PS 110
POLITICAL SCIENCE 110 SYLLABUS
AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
FALL SEMESTER 2008 (T, TH: 9:35 – 10:55am) GH 340
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Cole D. Taratoot
OFFICE: GH 312
PHONE: 745 – 6391
EMAIL: cole.taratoot@wku.edu
OFFICE HOURS: 11:00 p.m. – 12:00 p.m. TTH and by appointment
STUDY GUIDES: Study guides and useful materials can be found on my website at http://cole.taratoot.com (click on classes)

Political Science 110 is an introductory examination of the principles, structure functions and processes of American Government. Particular emphasis will be placed on the major institutions of the national political system – Congress, Presidency, Supreme Court and Bureaucracy – and the interrelationship of these major institutions and various political conditions in the production of particular policies for American society. Special attention will also be given to the impact of basic American values on the democratic concepts of political participation and individual rights.

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviation may be necessary because of unforeseen circumstances.

POLICIES:

Students are expected to act like adults in the classroom. Students causing disruptions will be asked to leave. **TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS.**

**THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR CHEATING.** Students are responsible for the information contained in the University’s Academic Honesty policy http://www.wku.edu/coursecatalog/index.php?subcategoryid=75. While the penalty for academic dishonesty is a matter of the instructor’s discretion, in the Department of Political Science the customary penalty for a violation of the academic dishonesty rules is an “F” in the course.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, DUC A-200. The OFSDS telephone number is (270)745-5004 V/TDD.

Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

STUDENT EVALUATION: 1. Class Attendance: Roll will be taken each day. Students are allowed a maximum of four absences for the semester. Each additional absence will result in the deduction of 1 point (out of 10) from the participation grade. **THE LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW AND RECEIVE A “W” IS TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2008.** 2. Participation: Participation by students is required and is worth 10% of the overall grade. If a student is one point short of a higher letter grade at the end of the
semester, then the instructor may award extra points if the student has attended class regularly and made a valuable contribution to class discussions. Participation includes having read the reading assignments, bringing all required readings to class, and contributing to class discussions. If you do not participate in class discussions you will not receive full credit. 3. **Exams**: There will be three regular multiple-choice exams during the course of the semester. Each test will count toward 25% of the final course grade. Make-up examinations will only be given for excused absences and must be taken within one week of the original exam date. The type of make-up exam is chosen at the instructor’s discretion. 4. **Quizzes**: There will be three quizzes that will make up the final 15% of your grade. Quizzes are unannounced and conditional on attendance (no make-ups), but only your two best quizzes will count toward your final grade. No make-up quizzes will be given.

5. **Grading Scale**:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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6. **Optional Extra Credit**: Students may earn up to five extra points to be applied to one test grade. There are two options:

1. **Meet an elected official**. Students may meet any local, state, or federal politician for extra credit. It is required that you document meeting this person i.e. get a photo with this person or signed documentation from a staff member. Students should then write a 2 page (double spaced) paper describing the person they met, why they chose this person, the person’s position, and what they learned from the experience.

2. **Watch the Obama – McCain debate**. Students can watch the debate and write an analysis of who they think won the debate. More information will be provided later. Please see the instructor. Visit [www.debatewatch2008.com](http://www.debatewatch2008.com) for information.
COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

August 26  First Day – Review of Syllabus; Introduction

August 28  American Political Culture: Seeking a More Perfect Union, Patterson (Chapter 1 pgs. 1 – 35, R1 – R2)

September 2  Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self-Government, Patterson (Chapter 2 pgs. 37 – 72, R2-1 – R2-3)

September 4  Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self-Government, Patterson (Chapter 2 pgs. 37 – 72, R2-1 – R2-3)

September 9  Federalism: Forging a Nation, Patterson (Chapter 3 pgs. 73 – 108, R3-1 – R3-3)

September 11  Federalism: Forging a Nation, Patterson (Chapter 3 pgs. 73 – 108, R3-1 – R3-3)

September 16  Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights, Patterson (Chapter 4 pgs. 109 – 150, R4-1 – R4-3)

September 18  Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights, Patterson (Chapter 4 pgs. 109 – 150, R4-1 – R4-3)

September 23  Equal Rights: Struggling Toward Fairness, Patterson (Chapter 5 pgs. 151 – 190, R5-1 – R5-3)

September 25  Equal Rights: Struggling Toward Fairness, Patterson (Chapter 5 pgs. 151 – 190, R5-1 – R5-3)

September 30  First Exam

October 2 – 3  FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

October 7  Public Opinion and Political Socialization: Shaping the People’s Voice, Patterson (Chapter 6 pgs. 192 – 222, R6-1 – R6-3) WATCH OBAMA – MCCAIN DEBATE

October 9  Public Opinion and Political Socialization: Shaping the People’s Voice, Patterson (Chapter 6 pgs. 192 – 222, R6-1 – R6-3)

October 14  Political Participation and Voting: Expressing the Popular Will, Patterson (Chapter 7 pgs. 223 – 250, R7-1 – R7-3) Last day to drop and receive a “W”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Political Parties, Candidates, and Campaigns: Defining the Voter’s Choice, Patterson (Chapter 8 pgs. 251 – 291, R8-1 – R8-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>Interest Groups: Organizing for Influence, Patterson (Chapter 9 pgs. 293 – 325, R9-1 – R9-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>Interest Groups: Organizing for Influence, Patterson (Chapter 9 pgs. 293 – 325, R9-1 – R9-3)</td>
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<td>October 28</td>
<td>The News Media: Communicating Political Images, Patterson (Chapter 10 pgs. 328 – 357, R10-1 – R10-4)</td>
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<td>October 30</td>
<td>Second Exam</td>
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<td>November  4</td>
<td><strong>PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DAY, NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>November  6</td>
<td>Congress: Balancing National Goals and Local Interests, Patterson (Chapter 11 pgs. 359 – 405, R11-1 – R11-3)</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
<td>Congress: Balancing National Goals and Local Interests, Patterson (Chapter 11 pgs. 359 – 405, R11-1 – R11-3)</td>
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<td>November 13</td>
<td>The Presidency: Leading the Nation, Patterson (Chapter 12 pgs. 407 – 448, R12-1 – R12-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>The Presidency: Leading the Nation, Patterson (Chapter 12 pgs. 407 – 448, R12-1 – R12-3)</td>
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<td>November 26 – 30</td>
<td><strong>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>December 2</td>
<td>The Federal Judicial System: Applying the Law, Patterson (Chapter 14 pgs. 488 – 526, R14-1 – R14-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>The Federal Judicial System: Applying the Law, Patterson (Chapter 14 pgs. 488 – 526, R14-1 – R14-3)</td>
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<td>December 8</td>
<td><strong>Third Exam: Monday, December 8</strong>, 10:30 am – 12:30pm</td>
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PS110 – American National Government fulfills General Education Requirements for Social and Behavioral Sciences section “C”. The course supports the goals of Western’s general education program by developing the following academic skills:

1. The course develops the student’s capacity for critical thinking by providing a theoretical context for analyzing politics.
2. The course provides a historical perspective that identifies connections between past and present through discussions of the U.S. Constitution, U.S. political institutions, and current events.
3. The course provides an understanding of society and human behavior through explanation of how individuals process political information as well as why political issues gain attention. The courses addresses this goal through the exploration of empirical evidence on voter turnout, public opinion, and electoral politics.