**US GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

**JPB367**

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***Course Description***

The course aims to provide students with basic knowledge and understanding of the US government. It focuses on the organization, functions and politics of the US political system, especially on its federal level. The course examines the division of powers and the system of checks and balances. The major topics include the analysis of the Constitution, all three major branches of government, the presidency, elections, and political parties as well as policy-making.

***Aim of the Course***

Through the participation in the course, the students should be able to understand constitutional foundations of all three branches of government, their structure, mechanism of functioning, and mutual overlaps as well as election process and political participation.

***Course Requirements***

The students are supposed to monitor actual political events related to the course topics on a weekly basis and digest two of them in the **written** **form** before each class; read the sources and literature; and write a seminar work. Regular attendance and participation in the class discussion is a must.

Format of weekly digests: title of the digested article, brief contents, statement of the relevance for the course, indication of the source (link).

***Assessment***

The seminar work is due two weeks before the end of the examination period. It must meet all academic standards, such as proper structure, citations, footnotes and bibliography. The extent should range from eight to ten pages in usual Charles University format.

For grading system (Grade A-F) please see the rule of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science No. 17/2018

***Required Source***

Constitution of the United States of America(with all amendments!).

***Recommended Source***

Federalist papers. (2019) Skyhorse Publising or other edition

***Recommended Literature***

Edwards III., George, Wayne, Stephen J., (2013). Presidential Leadership. Politics and Policy-making. Cengage Learning.

Jacobson, Gary C., Rowman, Jamie R. (2O19). The Politics of Congressional Election. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

O´Connor, Karen, Sabato, Larry,J. (2000). American Government. Continuity and Change. Longman

or

Wilson, James Q., Dilulio, John J. Jr, , Bose, Meena (2012). American Government: Institution and Policies. The Essentials. Cengage Learning.

or

any college textbook on US government published in last 15 years, e.g by authors Edwards, George C., Wattenberg , Martin P. and Lineberry, Robert,L.

Plano, Jack S., Greenberg, Milton. (2001). The American Political Dictionary. Hartcourt College Publishers.

Wayne, Stephen J. (2019). The Road to the White House 2020. The Politics of Presidential Election. Cengage Learning.

***Web Sources***

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov/)

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov/)

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov/)

[www.supremecourt.gov](http://www.supremecourt.gov/)

[www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov/)

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/)

[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com/)

www.politico.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

More detailed information on literature and readings will be given during the first class.

***Course Topics***

1. **Introduction**.

Orientation in the course. Discussion of the syllabus and requirements.

American political culture and values.

1. **Constitutional background** (2 classes).

Independence and the Articles of Confederation. Creating the Constitution. The Bill of Rights.

Federalism.

1. **The presidency.**

The leadership issue. Presidential character. Presidential formal and informal powers.

1. **The legislative branch.**

Bicameral structure. The powers of the House of Representatives and Senate. How a bill becomes a law.

1. **The executive branch.**

The structure and development of the bureaucracy. Its organization, functioning, and staffing.

1. **The judicial branch.**

The creation of the federal courts. The structure of the federal courts. The Supreme Court. Nominating the judges.

1. **Presidential election.**

Selection and succession of the presidents. Nomination process. Electoral College politics.

1. **Congressional election.**

Midterm election. Election campaign, its strategies and tactics.

1. **Who can vote?**

The structure of the U.S. electorate. Political behavior of the U.S. electorate.

1. **Political parties and interest groups.**

Two-party system, party platform, national convention. Party dealignment and realignment. Interest groups and lobbying. Political action committees.

1. **Policy-making.**

Policy implementation. Agenda-setting. Social welfare policy and entitlement programs.

1. **The conclusion of the course.**