



COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: **REGIONAL STUDIES: UNITED STATES**

COURSE DATA

Degree	Diploma in Humanities and Global Challenges
Academic Year	2023-24
Credits	6
Course type	Elective
Department	International Relations
Language of instruction	English

PROFESSOR DATA

Name	Prof. Dr. Jason Xidias
Email	jxidias@comillas.edu
Office hours	By appointment, in person or Zoom. Please contact me via email stating your full availability for a meeting.

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This introductory course on American Politics will explore democracy, the US Constitution, federalism, civil liberties and rights, the presidency, Congress, the judiciary, political parties, elections and political participation, interest groups, campaign financing, the news and social media, and foreign policy. Students will complete the course with an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and structural foundations of the country and the process and policy outcomes of the US government, both domestically and internationally. The key questions that underpin all of the above-mentioned themes are: How is power exercised and contested in the United States? And, how does the US project its power globally?

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTBOOK: GEER, JOHN ET AL. GATEWAYS TO DEMOCRACY: AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, FIFTH EDITION. BOSTON: CENGAGE, 2022.

CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

TOPIC 1: INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OVERVIEW.

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHAT ARE ITS ORIGINS? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE US AND GLOBALLY?

READING: ROBERT DAHL, ON DEMOCRACY: PP. 7-25, 35-61 (AVAILABLE ON MOODLE)

TOPIC 2: THE US CONSTITUTION

READING: GEER ET AL, GATEWAYS TO DEMOCRACY: AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, FIFTH EDITION: CHAPTER 2 (AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE OR RENT IN PAPER OR EBOOK FORMATS)

TOPIC 3: FEDERALISM

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 3

TOPIC 4: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND RIGHTS

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTERS 4 AND 5

TOPIC 5: THE PRESIDENCY

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 13

TOPIC 6: CONGRESS

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 12

TOPIC 7: THE JUDICIARY

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 15

TOPIC 8: POLITICAL PARTIES

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 9

TOPIC 9: ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTERS 10 AND 11

TOPIC 10: THE NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 7

TOPIC 11: INTEREST GROUPS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 8

TOPIC 12: US FOREIGN POLICY

READING: GEER ET AL: CHAPTER 16

5-MINUTE ORAL PRESENTATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE ON APRIL 23; YOUR ESSAY IS DUE BY MIDNIGHT THAT DAY. WE WILL HAVE OUR EXAM ON APRIL 25. PLEASE NOTE THAT ANYONE WHO DOES NOT MEET THE UNIVERSITY'S ATTENDANCE POLICY MAY BE DISALLOWED FROM TAKING THIS.

METHODOLOGY

This course titled Regional Studies: The United States will be taught in person. The professor will deliver a series of lectures on the key themes stated in the short description above. This content will be enriched by student contributions (questions, commentaries, discussions, presentations) inside the classroom as well as readings, research and writing outside.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Percentage
FINAL EXAM	In-depth knowledge and application of the course topics stated under Contents and Structure above. Students must receive a passing grade on the final exam in order for the other marking criteria to be calculated.	50%
RESEARCH ESSAY	3000 words on a topic of your choice - see the PDFs titled Essay Guidance and Essay Rubric on Moodle. Proposed research question must be submitted to your professor via email for approval by Feb 27 th .	20%
ORAL PRESENTATION	5-minute oral presentation of research essay – see rubric titled Oral Presentation on Moodle.	15%
ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION	Attendance and active participation based on the course readings.	15%

- Committing any serious academic misconduct, such as **plagiarism** of previously published material, or **copying** in the exam or any other graded activity, **will imply not being able to pass the course in the ordinary assessment period**.
- At the beginning of the term the professor will announce the office hours for the course. Tutorials are an essential part of the development of the course, and students may attend tutorials during the course within those office times, but it is recommended that they are arranged in advance with the professor.
- To be able to take the final exam, students must not have missed **more than one third of the classes without justification**. If this requirement is not met, the student may lose the right to be assessed both in the ordinary and extraordinary assessment period (art. 93-1 of the General Regulations). Failure to attend to the first hour of a two-hour lecture, means having missed the whole session in terms of attendance, regardless of whether or not the student the second hour.
- Students are expected to arrive to class on time and stay until the end of each session.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

CONTACT HOURS	OUTSIDE CLASSROOM	OVERALL
60	90	150

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Dahl, Robert. *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. New York: Penguin, 2003.

Foner, Eric. *Give me Liberty: An American Story*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2014.

Geer, John et al. *Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government*, Fifth Edition. Boston: Cengage, 2022.

Hochschild, Arlie. *Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press, 2016.

Kernell, Samuel et al. *The Logic of American Politics*. New York: Sage, 2021.

Kernell, Samuel et al. *Principles and Practice of American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 7th edition. CQ Press: Thousand Oaks, 2019.

Kleidosty, Jeremy and Jason Xidias. *A Critical Analysis of the Federalist Papers*. London: Routledge, 2017.

Kollman, Ken. *Readings in American Politics*, 5th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2019.

Madison, James et al. *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Dover, 2014.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Collins, 2015.
