**PS 5030: Seminar in American Government & Politics**  
**Fall 2008**  
**Thursdays 6:15pm-9:00pm**  
**Room 1132, Old Library Classroom**

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**Professor: Todd Hartman**  
**Office:** 2059 Old Belk Library Classroom Bldg.  
**Office Hours:** MWF from 8:30am-9:30am  
MWF from 12:00pm-1:00pm  
Appointments (confirm by Email)

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**Email:** hartmantk@appstate.edu  
**Web:** http://www.appstate.edu/~hartmantk

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**Course Description**

This seminar will provide you with an overview of some of the core topics in American politics. Of course, there is no way to cover every topic, nor is it even possible to evaluate the bulk of the literature within each area. Therefore, my goal is to give you a sample of the key findings in the literature, as well as help you develop critical skills for evaluating this research.

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**Required Readings**

We will be reading the following books in their entirety (see below), as well as numerous journal articles and selected chapters from scholarly works. The books should be available in the bookstore, but you may also want to search for used copies online (e.g., Amazon.com). All of the articles can be obtained electronically through the university library’s electronic databases (e.g., JSTOR), and I will leave copies of selected chapters to be photocopied (note that readings from books will be marked with an asterisk on the schedule).


*As this is a graduate seminar, you are responsible for completing all of the listed readings for a given week before coming to class.*

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**Grading**

Your grade will be based on a combination of your participation, critical reviews of the weekly readings, research proposal, and the final comprehensive examination. As a general rule, I do not accept late work, so plan ahead.

- **Discussion Participation**: 20%
- **Critical Reviews (5 x 5% each)**: 25%
- **Research Proposal**: 25%
- **Final Examination**: 30%

**Discussion Participation**

This course is a seminar in American politics, which means that there will be little time devoted to lecturing you and more time allocated to discussing the readings. You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate in the group discussions. Thus, it is important (and required) that you complete the readings as assigned before coming to class. You should also prepare a list of discussion questions based on the material.
Critical Reviews
You will write 5 separate critical reviews of the weekly readings. In this review, summaries should be kept to a minimum (i.e., a few sentences – assume that everyone, including me, has done the readings). Instead, the purpose is for you to critically evaluate the theoretical and methodological findings of all of the readings for a given week. You are free to choose which weeks you will write on, but please note that they are due before class meets. Papers should be approximately 4 pages in length, well-organized, proof-read, and scholarly in nature. Proper citation is required if you reference outside materials.

Research Proposal
You will write a 12-page research proposal integrating the literature that you have read in class, as well as other relevant readings you find outside of class. The paper must have the following sections: introduction, theory/literature review, hypotheses, and design. While you are not required to actually conduct the analysis, the idea is that you (or someone else) could take your proposal and carry out your work. Additional information will follow.

Final Examination
The final exam is designed to mimic an American government comprehensive exam and will test your theoretical and analytical understanding of the material for the course. This will be a closed book exam.

AsULearn <http://asulearn.appstate.edu/>
You should get in the habit of checking AsULearn. Course announcements, hard to find readings, and grades will be posted online.

Academic Integrity
The university’s academic integrity policy can be found at the Office of Student Conduct web site: <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/>. Students attending Appalachian State University agree to abide by the following code:
• Students will not lie, cheat, or steal to gain academic advantage.
• Students will oppose every instance of academic dishonesty.

Disability Statement
Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.ods.appstate.edu/> or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.
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**08/28: Introduction**
1. Course overview and expectations.
2. Brief lesson on understanding statistics in political science.

**09/04: Political Parties**

**09/11: Party Identification**

**09/18: Political Ideology**
09/25: Civic Engagement & Political Participation

10/02: Voting

10/09: Public Opinion

10/23: Processing Political Information

10/30: Emotion in Politics

11/06: Race & Politics

**11/13: Interest Groups**


**11/20: Congress**


**12/04: The Presidency**