

Local and Global Dynamics in Contemporary American Politics

POLH2306

Responsible Teacher: Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu

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Office Hours: Mondays, 15-16, or by Appointment.

Credits and Duration of Course: 2 or 4 ECTS, 10 Contact Hours

Registration: No advance registration required

Calendar & Location: Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 16 to 18 in Contemporary History's Paasivirta Lecture Hall (building T19 on the campus map). **The course begins on Thursday, 31 March.**

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF SCHEDULE!

Course Description

The United States has had to confront an increasingly large list of challenges that have exposed themselves since the 2008 Economic Crisis. President Barack Obama's administration has made a series of swift interventions and large legislative initiatives in the last two years that have proved to be controversial. Age old questions in American politics have resurfaced, such as: What is the proper role of government? What is the right balance between the federal government and state government control? Is the American international power being diminished? This lecture series serves as an introduction into the American political and electoral systems as well as place such controversial debates into recent historical contexts.

Assessment and Course Policies

There are two components to successfully earn credits for participating in this course: attendance and completion of a learning diary. As the information gained during this course is fundamentally based on its main lectures, it is of paramount importance that you attend all lectures. I will monitor course attendance by the distribution of a roster at the beginning of each lecture. Please do not place your name on the roster if you do not plan on staying for the duration of the lecture. **Further, you are permitted to be absent for one (1) lecture, regardless of reason.** You will also have the ability to earn an additional 2 ECTS through the successful completion of a supplementary essay.

Detailed Course Calendar

Thu 31.03.2011, from 16 to 18: Introduction to the American Political System (Paasivirta Lecture Hall)

Wed 06.04.2011, from 16 to 18: Ideology, Partisanship, and Claiming Electoral Mandates (Paasivirta Lecture Hall)

Thu 07.04.2011, from 16 to 18: The Great Debate: Role of the Federal Government (Paasivirta Lecture Hall)

Wed 13.04.2011, from 16 to 18: America's Place in the World: Domestic Perceptions on Foreign Policy (Paasivirta Lecture Hall)

Thu 14.04.2011, from 16 to 18: Challenges and Prospects for the Future (Paasivirta Lecture Hall)

All Learning Diaries and Essays are due on Wed 04.05.2011.

Learning Diary Guidelines

A satisfactory learning diary is the synthesis of the new information you obtained in each lecture; your own pre-existing knowledge/opinions on the topic; and other academic sources, resulting with you placing each lecture in a thoughtful and personal context. A learning diary is not just a summary of each lecture. Further, a learning diary is not just a formalized version of your lecture notes. A learning diary serves two main purposes. First, it allows you the possibility to formally reconsider and process themes and information introduced in the lecture. Second, I have the ability to properly assess your ability to process such themes and information.

The following are some questions to keep in mind while composing the diary:

- What were the main themes of the lecture?
- What preexisting knowledge of the lecture's theme did I possess?
- What new did I learn from the lecture?
- How did the lecture shape my understanding of the subject and related issues?
- How did the lecture relate to my studies in a general/specific way?

The learning diary should consist of 1-2 typed pages per lecture (A4, Times New Roman 12 point Font, 1,5 spaced). If outside sources are used, they must be properly cited. If any questions on citation arise, please consult the course's responsible person. It is highly recommended that the diary entry for each lecture be completed in a timely manner so information remains fresh. **On academic honesty: Although much information will be the same in each diary, the focus is on what you individually learned. As a result, it is easily apparent if diaries are written as a group or copied. Learning diaries are individual projects and issues of plagiarism will be dealt with per University of Turku regulations.**

Supplementary Essay Guidelines

You have the opportunity to earn an additional 2 ECTS through the successful completion of a supplementary essay. Your essay must deal with one particular topic dealing with the contemporary state of American politics, either addressing foreign or domestic policies. It is advantageous for you to discuss your potential essay topic with me as soon as possible, as I must approve all essay topics before they are accepted. Please note, while it is important for you to offer a strong academic analysis on your paper's theme, this essay is not the venue for excessive commentary or opinion.

Your essay should be based on contemporary source material, such as newspaper articles and reputable websites. In addition, you must include at least one scholarly monograph or two scholarly articles in your source material.

The essay should consist of 7-10 pages (A4, Times New Roman 12 point Font, 1,5 spaced). You must use the Turabian/Chicago Style of citation.

Information for Finnish (degree) Students:

Kurssilla voi korvata seuraavia poliittisen historian aineopintojen kohtia:

A3.1.4, A3.2.2, A3.2.3, A3.2.4, A3.3.2, A3.3.5, A7. Kurssi soveltuu myös History and Politics of European Integration -opetusohjelmaa suorittavien opiskelijoiden "Additional Courses" -kategorian suoritukseksi.

Kurssilla voi korvata seuraavia valtio-opin perusopintojen ja aineopintojen kohtia:

PER4: Grant, A.: The American Political Process (7. laitos)

KV2: Hill, C.: The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy

Muiden oppiaineiden korvaavuuksia voi tiedustella suoraan ko. oppiaineesta.