

INTRODUCTION

For

PS 103 FALL 2010

United States Political Systems (PS 103) is an introductory political science course that is designed to provide the student with a basic understanding of the institutions of national and state government within the United States. This course is not designed to be an in depth study of any one institution or part of the United States government. Nor is it going to be a study of "politics" as it relates to specific issues faced by the United States. Instead, during the course of the semester we will look at how and why the institutions of the United States government were created, and how those institutions operate today. In addition, we will look at how public policy decisions are made, and how the wide variety of actors in the United States affect that public policy. Finally, it is hoped that each student will leave this course with an understanding of how the topics discussed effect each of them individually.

While this course is a political science course, it also a University Studies course. For that reason, the course material will be presented in a manner that will address as many of the Nine University Study Objectives as possible. To ensure this happens, class assignments and exams questions will be presented in a variety of forms, ranging from multiple choice and true false, to short answer and essay. Many of the short answer and essay questions will place an emphasis on your ability to form a clear, concise explanation of your opinion. At no point will any grade you receive in this course be based on any political position you take. Rather, your grades will based on your ability to clearly explain why you feel the way you do.

The primary text for this course will be The American Democracy, 9th ed., by Thomas E. Peterson. It should be noted that while this will be the primary textbook used, information for the course will come from a variety of sources. Some of those sources will be provided to the student either in hard copy form or in electronic format via the course web page. Much of the information will be provided to the students and via in-class lecture. For this reason, students are encouraged to attend every meeting.

The most important part of this course will be the communication that will take place between you and I. In order for you to be successful this semester, you must keep me informed of anything that you feel will effect your ability to take part in this class. **BE SURE YOU KEEP ME INFORMED OF ISSUES BEFORE THEY BECOME PROBLEMATIC.**

Good Luck, and I look forward to a great semester,

Kevin Sexton
Instructor, PS 103 FALL 2010