

GORDON COLLEGE
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
POLS 1101
SECTION A
CRN# 111
ONLINE COURSE

NUMBER: 1101 A

CREDIT: 3 semester hours

SEMESTER: Fall 2009

CLASS TIME & LOCATION: INTERNET

OFFICE ADDRESS: 311 Russell Hall, 419 College Drive, Barnesville, GA 30204

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INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kris Beck

OFFICE: 311 Russell Hall

OFFICE PHONE#: (678) 359-5032

OFFICE HOURS: MW 4:15-5:15

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Gordon College - <https://gdv.view.usg.edu> This is the portal to login to the course website with your college user id and password.

I will make extensive use of the GeorgiaView/VISTA course website for email, chats, discussions, assignments, announcements, and grades.

Please visit me in my office or online by initiating a chat through the course's GeorgiaVIEW or by using email.

You must own a working computer with internet access to take this class.

ONLINE INSTRUCTIONS

The first REQUIRED meeting is Thursday, August 20th at 5:00 in Russell 327. Do NOT sign up for this course if you cannot make this meeting.

All tests will be on campus.

Details about the dates for exams and other class work will be on the GeorgiaView course website.

Accordingly, this class requires a working understanding of technology through GeorgiaVIEW.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As Americans and political scientists, we need an extensive understanding of our own political system in order to be true, active and productive members. In a way, the primary goal of this course is the most general one: to improve your ability to think, speak, and write about politics. The hope is that increasing your ability to deal with political theorizing will increase your interest in it - not merely in an academic or professional sense, but more in a highly personal, practical, and compelling way. Our other goals involve sharing our own thoughts with each other in the class and enjoying the exchange of ideas that will occur throughout the semester.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Braunwarth and Dewhirst - Open to Debate: An Introduction to United States Government and Politics

Braunwarth and Dewhirst - Open to Debate Reader

Website: www.nsspress.com

Supporting materials: Lecture notes, policies, readings, assignments, class work, etc. can be found on the GeorgiaView/VISTA course website.

Computer access for the following: PowerPoint, Internet, Microsoft Word.

IMPORTANT DATES

Please check the **Fall 2009 *schedule book***, which is available on the Gordon College website.

COURSE EXPLANATION

As Americans, we benefit from one of the most unique systems of government in the world. While other civilizations have had direct democracy and even a republic, they did not arise from a concerted effort to create them but rather from a random and oftentimes chaotic evolution. Our founders, though, took their understanding of previous forms of government along with Enlightenment thought to consciously create an entirely new form of government - a representative democratic republic. Along with the extremely rare beliefs by the military and the rulers that the civilian government and the citizens reign supreme, our representative system embraces the idea that citizens also ought to have a voice in the running of the government, either through their representatives or through direct political action.

As the founders created the Constitution (and subsequently the political system from which it arose), they gave it the ability to change as the times changed. They made it flexible enough to express the will of the citizens even as the Constitution remains the supreme law of the land. In doing so, they understood that a political system does not remain static throughout the ages but often changes as beliefs, scientific understanding, and diversity in the country evolve in different directions. Although some may question how well that has worked in recent times, nevertheless the wisdom of the founders is proven by the continued existence of the United States as a political system and as a representative democracy. This flexibility combined with the uniqueness of the American political system make it incumbent upon us to study the American political system thoroughly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

PARTICIPATION

Classroom discussion is a requirement of the course and you will receive a grade for participating in the class discussions scheduled regularly on GeorgiaView. General class participation will constitute 10% of your final grade. Participation may be in the form of questions, responses to questions, or commentary on a particular subject in our discussions. I will closely monitor student participation and grade students accordingly. The idea here is that good conversation is critical to improve your thinking about politics and it is important for developing the thinking abilities that you will find are required for any endeavor, professional or private, in your future. Perhaps the biggest single factor in the quality of the course is the quality of the class discussion. When it is high, then the course will be exciting and enlightening; when it is low, then the course can lose many of the advantages of working with others. Quality of participation is more important than quantity, although contributing often to the classroom discussion is an aspect of the quality of anyone's participation.

Indeed each student should participate as often as possible. The character of the course mandates regular participation on your part, and poor participation can harm your overall grade. Any lack of participation will not only have a negative effect on your individual performance, but will affect the progress of your fellow classmates as well. Do not avoid participating in discussions just because you have not done the reading assigned for a given class. That disrupts the general coherence of classroom discussion. We must work together throughout the term to make class discussions as productive as possible. More details about discussions will be posted on the website.

READING

We will have a substantial amount of reading assigned, not just from the textbook but also from the selected assigned readings from other books and articles. Each student is expected to have done the reading assigned, especially because discussion cannot take place if no one has read the material. Again, **you must do the reading assignment beforehand so that we may have a good discussion of it.** *I would like to stress that even if you fail to do the reading, you should still participate in discussions.* The issues we discuss should remain accessible and understandable. Of course, the quality of reading is much more important in the end than the quantity alone. Inevitably, I gauge reading through performance in discussions. *We will have online quizzes almost every week based on the textbook chapters. You will need a new copy of the textbook, not a used one, to take these quizzes.*

In addition to assigned class readings students are expected to stay abreast of current events in national politics. In order to do this, students should read the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, or *Washington Post* every day. Students should also consider reading *Newsweek* or other similar weekly news magazines. *Newsweek* has excellent political coverage. *National Review* (conservative) and *The Nation* (liberal) are also good sources of political information. This reading will further your knowledge of the subject matter and the articles you read can be included in the paper you will be asked to complete. Both the newspapers and the news magazines have their own web sites. The links can be found on my faculty webpage. You might also visit <http://www.politics1.com/>, <http://www.usa.gov/>, <http://www.govspot.com/>, http://nationaljournal.com/misc/pusa_splash.htm, or <http://www.georgia.gov/00/home/0,2061,4802,00.html>,

WRITING

The class basically will involve four tests – three in-semester tests and one final test. You will also be responsible for one paper, ten quizzes, and ten assignments. The in-semester tests will cover a particular section of the course and readings, contributing 10% each to your final grade. The final will be comprehensive over the entire semester and will contribute 20% to your grade. The paper will contribute 20% of your final grade, the quizzes equal 10%, and the ten assignments together equal 10% of your final grade. All of these will explore issues raised by the course materials and by class discussion. Occasionally small papers or other work may be assigned depending on how the class progresses in its discussion or if it becomes necessary to go beyond the classroom discussion. They will be folded into the class participation grade. I reserve the right to give bonus points and unannounced quizzes that cannot be made up. The date for the paper submission will be announced early during the semester; if you do not submit your paper you will receive a grade of ZERO. I will provide all the instructions on the GeorgiaView/VISTA course website. More details about assignments will be posted on the website.

THE GRADING POLICY

In this class, I have many responsibilities: instructor, discussion leader, referee, judge, and finally grader. As an instructor, my job is to create a relaxed, fun, and supportive environment so that you can better express your ideas. As discussion leader, I must be first among equals, which is to say that I must start the discussion and keep it going when it slows. As referee, I must see to it that the people in the class discussions do not get totally out of control. As judge, I must determine what is or is not appropriate for the class. And finally as the grader, I must evaluate the quality of your performance in class. It is this last role that I must address now.

To some extent, grades put fear and a high level of stress in the minds of students. Many regard grades either as personal attacks on themselves or as a result of arbitrary, overbearing, and overly critical evaluations of their performance. In this class, I hope that we can shy away from either of these views. **I do not give grades based on the personalities of students nor without well-considered reasons.** The grades you receive shall reflect the quality of your performance on class assignments and nothing more. As such, you yourself directly affect what grade you will receive for the course. Those willing to put forth an effort in class and on assignments shall do better in the course than those who shrug it off with an “I don't care” attitude. Consequently, to receive a high grade, you must complete your assignments with care, serious thought, attention to craft, creativity, and critical revision. Below you will find an explanation of the overview of the grading policy.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

To Earn a Grade of C you must do all of the work that is assigned, submit your work on time, and participate regularly. This involves preparing yourself outside of the class structure for the assignments, participating in class discussions, responding in a helpful way to the written work of your fellow students, formulating imaginative and thoughtful responses to all assignments, and responding positively to suggestions for clearer communications.

To Earn a Grade of B you must meet the criteria for a C and demonstrate a significantly higher level of effort and competence in all work assigned for the class. Your performance on tests and class participation must show energy, creativity, and a critical analysis of the material. Your assignments have good organization and clarity, display an awareness and sensibility to the subject(s), and have minimal errors in mechanics or delivery. B work typically reflects original thinking.

To Earn a Grade of A you must produce thought-provoking and inventive essays and assignments. You must show a consistent willingness to ask and answer difficult questions; to read, analyze, and critique texts and issues beyond the surface level; to help generate challenging and stimulating class discussions as well as a sense of community in the class; to use what you have learned from previous assignments to improve your performance in future ones; and to offer insightful, focused, constructive, and specific suggestions to colleagues on their work. Work that receives an A must demonstrate creative and fresh thinking, ample detail and support for main ideas, careful organization, clarity, and an excellent control over mechanics and delivery.

To Earn a Grade of D your work must fail to meet the requirements for a C. D work generally responds to the assignment in a superficial or careless way. Assignments often are completed in haste, only partially completed, or habitually late. Ideas are unclear or not sufficiently supported by details or evidence, sentences are often awkward or confusing, and mechanics consistently interfere with the content. Work receiving a D indicates that students have not revised their work.

To Earn a Grade of F you must fail to meet the requirements for a D. A student who receives an F does not take the assignment seriously, fails to complete assignments, rarely contributes to class, consistently remains unprepared, and shows no progress during the semester. Organization is confusing, ideas are not supported, and mechanics are ragged.

OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY

The three in-term exams will count as 10% each towards your final grade with the final examination counting 20%. The paper will count as 20% of the final grade, the quizzes equal 10%, participation will count as 10%, and class assignments as 10%. I have assigned these percentages for two reasons. First, if you do badly on one task for whatever reasons, it will not destroy your chances for a decent grade for the course. Second, if you do well on one task, it in no way offers a guarantee that you will receive a decent grade at the end of the semester. Basically, a bad performance is not the end of the world, but a good performance does not mean you can cruise through the

rest of the semester. Third, the final has more weight because you are expected to know how to study for and take the tests by then.

Please observe two important considerations:

1. I do make use of policy that allows grading by plus and minus as well as letter grades on assignments and exams but follow Gordon policy for no plus or minus distinctions on the final course grades. Using these extra gradations permits me to distinguish among adequate, good, excellent, and outstanding work.
2. I grade written work on quality rather than length, discussion on insight and creativity rather than amount.

All specific performance assignments are graded on a scale from 0.0 to 100.0. Here is how I translate results on this scale into letter grades:

A+ = 100 to 92.5	A = 92.4 to 87.5	A- = 87.4 to 84.5
B+ = 84.4 to 82.5	B = 82.4 to 77.5	B- = 77.4 to 74.5
C+ = 74.4 to 72.5	C = 72.4 to 67.5	C- = 67.4 to 64.5
D+ = 64.4 to 62.5	D = 62.4 to 57.5	D- = 57.4 to 54.5
F+ = 54.4 to 52.5	F = 52.4 to 47.5	F- = 47.5 to 00.0

This scale is designed to accomplish four things. First, it rewards truly outstanding work to a special degree, on the idea that a few things done extremely well demonstrate a depth of understanding which should be encouraged. Second, it allows considerable flexibility at the lower end of the scale, so that work on a particular item can be failing and yet still receive considerable credit. Third, it discourages incomplete work, since assignments not finished cannot receive any grade other than 00.0, with the result that skipping an assignment or contributing nothing to classroom discussion puts your overall grade for the course into considerable peril. And fourth, it allows me to report your grade on a finer scale, so that you and faculty can know more precisely how your performance related to standards of the course. Using this system should allow you to determine for yourself how well you are doing in the class. If you have any questions or desire to know your exact grade, please see me. If doing so, please give me time to evaluate your performance.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I would like to hear from anyone who has special needs that may require some modification of the seating, testing, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please see me during office hours. If you are registered with the Student Services Center, please see me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted the Student Services Center, please call Ms. Kristina Henderson (678.359.5221) in the Student Center, room 202, to register for services.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

If you have questions, problems, or suggestions about anything in the course, please see me first so that we may talk about it.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The Gordon College Academic Dishonesty Policy will be fully followed in the event that academic misconduct occurs. Essentially, if you plagiarize or cheat, you will fail the assignment and the class. **Plagiarism** has become a serious problem at most American colleges and universities. Sometimes it is unintentional, a result of not fully understanding what it is. Most simply, plagiarism is presenting

someone else's opinions, ideas, or writings as though they were your own. This applies to materials found on the internet as well. Since we have all become so used to downloading materials from the internet, it is often easy to imagine that the ideas and information found there is available for use without citation. This is not true. If you have any questions or doubts about how to cite such materials, ask. Any cheating means automatic failure of the course.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Do you have a job that keeps you from doing your work? Do you have trouble finishing assignments on time? If you are honest with yourself, do you miss a lot of class work? Do you hate politics? Are you apathetic about politics? If your answer to any of these questions is **yes**, then this is **NOT** the course for you. You should seriously consider finding another one.

This is a college level class; it is not just another version of high school. I expect students to act as college students. This means that you are expected to do class assignments and other work **ON TIME**. You are expected to do class readings ahead of time. You are expected to study for the exams well ahead of the night before the exam itself. You are expected to participate in class discussions. If you believe that you cannot or do not want to do any of these, then you **should NOT** take the class.

Due to the short nature of the course and the vast amount of material involved, students are expected to become learners both **IN** and **OUT** of the classroom. This means reading when it is required and becoming aware of current events and political happenings. This means paying attention to the outside world, discovering the daily occurrences within the American government, outside the government, and all over the planet. Only in this fashion can you begin to truly understand and apply knowledge. Learning, true learning, does not occur in the vacuum of the classroom but occurs everywhere and all the time **IF** you are willing to learn. Endeavor to be such a student, currently and even when you no longer are in school. Strive to learn the rest of your life; you will find that such learning will enhance your life and will make it far more enjoyable and satisfying overall.

The following list details the expectations from you the student throughout the semester.

- 1) You must own a working computer with internet access to take this class.
- 2) You must be able to meet deadlines for assignments and projects. No excuses will be accepted for missing a deadline.
- 3) All students must have a Gordon email address. In addition to my regular office hours, I encourage you to use email whenever you have a question or would like to discuss further something that has come up during the course.
- 4) It is your responsibility to download any assignments, test questions, or other class work **ON TIME**. I will not constantly remind you that you need to do them.
- 5) I do not give out extra credit so please do not ask for it.
- 6) Please download all the necessary notes and other important informational forms from my Gordon College webpage at <http://www.gdn.edu/Faculty/kbeck/>
- 7) Please read this syllabus more than once – it would be a good idea to keep it with you throughout the semester.
- 8) Please check your Gordon email periodically. You may contact me through email for questions, appointments, and so on. I check my email quite often during the week. I will not respond to emails that ask questions already covered by the syllabus or can be found on the Gordon College website.
- 9) Exams must be taken on the dates assigned. There will be no make-up exam **except** for special circumstances. However if you are unable to take one of the scheduled exams, then you will take that exam within one week's time or earn a **ZERO** for the exam. If there is a problem with the final exam date and time you must make arrangements with me a week before the exam. **You** cannot pick and choose the day and time of any exam.
- 10) You are responsible for any and all announcements made on the GeorgiaView course webpage regarding exams, assignments, discussions, reading materials, etc. whether or not you checked the course website or your email.
- 11) You are responsible to submit all your exams and research paper on time given their specific deadlines.

12) You are responsible to participate in the discussions and submit all your assignments on time given their specific deadlines.

13) Faculty is not liable for the content of students' web-pages.

SYLLABUS

The following is a list of topics we will discuss in the next weeks. Please especially notice the quotations and the questions. The questions are included to inspire your own thoughts on the topics. They are not exhaustive. You should present to the class your own questions. Be ready and willing to discuss anything that you find puzzling, interesting, upsetting, silly, fascinating, compelling, etc. I reserve the right to change the class schedule whenever necessary, including test dates.

Introduction & The Importance of Politics

Braunwarth – Chapter 1

Participatory Democracy by Joseph Braunwarth

Reader General Introduction, Chapter 1 Introduction

What is politics?

What different types of politics exist?

Where does politics happen?

What is/are your politics?

Why government?

Is government necessary? Desirable?

Is anarchy better than government?

Is large government good government?

“Engineering is the implementation of science; Politics is the implementation of faith” - Marc Stiegler

“But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature. If men were angels, no government would be necessary” – James Madison *Federalist Papers #51*

The American Founding

Braunwarth – Chapter 2

Reader Chapter 2 Introduction

Jefferson, Thomas – The Declaration of Independence

The Constitution of the United States

Madison, James – *Federalist #10*

What makes a citizen?

What duties do we have as citizens?

Why has the Constitution lasted?

What do you think of the Virginia Plan? The New Jersey Plan?

Were the Anti-Federalists wrong in their concerns?

“There have to be arenas where potentially everyone can take part, where everyone can do something” – Mike Oldfield

Balance – Federalism & Separation of Powers

Braunwarth – Chapter 4
Reader Chapter 4 Introduction
Madison, James – *Federalist #51*

Does local government work?
Does state government work?
Does one level dominate? Why or why not? Should it?
Should the national government dominate the other forms of government?
Should national laws be superior to state laws?
Does one branch dominate? Why or why not? Should it?

“The more the citizens are accustomed to meet with it (the national government) in the common occurrences of their political life; the more it is familiarized to their sight and to their feelings; the further it enters into those objects which touch the most sensible cords, and put in motion the most active springs of the human heart; the greater will be the probability that it will conciliate the respect and attachment of the community” – Alexander Hamilton Federalist #27

Monday, September 14th: Exam 1 (5:00 – 6:15) on-campus; room to be determined later

The House of Representatives

Braunwarth – Chapter 10

Are our representatives good representatives?
Does the House work well?
How can we make Congress and our representatives better?
Should our representatives be delegates or trustees?
Why should the House originate tax bills?

“Certainly, Gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs – and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own” – Edmund Burke

“It was to be the grand depository of the democratic principle of the government. It was, so to speak, to be our House of Commons – It ought to know and sympathize with every part of the community” - George Mason

The Senate

Braunwarth – Chapter 10
Reader Chapter 10

Are direct elections good for Senators?
Should the Senate still be allowed to take as much time as it wishes in deliberating over bills and policies?
Do our Senators have gravitas?
How does the Senate differ significantly from the House?
Are Senators more prestigious than Representatives?

“The use of the Senate is to consist in its proceeding with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom, than the popular branch” – James Madison

The Presidency

Braunwarth – Chapter 11
Lincoln, Abraham – Gettysburg Address

Is there a presidential crisis?
Is George W. Bush a good president?
Is the presidency too powerful an institution?
Who was the last “great” president?

“The President and Senators so chosen will always be of the number of those who best understand our national interests, whether considered in relation to the several States or to foreign nations, who are best able to promote those interests, and whose reputation for integrity inspires and merits confidence” – John Jay Federalist #64

The Supreme Court

Braunwarth – Chapter 12
Historic Supreme Court Cases
Reader Chapter 12

Which is better – activism or restraint?
Do we need more or less members of the Supreme Court?
Is the Supreme Court too passive?

“My Brother GOLDBERG also states, without proof satisfactory to me, that in making decisions on this basis judges will not consider ‘their personal and private notions.’ One may ask how they can avoid considering them” – Justice Black 381 U.S. 479

Wednesday, October 7th: Exam 2 (5:00 – 6:15) on-campus; room to be determined later

Campaigns and Elections

Braunwarth – Chapter 8, Sections 7-20
Reader Chapter 8, 11
Bryce, James – “Why Great Men Are Not Chosen Presidents”

Does it cost too much to run for office?
Should candidates take public funds for their campaigns?
What is the best way to win a campaign?
Have American political campaigns become too negative?

“If he should feel himself equipped for public life, he will employ not only subtle persuasion, but also a more broad and enduring kind of oratory by which he may sway the populace and establish laws, punish the wicked and defend the good, sing the praises of famous men, and lay down rules of right conduct, suited to persuade his fellow citizens to aspire for glory and turn from disgrace” - Cicero

The Media

Braunwarth – Chapter 9

Tocqueville – Liberty of the Press in the United States

Reader Chapter 9 Introduction; *News, Media and Democracy* by Joseph Braunwarth

Do the media have too much influence?

How do the media operate?

Is there a bias in the media?

What impact will the Internet have on the media and the political system?

“The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspaper, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter” – Thomas Jefferson

Political Parties

Braunwarth – Chapter 7

Reader Chapter 7 Introduction ; *Minor Party Relevance in American Politics* by Steve Candee

Is the two-party system a workable system?

Should we encourage the rise of viable third and fourth parties?

Are political parties too divisive?

Are political parties too broad to be effective?

“A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good” – James Madison *Federalist #10*

Political Associations

Braunwarth – Chapter 6

Reader Introduction, *Eisenhower’s Farewell Address*

Tocqueville – Political Associations (various readings)

What is the main difference between orders, factions, private interest groups, and public interest groups?

Do interest groups have too much influence in government?

Are interest groups good ways to participate in the American political system?

Are interest groups dangerous?

“By a faction I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community” – James Madison *Federalist #10*

Monday, November 16th: Exam 3 (5:00 – 6:15) on-campus; room to be determined later

Public Opinion and Political Socialization

Braunwarth – Chapter 5
Reader Chapter 5 Introduction

What is the best way to measure public opinion?
Is it even possible to accurately measure public opinion?
How did our leaders measure public opinion before professional opinion polls?
Should our leaders even listen to the public opinion?

“In a perfectly informed electorate, candidates would carefully outline their positions on the issues, voters would be highly informed about where the candidates stood, and elections would be determined by issue voting. Voters would start each campaign with their own list of ‘most important problems’ facing the country. The candidates would then provide voters with their detailed policy positions on each of the top issues. The voters would measure their distance from the candidates, and give their vote to the one who came closest to their views. Everything would be perfectly rational” - Light

Participation and Voting

Braunwarth – Chapter 8, Sections 1-6
On the Duty of Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau & Joseph Braunwarth

What is the best way to encourage citizens to participate?
What is the best way to participate?
How do we encourage citizens to vote?
Should Americans be required to participate?

“It is hard to explain the place filled by political concerns in the life of an American. To take a hand in the government of society and to talk about it is his most important business and, so to say, the only pleasure he knows” – Alexis DeTocqueville

“The more people are endowed with economic and other resources, the more they tend to participate in politics, because these resources make it possible and advisable for them to take an interest in public affairs, alongside their private pursuits, as a smoothly complementary activity” – Albert Hirschman

Environmental Politics

Jefferson, Thomas – Letter to James Madison, October 28, 1785
Expanded Environmental Timeline
Hall, Jeremiah – History of the Environmental Movement

How do we solve environmental problems?
What major environmental issues exist?
Does environmental degradation really exist?

“Today there is a steadily growing body of knowledge about the environment and its impacts on the duration and quality of all forms of life. There is also steadily growing alarm. The more we learn the more we realize that our misuse of the environment can come home to roost. Not only nonhuman life forms are endangered; human life itself is threatened. In Pogo's immortal words, ‘We have met the enemy, and it is us’” – William Blackstone

FINAL: 5:00 to 7:00 pm Monday, December 7th ON-CAMPUS (room to be determined later)

How to Take Multiple-Choice Tests

- 1) Make sure you understand the class notes
- 2) Go over the notes and the book to fill in what you do not understand or know
- 3) Add to your notes the topics the book covers that we did not cover in class
- 4) Pay special attention to those ideas and topics highlighted by the book.
- 5) Pay careful attention to the wording of the questions – sometimes the answer is in the question itself.
- 6) Cross out the answers you know are wrong to limit the remaining possible answers
- 7) Do NOT just fill in C all of the time

The immeasurable importance of politics

By: Kevin Molduene, Columnist

Posted: 5/21/08

Over the course of this year I've written about presidential politics, gubernatorial candidates who remind me of "Bob, the Enzyte Guy," and local office holders who have resigned due to gross incompetence. The effect of discussing these issues was more than just to poke fun. It was an attempt to engage you, the reader. Why do I care so much about politics and why should you? Because, politics is life.

Like death and taxes, politics is the third irrefutable law of life. Speaking of which, politics is law. What do I mean by politics is law? An example of this would be the Jim Crow laws that, even after the Civil War and Reconstruction period, still disenfranchised a segment of Americans due to their race. Only after the political unrest of the '60s, that pressured the Johnson administration into promoting reform, did Civil Rights laws come about that struck down these practices of racial discrimination.

Politics is infused into everything we do. The economy, environment, and our nation's infrastructure are all in near-ruin because of a complete lack of political willpower over the past decade. This failure by our politicians is largely due to distracting issues that have little or no actual importance to our personal security or the matters listed previously, but they sure are divisive and make for good 30-second attack ads.

I'm speaking of course about issues like Monica Lewinski, gay marriage amendments, and recently, flag lapel pins. These distractions have served politicians and duped the general public into thinking they actually matter, and instead of spending time solving issues of actual importance, our elected leaders and the public in general, spend their days bickering over John Kerry's "French-ness" or George Bush's man-crush on Dick Cheney.

All politics is local. It's a cliché, I know, but it couldn't be truer. Think about the last time you said or heard someone else say, "Why should I vote, it doesn't matter." I know the media don't help this popular line of thought, especially when they predict winners of elections without any of the actual results in. Yet, herein lies the problem. So many of us are disenfranchised because we think all of our elected leaders are either incompetent, feckless thugs or both. And because the media rarely report on things when they are running well, you never hear about the good deeds done by our leaders or their offices. Case in point, I've been interning this quarter for U.S. Sen. Patty Murray (D - WA). Every day I work at the senator's office, I help local people. Whether they need assistance with a government agency like the VA or IRS, or want to discuss their concerns over a bill the senator may be voting on. Recently, I helped a kind lady get her coupon for a digital TV converter and walked her through the installation process. Helping average people is a regular occurrence in many of the government offices every day, but they are rarely discussed. Only when a lawmaker comes down on the opposite side of an issue from them do people ever get involved.

Politics is a numbers game. The more people involved, the more open and inclusive the process and the better the outcome. When politics is secretive, voter turnout is low, the will of a few overcomes the complacent mindset of the many.

Republicans, especially recently, have used this information to their advantage, as numerous polls and history indicate. In important elections where the issues are discussed in the open, the more voters who participate, the more likely the results will be in favor of the Democrats or "left-leaning" positions. This is why Republicans (who have been out-registered by Democrats 2:1) are overwhelmingly nervous about the upcoming elections in November.

In regard to the national election that will put a senator into the White House, I'll say this: all of the candidates who have made it this far are well-intentioned people. All the political phoniness and pandering aside, not one of these individuals wants to hurt us or do wrong. They all have different ways of achieving what they think is the best course for our country and our planet. The people running for president have shaken a million hands, kissed a few hundred thousand babies, they have met real Americans and been confronted with real differences of opinion; they all have a vision for how the world is and how it could be. Hopefully when you vote, and I hope you do, you'll vote for the candidate who will best represent your interests, ideals, and at times will show real leadership and challenge the path of least resistance.

And that's what my writing is all about - politics is life. You can never escape the effects of politics, no matter how far removed you attempt to be. When it comes down to it, you can be someone who embraces this fact, one who learns about important issues, gets involved, and participates; or you can be someone who feels that no matter what, the government is always out to screw you over, every politician is dishonest and that your vote doesn't matter. You'll find these people are often the first to complain about lots of facets in their life, not just politics.

Hopefully my vain attempts to piqué your interest in politics has paid off and you will engage yourself not just in the hot topic of the day, but in the life that is all around you.

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<http://media.www.easterneronline.com/media/storage/paper916/news/2008/05/21/Opinion/The-Immeasurable.Importance.Of.Politics-3374255.shtml>

Moran discusses importance of politics to college students

By: [Adrienne Deweese](#)

Jerry Moran surprised his friend - professor Jerry Flinchbaugh - Tuesday afternoon after sitting through the beginning of Flinchbaugh's Agriculture Policy class as a student.

Moran, who represents the "Big 1st" Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, talked about the difference between politics and policy during the Agriculture Policy class.

Moran discussed students' relationship with politics.

What is the role of K-State students in Kansas and the Midwest?

Obviously, K-State is a premiere institution. Many Kansans - certainly from our state of Kansas - but from surrounding states come here to school, and in my opinion, have the opportunity to receive a broad education that is very valuable to them.

In my particular circumstance, many of the people who work for me as a member of Congress are former K-State students. Most of our interns that we've had over my 12 years in Congress have been K-State students, so we have a very close tie to students who are here in our internship program, and the graduates are a very important component in me developing good policy for the country.

For what reasons is it important for K-State students to care about politics?

The decisions that are made by Congress, by our national leaders, by the next administration, will affect the students much more than they will affect somebody my age. The things that we are deciding today have consequences throughout the lives of people who are 18-22 years old.

So it's very important that their input is obtained, that they pay attention. I know how difficult that is. It's easy to be cynical about elected officials. It's easy to get busy with studies and social life. So, it's not an easy thing, necessarily, for students to be engaged in politics, but I think it's very important for them to do so because they need to have input on decisions that are made today, as it will affect them and their families in the future.

What do you do to reach out for students' votes? For what reasons do you value the 18-to-22-year-old demographic?

I live in a university town, and so I'm very closely associated with Fort Hays State University. I'm an adjunct professor of political science at Fort Hays, and so I'm in the classroom there from time-to-time. But I also look for opportunities to be in high-school government classes, as well as college political science classes, in which I hope to reach out to students.

It's not necessarily political or garnering their votes, but I think I have a lot to learn. I enjoy being around students. I enjoy being around people who are 18-22 years old. I think that the goal is that we connect, so that I learn from them and maybe they learn something from me. But it's usually an inspiration. It's a reminder that the job I have in Washington is important because it affects the future of these folks I know and care about.

<http://media.www.kstatecollegian.com/media/storage/paper1022/news/2007/09/12/TodaysNews/Moran.Discusses.Importance.Of.Politics.To.College.Students-2963487.shtml>

Creative spirit and drive missing from higher education

By: Jason Olivero, Columnist Posted: 2/20/08

Have you ever really thought about why you are going to college? According to Toni Murdock, Chancellor of Antioch University, more than 80 percent of college freshmen said they attend a university with the hope of learning more about things that interest them. Slightly fewer want to go to college to increase earning potential and land a better job.

College used to be a requirement for only doctors, lawyers and engineers. These professions were considered too complex to learn from a simple apprenticeship. A wealthy family might send its children to school to broaden their minds, expecting that these students would return from school to serve the public good, possibly by entering government or industry or exploring the world.

At some point, university education lost its passionate exploration and became commoditized. Now it is seen by many students as just one more box to check off on the climb up the socio-economic ladder to a stable middle- or upper-middleclass lifestyle.

Your time spent in college can be so much more than that, and you owe it to yourself to get as much out of it as you possibly can.

The opportunities at a university are many. Your professors absolutely love what they do. You take required classes and maybe you like them and maybe you don't, but your instructors have chosen this as a profession, a passion. Talk to them after class and you may walk away with more than just what is on the next test. Explore.

College also presents an opportunity to discover the world philosophically. I don't strictly mean this in an ancient Greek way. What I mean is your personal philosophy and relationship with the world. You can think about who you are and who you want to be. Dream about where you fit into the grand scheme of things and what you would like to get out of life. You have an unparalleled opportunity to spend your years in school on these very personal explorations.

All successful people learn and adapt, but the college environment is not the right place for everyone. Many fulfilling public service careers, for example, do not require a college education. Police, firefighters and the military have their own specialized education. College isn't the only choice out there for a successful career and a fulfilling life. Look for your passion and follow it.

At the end of World War II, America saw a sharp increase in college attendance. The GI Bill of Rights allowed veterans to afford a university education and, consequently, the competition for jobs increased. Having a degree soon became a requirement for a good job in the business world where, in the past, an apprenticeship would have been enough. The nature of American schooling changed because of the post-war generation, and it seems ready to change again.

Thomas Friedman, a New York Times columnist, wrote *The World is Flat*, a book about the modern, more interconnected world. He discusses how education has traditionally been set up and in what ways it may need to change. The approach that the Georgia Institute of Technology takes is a great example.

Georgia Tech discovered that graduates with active interests outside the strict confines of engineering became better engineers. It would seem that engaging in creative pursuits yields a more imaginative, expressive and communicative employee.

The term for this kind of thinking is consilience. When I first heard the word consilience I thought it was Latin for "with silliness." Instead, as I later discovered, it has to do with the unity of knowledge. Consilience bridges the gap between science and the humanities.

Serious competition from around the world necessitates that the United States steps up the education of its people. This country must push for a synthesis of the technical and creative to maintain its position as a global innovator. Each student makes this possible not just by going through the motions, but by searching within for what really interests him or her and pursuing it for a lifetime.

Jason Olivero is pursuing a degree in electrical engineering.

Students need to realize lots of effort does not necessarily equal a high grade.

"If I do the work and go to class, I deserve an A."

Such is the mantra of our entitled - and somewhat spoiled - generation.

Since kindergarten, we've been told that if we simply put in the required effort, we'll be rewarded with high grades.

After all, the old saying, "A for effort" didn't come from nowhere.

But what happens when we get to college and good grades don't come so easily?

Should we be rewarded with A's and B's for merely showing up for class? Of course not.

The New York Times reported Tuesday that college students expect to receive high grades if they put a lot of effort into their work.

What a groundbreaking report, some might say. Those of us actually in college have known for years that frame of mind exists.

But just because an assignment or paper required a lot of work doesn't automatically make the result A-worthy.

There's no "magic formula," as The Times put it, to receiving high grades.

But thanks to parental pressure, a history of high achieving and competition amongst ourselves, we have intrinsic expectations to succeed.

The Red & Black editorial board understands this way of thinking - after all, we, too, were raised with Honor Rolls and Awards Days and teachers and parents praising us all the time.

But college is different, and some of our peers would do well to remember that just doing the reading and showing up for lectures doesn't equal even a B in a course.

Take a look at your class syllabi. We're willing to bet "trying hard" isn't listed as a course requirement or under the breakdown for your grades.

It's time to be more accountable for ourselves. Final product, not effort, is what counts here.

Students need to grow up and realize that "A for effort" doesn't cut it anymore. Level of effort does not equal quality of final product.

We may have all been on the Honor Roll in elementary school, but the days of hall passes and playgrounds are behind us. Let's be responsible young adults and accept the grades we deserve.

- Shannon Otto for the editorial board

<http://media.www.redandblack.com/media/storage/paper871/news/2009/02/20/Opinions/Our-Take-3640233.shtml>

Student Expectations Seen as Causing Grade Disputes

By MAX ROOSEVELT

Prof. Marshall Grossman has come to expect complaints whenever he returns graded papers in his English classes at the [University of Maryland](#).

“Many students come in with the conviction that they’ve worked hard and deserve a higher mark,” Professor Grossman said. “Some assert that they have never gotten a grade as low as this before.”

He attributes those complaints to his students’ sense of entitlement.

“I tell my classes that if they just do what they are supposed to do and meet the standard requirements, that they will earn a C,” he said. “That is the default grade. They see the default grade as an A.”

A recent study by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, found that a third of students surveyed said that they expected B’s just for attending lectures, and 40 percent said they deserved a B for completing the required reading.

“I noticed an increased sense of entitlement in my students and wanted to discover what was causing it,” said Ellen Greenberger, the lead author of the study, called “Self-Entitled College Students: Contributions of Personality, Parenting, and Motivational Factors,” which appeared last year in *The Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

Professor Greenberger said that the sense of entitlement could be related to increased parental pressure, competition among peers and family members and a heightened sense of achievement anxiety.

Aaron M. Brower, the vice provost for teaching and learning at the [University of Wisconsin](#)-Madison, offered another theory.

“I think that it stems from their K-12 experiences,” Professor Brower said. “They have become ultra-efficient in test preparation. And this hyper-efficiency has led them to look for a magic formula to get high scores.”

James Hogge, associate dean of the Peabody School of Education at [Vanderbilt University](#), said: “Students often confuse the level of effort with the quality of work. There is a mentality in students that ‘if I work hard, I deserve a high grade.’ “

In line with Dean Hogge’s observation are Professor Greenberger’s test results. Nearly two-thirds of the students surveyed said that if they explained to a professor that they were trying hard, that should be taken into account in their grade.

Jason Greenwood, a senior kinesiology major at the University of Maryland echoed that view.

“I think putting in a lot of effort should merit a high grade,” Mr. Greenwood said. “What else is there really than the effort that you put in?”

“If you put in all the effort you have and get a C, what is the point?” he added. “If someone goes to every class and reads every chapter in the book and does everything the teacher asks of them and more, then they should be

getting an A like their effort deserves. If your maximum effort can only be average in a teacher's mind, then something is wrong."

Sarah Kinn, a junior English major at the [University of Vermont](#), agreed, saying, "I feel that if I do all of the readings and attend class regularly that I should be able to achieve a grade of at least a B."

At Vanderbilt, there is an emphasis on what Dean Hogge calls "the locus of control." The goal is to put the academic burden on the student.

"Instead of getting an A, they make an A," he said. "Similarly, if they make a lesser grade, it is not the teacher's fault. Attributing the outcome of a failure to someone else is a common problem."

Additionally, Dean Hogge said, "professors often try to outline the 'rules of the game' in their syllabi," in an effort to curb haggling over grades.

Professor Brower said professors at Wisconsin emphasized that students must "read for knowledge and write with the goal of exploring ideas."

This informal mission statement, along with special seminars for freshmen, is intended to help "re-teach students about what education is."

The seminars are integrated into introductory courses. Examples include the conventional, like a global-warming seminar, and the more obscure, like physics in religion.

The seminars "are meant to help students think differently about their classes and connect them to real life," Professor Brower said.

He said that if students developed a genuine interest in their field, grades would take a back seat, and holistic and intrinsically motivated learning could take place.

"College students want to be part of a different and better world, but they don't know how," he said. "Unless teachers are very intentional with our goals, we play into the system in place."

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/18/education/18college.html?_r=2&ref=todayspaper&pagewanted=print