UNIV 1100: Freshman Seminar

Politics Present & Past:
Perspectives on American Political Development

SPRING 2008
Monday | 3:00-4:50 | Haley Center 3238

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructors:  David Carter
              Tony Carey

Office:      Carter:  320E Thach Hall
              Carey:  315 Thach Hall

Office Hours: Carter:  Monday, 12:30-2:30pm, Wednesday 8-10am, and by appt.
               Carey:  Monday 9-11 and by appt.

Phone:       Carter:  844-6859
              Carey:  844-7640

Email:       cartedc@auburn.edu
              careyag@auburn.edu

Peer Instructor:  Andrew Mannheimer
Email:       mannhah@auburn.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

A. James Reichley, *Life of the Parties: A History of American Political Parties*
- Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Pub. Date: August 2000
- 416pp

Other Readings and Media Materials as Assigned (we will be posting items in Blackboard, working on the Web, etc.)
COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will explore important themes, institutions, and issues in American politics. We will link current events to historical and theoretical material to understand the nature of American political parties, campaigns, and candidates. We will also examine key institutional features of American politics, such as the electoral college, party systems, primary elections, interest groups, advertising, and so forth.

The most basic purpose of the course is to help students better understand the political arena and to equip them to act more effectively as engaged citizens. A major point of reference will be the unfolding federal elections campaigns of 2008. Students will investigate and report on topics, and they will have opportunities to participate in projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Will demonstrate knowledge of how the Constitution shapes American electoral processes and party governance.
- Will demonstrate knowledge of party systems and changes in American political parties over time.
- Will demonstrate knowledge of basic cleavages in the American electorate and characteristics of voters.
- Will demonstrate knowledge of changes in electoral processes over time and how these changes affect the outcomes of elections and the broader political arena.
- Will demonstrate knowledge of the role of modern media in campaigning and governance.
- Will demonstrate knowledge of leading issues, both in contemporary politics and in the past, and be able to analyze the impact of issues on campaigns and voting.
- Will demonstrate the ability to develop projects and deliver reports on important topics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Readings and Materials as assigned
- Attendance
- Group Project
- Exams
- E-Journal (Blackboard)

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class period. The student is expected to attend all classes, except in the case of a University-approved excused absence (e.g. medical cause, or other emergency as detailed in the Tiger Cub). In the case of a University-excused absence, all assignments will be due at the beginning of the next class attended. **ONE UNEXCUSED ABSENCE WILL BE ALLOWED. EACH ADDITIONAL ABSENCE MAY RESULT IN**
A LETTER GRADE REDUCTION (from the final grade) PER ABSENCE. Each instance of tardiness may count as one-half of an unexcused absence.

Students With Disabilities: Any student needing special accommodations should inform the instructors and/or The Program for Students with Disabilities (1244 Haley Center - phone: 334.844.2096) as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty: Auburn University expects students to pursue their academic work with honesty and integrity. The Academic Honesty Code is outlined in the Tiger Cub and contains a list of those actions that are considered cheating and the possible consequences they carry. Violations of the Academic Honesty Code will NOT be tolerated in this course.

Grading:

Weighting of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-Journal</td>
<td>12 entries @ 10 pts. ea.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Issues Project</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:

- A 90% to 100% of total points
- B 80% to 89% of total points
- C 70% to 79% of total points
- D 60% to 69% of total points
- F 59% or fewer of total points

E-Journal:

You will complete 12 (twelve) E-Journal entries. **Each entry must be submitted BEFORE 12:00pm on its respective date due.** E-Journal submissions are to be posted online in Blackboard, and are electronically time-stamped upon receipt. No late submissions will be accepted.

Each submission must be no shorter than 400 words in length, and must substantively address the assigned topic and/or question(s). Further guidance on how to approach each E-Journal assignment will be offered in class or online. There are no specific formatting requirements for the e-Journal submissions. Quoting or borrowing from other sources is strongly discouraged; if you borrow, do so sparingly and cite the source appropriately. We will provide some additional guidance on preferred method of citation.

You are encouraged to be candid in your e-Journal entries, and are welcome to adopt strong positions, but it is requested that you refrain from the use of inappropriate or offensive content or
language in your submissions. A warning will be issued for the first offense, and subsequent offenses will result in a grade of 0 (zero) for each offending submission.

Group Projects: Students will be assigned to small groups to prepare briefings for the class on major issues in the 2008 presidential campaign. The briefings will include both oral presentation of material and the preparation of written or electronic material for class review. The basic requirements are that each student group will jointly prepare a detailed and balanced consideration of a significant issue. The instructors and class will develop a list of issues to choose from, and classmates will contribute their own evaluations (in E-Journal entries) of each group’s briefing. Additional handouts from the instructors and class discussion will further clarify expectations for the group projects.

Class Participation:

Students are expected to come to class on time and be prepared to contribute to the classroom learning experience. Class participation will be a factor in deciding borderline grades.

Exams:

Two exams will be given in this class. Exams will cover assigned readings, class discussions, and class presentations by instructors, guests, and students. The mid-term covers material available to that point, and the final exam will cover the entire course but with an emphasis on material from second half of the semester.

Late Assignments and Make-Up Assignments:

Late work will be evaluated according to the policies established in this syllabus for the particular assignment. Arrangements for make-up assignments and exams must be made in advance unless due to emergency, and will be subject to the policies as outlined in the Tiger Cub and this syllabus. No make-up work will be accepted for unexcused absences.

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any time during the course of the semester. If a change is made, appropriate notice will be given in class.
## UNIV 1100 – Freshman Seminar
### SCHEDULE
**Mondays | 3:00pm – 4:50pm | Haley Center 3238**

Revised 18 March 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topics/Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 7</td>
<td>No Class Yet; Familiarize Yourself with Syllabus Through Blackboard Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Attend Dr. Carter’s Talk on Johnson Administration and Civil Rights in the Archives on the Ground Floor of RBD Library at 3:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>No Class; MLK Day Due: E-Journal Entry on Either the Democratic or Republican Primary Race So Far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Current: Prospects on the Eve of the Most Super Tuesday Ever Retrospective: The Concept of Party Systems Due: E-Journal Entry on What Functions Parties Serve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Current: The Candidates We Don’t Hear Much About Retrospective: Third Parties in American History E-Journal Entry on What Third Party You Would Be Most Interested in Supporting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>What Do Words Matter? The Use, Abuse, and Analysis of Speeches and Debates in American Politics E-Journal Entry on Which Candidate Impresses You Most as a Public Speaker or Thinker?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>No Class; Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>The Issues of 2008 Student Group Reports and Discussion E-Journal Entry Evaluating the Day’s Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>The Issues of 2008 Student Group Reports and Discussion E-Journal Entry Evaluating the Day’s Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>The Issues of 2008 Student Group Reports and Discussion E-Journal Entry Evaluating the Day’s Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Date  | April 21 | Current: Some Profiles of the American Voter  
Retrospective: The American Voter and Voting Blocs Over Time  
E-Journal Entry on Does America Need Informed Voters? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Current and Retrospective: From Campaigns to Governance: A Flaw in Our System? Review for Final Exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Final Exam, Saturday, May 3, 7:00-9:30 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule at any time during the course of the semester. If a change is made, appropriate notice will be given in class.