

Politics, Power and Policymaking in Washington, D.C.
University of Pennsylvania
Washington Semester Program
Spring 2004, Thursdays 11-1:30pm

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Course Description

Living in Washington, D.C. presents a wonderful opportunity to learn how the “three branches” really work. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the more complex aspects of American politics while taking advantage of the Washington community. Along the way, we will acquire additional awareness of the numerous non-governmental actors vying for a role in the American political system. To compliment the classroom experience, we will visit important governmental institutions and listen to prominent speakers. (Be advised that accommodating these speakers occasionally requires scheduling flexibility.)

Requirements: What’s Expected?

The requirements for this course consist of class participation, a midterm examination and a cumulative final exam.

Midterm/Final Exams – These essay exams will be based on the course readings, class discussion, class outings/speakers and current events. They will consist of identifications, short essays and one long essay.

Discussion Sessions/Activities - The key element of discussion is simply individual participation in the weekly seminars. Students are required to engage their colleagues with comments and insights on the weekly readings. In an effort to illuminate the discussions, there will be a variety of weekly assignments. Some weeks I will provide you with a list of questions that you will review and prepare for the next meeting. Other weeks you might write a summary and analysis or submit your own discussion questions related to the readings. **These assignments must be sent via email by Wednesday at start of business (9am) so that I can prepare them for Thursday’s seminar.** Timeliness is critical since late assignments will not be incorporated into the seminar; as such they will be treated as “not submitted” for that particular week. Questions should be thematic (not descriptive/factual), interpretive or evaluative and may also address current events, aspects of your internship and prior readings. I reserve the right to administer quizzes if it seems as though students are not keeping up with the readings or current events.

Each class will begin with a discussion of current political events. Students are asked to follow national political news through one of the following sources: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* or other national periodicals (*TIME*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Economist*).

Given the emphasis on class discussion in a seminar setting, physical presence alone will not result in an “A” or “B” grade. Rather, all students must be actively involved in the discussions and well versed in the week’s readings. **Unlike a lecture class in which you are in “listening mode,” this seminar format requires the commitment of all class members to teach each other.** Grades for this component will reflect the quality and quantity of participation, as demonstrated by a command of the readings, relevance of one’s comments and the sophistication/quality of weekly assignments.

Set out below is the percentage breakdown for the course assignments:

Class Participation (weekly questions, participation, quizzes) - 20%

Midterm Exam - 35% - March 4 – 2.5 hours 11-1:30pm

Final Exam – 45% - April 29 – 2.5 hours 11-1:30pm

Readings

Set out below is a list of required reading for this course:

1. Sarah Binder, *Stalemate*
2. David Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power*
3. Charles O. Jones, *The Presidency in a Separated System*
4. John Anthony Maltese, *The Selling of Supreme Court Nominees*
5. William Mayer, *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2004*
6. Norman Ornstein and Thomas Mann, *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*
(download on-line at: www.aei.org/publications/bookID.188,filter./book_detail.asp)
7. *The Brookings Review*, “Polling and Public Opinion,” Summer 2003 (available on-line, brookings.edu, click on publications)
8. My reading packet (for the first class)

Semester Schedule

Week 1 – Jan. 15 - Introduction (no readings)

Defining the Political Context

Week 2 –Jan. 22 – Reading Packet, PC Ch.1

Presidential Elections

Week 3 –Jan. 29 – *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2004* (chapters 1-5)

Week 4 – February 5 – *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2004 (finish)*

The Presidency

Week 5 – February 12 – *Eyewitness to Power, PC Chapter 5*

Week 6 – February 19 – *The Presidency in a Separated System (first half)*

Week 7 – February 26 - *The Presidency in a Separated System (finish) PC Ch. 8*

****Week 8 – Tuesday March 2** – Trip to United States Supreme Court, *Ashcroft v. ACLU*, arrive at 10:30 am. Download briefs on-line at findlaw.com and read before oral argument (approximate timeframe 10-30 – 12:15)

March 4 - MIDTERM

(Two meetings in one week. No class on April 9 because of double-week)

Spring Break March 11 – Enjoy!

Congress

Week 9 – March 18 - *Stalemate (first half), PC Ch. 6*

Week 10 – March 25 – *Stalemate (finish)*

The Supreme Court

Week 11 – April 1 – *The Selling of Supreme Court Nominees*

Public Opinion

Week 12 – April 9 – No class because of double week with Supreme Court oral argument

Week 13 – April 15 - *Brookings Review*, “Polling and Public Opinion: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” Summer 2003 (access on-line, www.brookings.edu, click on Publications, click on *Brookings Review*, click on Summer 2003, read all articles (13).

Class Overview

Week 14 – April 22 - “Can an Office Change a Country?” Report accessible on-line at pewforum.org, go to publications, click on reports and scroll down. PC, Chapter 9.

FINAL – April 29 – 11-1:30pm in same classroom.