



UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN TIRANA

Course: American Government and Politics.
Instructor: Bledar Kurti
Office Hours: Can be arranged at students' request.
E-mail: bledarkurti@unyt.edu.al
Cell: 0693196685

Course Purpose

This course will examine the American Government and Politics. It will focus on the balance of power between the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of the American government, how the government is structured, the U.S. constitution, institutions, groups of interest, elections, domestic and foreign policy, and will analyze the balance, merits, and even conflicts between freedom and power.

Required Readings, Text

Lowl et al. (2006). *American Government; Freedom and Power*. :New York – London. W.W. Norton & Company.

Required Additional Materials

During the class meetings, students will be given some supporting materials which will help them to have a better understanding of the American government and politics. Certain materials will be taken from primary and secondary sources, internet, newspapers, magazines and will be used for class discussions, but could also be part of the questions during tests. Particular topics and supporting materials will be taken from Landy, Mark (2004). *American Government: Balancing Democracy and Rights*. Boston. McGrawHill Higher Education.

I will be showing some documentaries about the US Presidents, Politics and the Media, Presidential Elections, etc... therefore your attendance is very important.

In addition to the supporting materials on the subject, I will invite some government officials who are directly linked with the U.S. politics, for example the U.S. Ambassador in Albania (depending on their availability) so that we can hear and learn first hand about the American government and democracy.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Know and master the structure of the American government, its institutions, balances between branches, and fully understand American politics.

2. Reach a high knowledge of American democracy and understand why this democracy sets an example for other countries' system of government..
3. Learn and practice, through class discussions and presentations or essays, political ideologies and terminology.
4. Demonstrate good language skills and learn how to support their arguments, become thinkers and analyze academically rather than being bias or emotional critics.
5. Understand the importance of the American politics and how that affects the rest of the world..

Content of the Course

1. An Introduction to the American Government & Politics. Explanation on how to prepare presentations and essays.
2. Foundations: Freedom and Power / Constructing a Government, (Chapters 1 & 2).
3. The Constitutional Framework / Federalism and the Separation of Powers, (Chapter. 3)
4. The Constitution and the individual: The Bill of Rights, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights, (Chapter. 4).
5. Institutions: Congress – the Legislative Branch, (Chapter. 5).
6. Institutions: The President – the Executive Branch, (Chapters. 6 & 7).
7. Mid-Term exam.
8. Institutions: The Federal Courts – the Judiciary Branch, (Chapter. 8).
9. Politics and Policy: Public Opinion and the Media, (Chapter. 9).
10. Elections and the Political Parties, (Chapters. 10 & 11).
11. Groups and Interests/ Public Policy, (Chapters. 12 & 13).
12. Foreign Policy: How does the foreign policy work, its values, and the moderns U.S. foreign policy, (Chapter. 14).
13. Final Exam

Course Requirements

Attendance: I will be keeping track of your attendance every hour. Missing classes could affect your grade. Any absence should be excused with a valid reason and document which should be submitted at the Records Office. Your absences will be observed and dealt with in accordance with the UNYT policy.

Participation: Contribution during the class discussions is very important and will be taken into consideration in your final grade. All the students are most welcome to ask any question or raise any topic relevant to the subject during the class sessions. Interaction is essential in the class: it produces a better and more effective learning.

Presentation: Each student will be asked to give a presentation. This presentation could be individual or in group, depending on the number of the students on each class. The presentation will be in writing as well as given verbally in front of the class. It will consist of a research topic, visual aids, supporting materials, etc.

General Requirements

In the event of illness or emergency, contact your instructor IN ADVANCE to determine whether special arrangements are possible. The University's rules on academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, submitting false information) will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the STUDENT HONOUR CODE, or ask your instructor for clarification.

Criteria for Determination of Grade, including Evaluation Methods

Attendance	-	10%
Participation	-	10%
Presentation	-	15%
Short essays	-	15%
Mid-term exam	-	20%
Final exam	-	30%

The grading scale listed below is the official UNYT grading scale for all courses

Letter Grade	Percent (%)	Generally Accepted Meaning
A	96-100	Outstanding work
A-	90-95	
B+	87-89	Good work, distinctly above average
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet minimum standards for passing the course

Technology Expectations

Assignments are to be word-processed and formatted according to UNYT Writing Center Guidelines. Continuing and regular use of internet is expected.

Bledar Kurti / October 2007.