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## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is entirely in an online format. To be more specific, this 7-week course will require students to log into Canvas online **every week**. The folders of learning for each week will not be posted in advance. This class will not physically meet. If you would like more information on the online course format, please visit the distance learning webpage at <http://www.wilmu.edu/distancelearning/index.aspx>.

During this course, students will complete various assignments to investigate the political institutions of the federal republic of the U.S.A. and their interaction, strengths, and weaknesses. The survey includes a description of the U.S. federal system contained in the Constitution as amended formally and through legislation, the institutions that make up the vertical and horizontal separations of powers, the role of interest groups and elections in society, and the concept of civil rights and equality as opposed to freedoms in the culture.

Course Objectives:

- 1) The student will demonstrate an understanding of the history of the United States' system of government, from its founding through today:
  - a) Examine the roots of the federal system and assess the challenges in balancing national and state powers.
  - b) Examine the roots of the legislative branch and the powers of Congress.
  - c) Trace the growth and development of the federal bureaucracy and determine how bureaucracy makes policy.
- 2) The student will demonstrate an understanding of the philosophy and rationale that drives the United States' system government
  - a) Describe American political culture and identify the basic tenants of American democracy.
  - b) Recognize the differences between basic freedoms and equalities as addressed in American politics.
  - c) Appreciate the rights and duties of citizens of the U.S.
  - d) Analyze the evolution of health, economic, foreign and defense policy in the U.S.
- 3) The student will demonstrate an understanding of the structure of the United States' system of government
  - a) Describe the basic governmental institutions of the United States at the federal and

- local levels.
- b) Enumerate the powers of the various branches of the federal government granted by the constitution and those powers subsumed.
  - c) Identify and describe the constitutional powers of the President.
  - d) Assess the role of the federal judiciary in the policy-making process.
  - e) Appreciate the role of interest groups and the media in the political socialization process, the formation of public opinion, and the public policy process.
  - f) Appreciate the role of independent governmental bodies/agencies such as the National Labor Relations Board, Federal Reserve Board, etc.
- 4) The student will demonstrate effective mastery of these objectives through proficient written and oral expression of ideas through tests, projects, papers, and/or presentations.

## **II. RATIONALE:**

The course provides the student with a basic framework leading to an understanding of the United States government, fostering an awareness of his/her relationship to the political organization that allocates scarce resources to society. The understanding should lead to responsible political participation on the part of the student. For those involved in business negotiations and employed by governmental agencies, the understanding should lead to greater understanding of the complexities of the interface between the levels of government and the public and private sectors.

## **III. METHODOLOGY:**

### **A. Teaching Methods:**

The instructor will use various teaching methods to address the subject matter for each week of class via Canvas. Students typically will not be able to work ahead. Please see the course outline in this document for specific dates for weeks of learning. The assignments for each week will become available on Sunday nights. The student will only be able to access one to two weeks of learning at a time. It is important in online instruction to keep the majority of the class learning together. The instructor is open to all lines of communication at any time. The contact information is listed above. Furthermore, students will research various topics to complete discussion board posts and other short assignments each week. Most assignments require the use of the textbook or e-text and McGrawHill Connect. Students will also be required to complete a mid-term exam, research project, final exam, and public meeting attendance project. Please see Part V for more information.

### **B. Evaluation Procedures:**

Readings – 15%  
Discussion Boards – 15%  
Debate Journals – 15%  
Quizzes – 5%  
Midterm Exam-10%  
Final Exam-10%  
Public Meeting Attendance - 10%

Final Book/Movie PLMIN

POL 300

American Politics

