

# **SYLLABUS**

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT 2305**

**AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

**SPRING, 2012**

**Nancy Bond, Instructor**

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## RANGER COLLEGE

Syllabus  
Spring, 2012

**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE:** Government 2305 – American National Government

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3 HRS/WK **LEC** 3 HRS/WK **LAB:** 0 **LEC/LAB COMB:** 3

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### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the federal constitution; the organization and administration of the federal system; political participation by the individual, and the principles which underlie American democracy.

### II. COURSE GOAL

Students successfully completing this course will have the knowledge to more readily understand how public officials are elected, how the governmental bureaucracy functions, the role of the judiciary among the executive and congressional branches, the importance of our foreign and military policies and the civil rights of the various ethnic groups. The student will understand that active participation in our political process is mandatory for responsible American citizens.

### III. REQUIRED BACKGROUND/PREREQUISITES

Passing score on TASP reading section or equivalent alternate test.

**IV. TEXTBOOK:** Patterson, Thomas E., Tenth Edition. McGraw-Hill, New York, New York, 2011.

### V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Lecture, discussion, audio-visual materials, etc.

### VI. EXEMPLARY EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

#### **Social and Behavioral Sciences (S)**

to develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues (S-4);

to analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study(S-5);

to comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a

focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, civil and human rights(S-6);  
to understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world (S-7);  
to differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view (S-8);  
to analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems (S-10);  
to recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy (S-11).

## **VII. Basic Intellectual Competencies**

**B 4 --Listening:** the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication, possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading—above 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**B2 --Writing:** the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion and audience—above 12<sup>th</sup> grade level.

**B1 --Reading:** the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials—books, documents, and articles—above 12<sup>th</sup> grade level.

**B5 --Critical Thinking:** the ability to apply both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter to evaluate arguments and construct alternative strategies.

## **VIII. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Analyze the federal system of government including the three branches at the national level in connection with their relationship to the states. (S3, S7, S11, B1, B2, B4, B5)

Compare and contrast the various forms of democracy, with an emphasis on representative democracy and the uniqueness of the American system of government. (S5, S6, S7, S10, B1, B2, B4, B5)

Differentiate between the two major political parties and their impact on policymaking. (S5, S6, S10, S11, S12, B1, B2, B4, B5)

Identify various governmental agencies and their functions. (S4, S10, B1, B2, B4, B5)

Study the role of the judiciary in the decision-making process. (S2, S4, S10, S11, B1, B2, B4, B5)

## **IX. COURSE CALENDAR (See attached Appendix I)**

## **X. CLASSROOM POLICIES**

1. The absence policy as specified in the college catalog will be followed to the letter. Additionally, students will be expected to be punctual in all class attendance.
2. All students are expected to participate in class discussions.
3. Examinations missed because of official absences may be made up within a two week period. Students must consult with instructor regarding dates and times.
4. A “no tolerance” policy is in effect for cheating or plagiarism in any form. Students may be permanently dismissed from class and/or receive a grade of “F” for the semester.

5. Disruptive behavior in class is not acceptable. Students will be directed to leave the classroom upon the first occurrence. Should the behavior be repeated, students will be permanently dismissed from the class. Students will have one “break” period during class and will be expected to remain in their seats during all other periods of class time.
6. ADA Statement: Ranger College provides a variety of services for students with learning and/or physical disabilities. The student is responsible for making the initial contact with the Ranger College Counselor. It is advisable to make this contact **before** or **immediately after the semester begins**.

## **XI. ASSESSMENT**

Four Major Examinations will be given during the semester, comprising 65% of the semester grade. Examinations will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions. One outside class project will be required; example attached with complete instructions. The project will comprise 20% of the semester grade; however, the outside project is an absolute requirement for course completion. Failure to complete this project will result in a failing grade for the course. The remainder of the semester grade will be determined through class discussion, attendance, and (unannounced) quiz questions asked of students.

The student may complete one extra credit paper if desired. This may consist of an interview with an elected official or a review of an article or any type of news story regarding our national government.. The paper may earn a maximum of three percentage points to be added to your overall grade. Extra credit papers are due no later than one week prior to semester’s end.

Major Exam No. 1—Course Objectives S6, S7, S12, B1, B2, B4, B5.

Major Exam No. 2—Course Objectives S5, S10, S11, B1, B2, B4, B5.

Major Exam No. 3—Course Objectives S6, S7, S10, S11, B1, B2, B4, B5.

Final Exam-All course objectives.

**ADMISSION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PROGRAM POLICIES OF RANGER COLLEGE ARE NON-DISCRIMINATORY IN REGARD TO RACE, CREED, COLOR, SEX, AGE, DISABILITY, AND NATIONAL ORIGIN.**

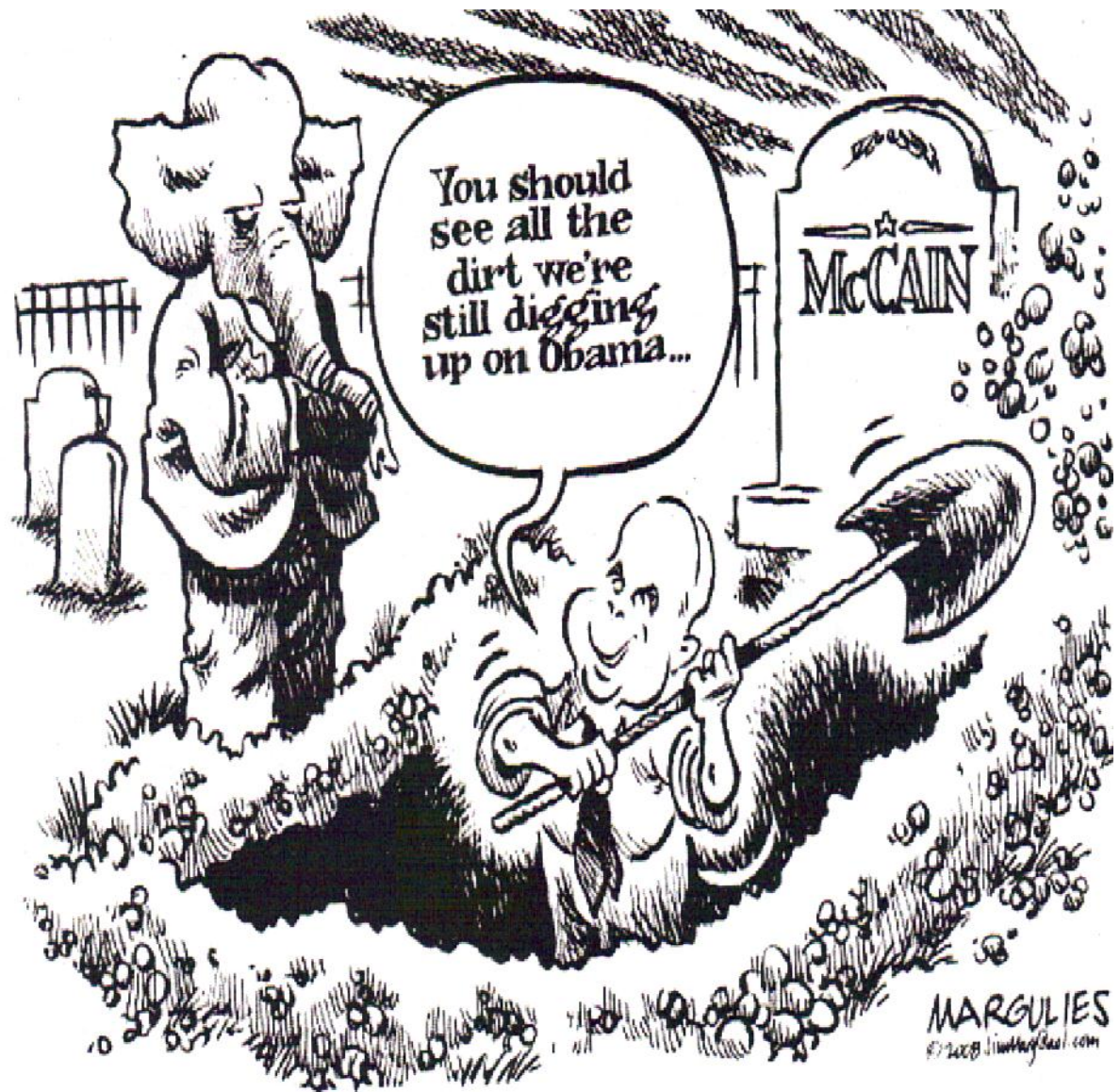
## **SPECIAL PROJECT**

**Select 20 editorial cartoons published between January 1 and April 5, 2012, which are relevant to the government of the United States in either its domestic or foreign relations. Should you use political cartoons gained from internet access, you must provide very specific addresses and be most careful about the currency of the cartoons. Only current cartoons will be acceptable. Make a xerographic copy of the cartoon across the top half of a sheet of paper. On the bottom half of the sheet, under the cartoon, type the following information:**

- 1. SOURCE: (NAME OF NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE, INTERNET SITE, AND DATE OF THE CARTOON AS WELL AS PAGE NUMBER OF ADDRESS.)**
- 2. DESCRIBE THE SCENE THAT YOU SEE.**
- 3. EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CARTOON AT THIS TIME.**
- 4. TELL ME WHAT THE CARTOON SAYS TO YOU.**

**Handwritten entries will not be accepted. All cartoons, again, must be current. Submit them by attaching a cover sheet with your name, class, time and date in the upper left-hand corner. Staple the top left-hand corner. Do Not Submit Paperwork In Folder. Follow instructions precisely. Deviations will result in a loss of points.**

**If you have questions regarding requirements for the special project, I will be very pleased to assist you, as long as you ask them with the due date in mind. A sample follows.**



Source: The Cagle Post Cartoons & Commentary, October 20, 2008  
<http://www.caglepost.com/send/Jimmy+Margulies/56673/Digging+up+dirt+on+Obama.html>

- Scene: An elephant, representing the Republican Party, is standing by a gravesite as Senator John McCain is shown digging a grave. The Senator is telling the Elephant, “You should see all the dirt we’re still digging up on Obama...”
- Context: This cartoon relates to the presidential campaign of 2008, nearing the end, and the numerous controversial rumors being discussed. The media constantly has something new to say about both major candidates for the presidency— Senator McCain is too old and out of touch; Senator Obama isn’t an American citizen---but in this cartoon you see Senator McCain “digging up dirt” on his opposition.
- Reflection: This cartoon tells me that the presidential race is, as usual, more about candidates attempting to discredit each other than share their honest opinions with the public. It would be very nice to see candidates show more interest in their country and its people than they show in trying to “win.”

**(PLEASE NOTE: ALL OF THE ABOVE SHOULD BE CONTAINED ON ONE SHEET OF PAPER: SOURCE, SCENE, CONTEXT AND REFLECTION SHOULD BE ON THE BOTTOM HALF OF THE SHEET. SOMEHOW, ON THIS PARTICULAR DOCUMENT, I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SET THE PAGE LAYOUT TO DO SO. ) I WILL ATTACH A PROPER COPY TO YOUR PERSONAL SYLLABUS.)**

## **SEMESTER CALENDER**

- January 17** Introduction to class, outline of semester objectives, student responsibilities and discussion of initial text chapter—Political Thinking: Becoming a Responsible Citizen
- January 18** Read Chapter 1; discussion in class.
- January 23** Continue discussion Chapter 1.
- January 24** Discuss Chapter 2. Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty, etc.
- January 25** Continue study of The Constitution.
- January 30** Discuss Chapter 3, Federalism: Forging a Nation
- January 31** Continue Chapter 3
- February 1** Chapter 4, Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights
- February 6** Continue Chapter 4
- February 7** **REVIEW FOR FIRST MAJOR EXAMINATION**
- February 8** **FIRST MAJOR EXAMINATION**
- February 13** Chapter 5, Equal Rights: Struggling toward Fairness
- February 14** Continue discussion of Chapter 5
- February 15** Discuss Chapter 6, Public Opinion and Political Socialization.
- February 20** Continue Chapter 6
- February 21** Chapter 7, Political Participation: Activating the Popular Will
- February 22** Continue discussion of Chapter 7
- February 27** Chapter 8, Political Parties, Candidates and Campaigns

- February 28** Continue discussion of Chapter 8
- February 29** Discuss Chapter 9, Interest Groups: Organizing by Influence
- March 5** Continue Discussion of Chapter 9
- March 6** Discuss Chapter 10, The News Media: Communicating Political Images
- March 7** Continue discussion of Chapter 10
- WEEK OF MARCH 12 – SPRING BREAK – CLASSES WILL NOT MEET**
- March 19** Discuss Chapter 11, Congress: Balancing National Goals and Local Interests
- March 20** **Class will not meet. Please use time for work on your outside project**
- March 21** Continue discussion of Chapter 11; **REVIEW FOR SECOND MAJOR EXAM**
- March 26** **SECOND MAJOR EXAMINATION**
- March 27** Discuss Chapter 12, The Presidency: Leading the Nation
- March 28** Continue discussion of Chapter 12
- April 2** Discuss Chapter 13, The Federal Bureaucracy: Administering the Government
- April 3** Continue discussion of Chapter 13
- April 4** Discuss Chapter 14, The Federal Judicial System
- April 9** Continue discussion of Chapter 14
- April 10** Discuss Chapter 15, Economic and Environmental Policy
- April 11** **REVIEW FOR THIRD MAJOR EXAMINATION**
- April 16** **THIRD MAJOR EXAMINATION**
- April 17** Discuss Chapter 16, Welfare and Education Policy
- April 18** Continue discussion of Chapter 16 **Outside Project due. Discuss project.**
- April 23** Discuss Chapter 17, Foreign Policy: Protecting the American Way
- April 24** Continue discussion of Chapter 17

- April 25** Discuss Chapter 18, State and Local Politics: Maintaining our Differences
- April 30** Continue discussion of Chapter 18, **EXTRA CREDIT PAPERS DUE.**
- May 1** **Questions, discussion of semester's accomplishments, goals**
- May 2** **BEGIN REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM**
- May 7** **REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAMINATION.**
- May 8** **FINAL EXAMINATION, MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**
- May 9** **FINAL EXAMINATION, ESSAY QUESTIONS**

## STUDENT STATEMENT

**I have received and read a copy of the syllabus for Government 2305, and I understand the requirements for satisfactory completion of this course. I also understand that I may ask for assistance with outside assignments or any aspect of the course I do not understand by contacting my instructor.**

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▪ Student Signature