college coursework. It is your responsibility to complete your work on time.

**Lap Tops, Cell Phones, Recorders:**

The use of laptops, smart phones, PDA’s, and recording devices in class is encouraged IF (and only if) their use is class related (taking notes, finding information germane to lectures and class discussion, posting summaries and links to the course Blackboard site). All other uses, texting friends for example, are illegitimate and are disallowed. Emergency use should be cleared with me. If you cannot abide by these regulations I will ask you to turn them off or leave the classroom.
Communication:

Outside of office hours, please allow at least 24 hours for an email response to a question or a returned phone call.

All email pertaining to this class MUST have a subject line that begins with “104: Subject”. The remainder of the subject line should suggest the content of the message. For example: “104: Q on Locke’s concept of the State of Nature.” Please include your full name in your email messages. This makes it easier for me to figure out who you are and respond accordingly.

All questions and concerns related to general course materials and issues should be posted in the Discussion Board.

Due Dates and Deadlines:

All papers and assignments must be submitted via Blackboard in proper format on or before the due date and time. Do not email your assignments. Do not slide papers under my office door or deliver them to the department secretaries.

I will not accept papers submitted in an improper format. This includes file type (.rtf or .doc) and document formatting (use the MLA style taught by the EdCC English Department, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/).

No accommodation in the class exam/quiz/activity schedule will be made for family vacations and work schedules. Use the class schedule to plan out your general schedule BEFORE you buy your tickets.

There are no make-ups for missed quizzes and exams unless you have made prior arrangements at least two business days in advance OR have a verified emergency.

Grades and Course Work:

The course grading policy is clear and straightforward, and it provides all students with the chance for success. I am always happy to discuss grades and assessments, but will not entertain abusive reactions to grades. It is ALWAYS better to be proactive when it comes to discussing your performance in the class. Always ask questions if grading criteria, my comments, or the reasons for your grades are unclear to you.

It will take approximately one week to grade and return all assignments. They will be graded and returned electronically.

Unless you are auditing this class, you will receive a Decimal Grade for this class based on your work. Extra Credit is given at my discretion for the whole class only. You may not “make-up” missed work by substitution.

See me if, for some reason, you need to take an Incomplete in this course—an “I” grade. Incompletes will only be awarded in cases where the majority of the work has already been completed. We will negotiate and sign a contract regarding outstanding work and due dates. Without exception you will only have until the established due date to fulfill this contract. Failure to do so will result in a grade based on the work you have completed.

I will not assign “V” grades for non-attendance. If you stop attending this class and your name is on the roster when grades are submitted you will receive a grade for the class based on the work that you have completed within the confines of the grading system outlined above—this generally means a “0.0”. It is your responsibility to officially withdraw if you have no intention of completing the course.
Grading Criteria and Table of Decimal/Percent Scores and Letter Grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Range</th>
<th>B Range</th>
<th>C Range</th>
<th>D Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0 = 95 – 100%</td>
<td>3.4 = 89%</td>
<td>2.4 = 79%</td>
<td>1.4 = 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.9 = 94%</td>
<td>3.3 = 88%</td>
<td>2.3 = 78%</td>
<td>1.3 = 68%</td>
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<td>3.8 = 93%</td>
<td>3.2 = 87%</td>
<td>2.2 = 77%</td>
<td>1.2 = 67%</td>
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<td>3.7 = 92%</td>
<td>3.1 = 86%</td>
<td>2.1 = 76%</td>
<td>1.1 = 66%</td>
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<td>3.6 = 91%</td>
<td>3.0 = 85%</td>
<td>2.0 = 75%</td>
<td>1.0 = 65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5 = 90%</td>
<td>2.9 = 84%</td>
<td>1.9 = 74%</td>
<td>0.9 = 64%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.8 = 83%</td>
<td>1.8 = 73%</td>
<td>0.8 = 63%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.7 = 82%</td>
<td>1.7 = 72%</td>
<td>0.7 = 62%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.6 = 81%</td>
<td>1.6 = 71%</td>
<td>0.6 and below = 0.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.5 = 80%</td>
<td>1.5 = 70%</td>
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An **A** [100-90 or 4.0-3.5] level paper or essay answer is one which clearly and accurately describes and defines the issues raised and is accompanied by analysis and/or commentary which in addressing the question shows a superior understanding of the material. Such submissions are highly organized, clearly present a thesis and essay map, make superior use of course materials to craft and support an argument, and lack spelling, grammatical, and other writing errors.

A **B** [89-80 or 3.4-2.5] level paper or essay answer is one which clearly and accurately describes and defines the issues raised and is accompanied by analysis and/or commentary which, while promising, lacks refinement or focus. Such submissions are organized, present a thesis and essay map, make superior use of course materials to craft and support an argument, and lack spelling, grammatical, and other writing errors.

A **C** [79-70 or 2.4-1.5] level paper or essay answer is one in which the issues raised by the question are accurately described and defined but which lacks sufficient analysis and/or commentary. Such submissions display a nascent organization, present a thesis and essay map that requires refinement, attempt to use course materials to craft and support an argument, and which contain spelling, grammatical, and other writing errors.

A **D** [69-60 or 1.4-7] level paper or essay answer is one which shows effort but which contains serious errors in its definition, description of the problem, understanding of basic concepts, and which lacks analysis and/or commentary. Such submissions display little organization, thesis and map development, and contain significant problems with content mastery and writing mechanics.

An **F** [59-0 or .6-0] level paper or essay answer shows little or no understanding of basic concepts, lacks analysis and/or commentary, and is riddled with grammar, spelling, and other writing errors.