New Course Request

Indiana University

South Bend Campus

Check Appropriate Boxes: Undergraduate credit [X] Graduate credit [ ] Professional credit [ ]

1. School/Division: CLAS

2. Academic Subject Code: POLS

3. Course Number: Y201 (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)

4. Instructor: Elizabeth Bennion

5. Course Title: Controversies in U.S. Politics

Recommended Abbreviation (Optional): ________________________________ (Limited to 32 Characters including spaces)

6. First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year): __________________________

7. Credit Hours: Fixed at ________ or Variable from ___________ to ___________

8. Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes [ ] No [X]

9. Is variable title approval being requested? Yes [ ] No [X]

10. Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication: A critical examination of multiple perspectives on contemporary political issues. Students develop critical thinking and oral examination skills through lively class debate and dialogue regarding some of the most controversial issues in U.S. domestic and foreign policy. Topics updated each semester. Argumentative essays required.

11. Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ________ or Variable from ___________ to ___________

12. Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ________ or Variable from ___________ to ___________

13. Estimated enrollment: 25, of which ________ percent are expected to be graduate students.

14. Frequency of scheduling: ________ semester. Will this course be required for majors? No

15. Justification for new course: See attached "Justification for New Course"

16. Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? Yes

17. Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other materials. See attached sample syllabus

18. If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap is necessary, desirable, or unimportant. This course will replace X POLS Y100 on our campus.

19. A copy of every new course proposal must be submitted to departments, schools, or divisions in which there may be overlap of the new course with existing courses or areas of strong concern, with instructions that they send comments directly to the originating Curriculum Committee. Please append a list of departments, schools, or divisions thus consulted. NA-POLS Only

Submitted by: [Signature]  Date: 2/27/08

Department Chairman/Division Director

Approved by: [Signature]  Date: 3/4/08

Dean, Assoc. Dean, CLAS

Dean of Graduate School (when required)

Chancellor/Vice-President

University Enrollment Services

After School/Division approval, forward the last copy (without attachments) to University Enrollment Services for initial processing, and the remaining four copies and attachments to the Campus Chancellor or Vice-President.

UPS 724 University Enrollment Services Final—White; Chancellor/Vice-President—Blue; School/Division—Yellow; Department/Division—Pink; University Enrollment Services Advance—White
JUSTIFICATION FOR NEW COURSE

POLS Y201: Controversies in U.S. Politics

This new course request is essentially a request to replace our current POLS Y100 course with a new 200-level American political controversies course. There are several reasons why we wish to offer this course at the 200 level.

(1) Students will be more prepared to debate the issues if they have already taken a 100-level political science course. Although we will not set a prerequisite for this course, the 200-level designation will accurately suggest that some 100-level knowledge about basic political institutions and processes will be helpful in successfully completing the 200-level debate course. The instructor will review some basic concepts with students at the beginning of the semester, but students should recognize that it is their responsibility to master these basic concepts quickly in order to participate fully in the 200-level discussion course.

(2) The verbal participation and writing requirements for this course exceed our expectations for other 100-level courses. As in an upper-level seminar, students are expected to speak during every class session. They are also required to write a series of well-developed, argumentative essays requiring them to synthesize, cite, and critically evaluate the reading material. This type of work seems most appropriate for a 200-level course.

(3) This course differs from the other 100-level offerings in our department. The other 100-level courses we offer are introductory survey courses: Introduction to Political Science, Introduction to American Politics, Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to Comparative Politics. These courses require students to learn a great deal of new content in order to develop their understanding of basic institutions and processes. The debate course, in contrast, requires students to examine, in detail, a few specific policy areas. This is substantively different than our 100-level survey courses.

(4) An external reviewer suggested that the department needs to offer some 200-level courses to allow students to make the transition from 100-level to 300-level coursework. This course seems like an appropriate transitional course for students who think sequentially. It is a good bridge between our 100-level survey courses and our 300-level special topics (subfield specific) courses.
POLS Y201, You Decide!  
Controversies in U.S. Politics  
SAMPLE SUMMER SESSION SYLLABUS  
Indiana University South Bend

Instructor Contact Information:  
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(574) 520-4128  
ebennion@iusb.edu

SSI Office Hours:  
After class &  
by appointment  
2181 Wiekamp Hall

Course Description:

This is an interactive, highly participatory course that will investigate some of the most controversial issues facing U.S. citizens during the post-9/11 era. Democracy is based upon public debate, dialogue and decision-making. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to a number of contemporary policy debates in order to illustrate how political scientists and journalists address these controversies. Additionally, the course is designed to provide you with skills and knowledge that can be used to form educated opinions about a wide variety of political issues.

There are no easy answers to many of the dilemmas we will investigate. When confronted by differing opinions and points of view, it is necessary to develop the ability to comprehend, evaluate, and make decisions in the face of uncertainty. Whether as a citizen or a political leader, one must be able to evaluate the pros and cons, benefits and costs of various policy options. The use of such “critical thinking skills” can have a profound impact upon one’s life in terms of academic, professional, and personal success. Such skills are also necessary to achieve informed citizenship and to participate fully in the political life of the nation. This course will foster active learning designed to develop your critical thinking, writing and oral communication skills.

Course Objectives:

1. To introduce you to a number of concepts, issues, and theories in contemporary political science so that you will be a more intelligent consumer of information about our political system and public policy.
2. To provide you with thinking skills that will enable you to analyze, evaluate, and make decisions concerning complex contemporary issues in politics.
3. To help you to improve your communication skills, both written and oral, in order to enhance your effectiveness in expressing your views on the issues.
4. To encourage you to become more tolerant of ambiguity and diversity as it pertains to political issues and to increase your ability to deal with multiple points of view.
5. To facilitate your assessment of your own personal political beliefs so that you can know (and explain) what beliefs you hold and why you hold them.
**Textbook:** Additional reading, including newspaper reading, will be assigned.


**Course Schedule:** Fall version of course may add universal health care, affirmative action, and public financing of political campaigns to this topic list.

- **Tuesday, May 13**  Introduction to the Course
- **Thursday, May 15**  Presentation of Political Cartoons
- **Tuesday, May 20**  Issue 15: Does the Patriot Act Abridge Essential Freedom?
- **Thursday, May 22**  Issue 11: Is “Middle Eastern” Profiling Ever Justified?
- **Tuesday, May 27**  Issue 19: Is the Use of Torture Ever Justified?
- **Thursday, May 29**  Issue 9: Is Capital Punishment Ever Justified?
- **Monday, June 2**  EXAM 1 DUE – Monday at 4:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, June 3**  Issue 16: Stopping Illegal Immigration: Border Security First?
- **Thursday, June 5**  Issue 2: Is Democracy the Answer to Global Terrorism?
- **Tuesday, June 10**  Issue 18: Does the War in Iraq Help the War Against Terrorism?
- **Thursday, June 12**  Issue 21: Must America Exercise World Leadership? If so, how?
- **Monday, June 16**  EXAM 2 DUE – Monday at 4:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, June 17**  Election 2008: Issues, Candidates, & Campaigns
  *In-Class Research Teams; Mock Debate Preparation*
- **Thursday, June 19**  Presentations of Presidential Candidate Issue Positions
  *Mock Debate; Course Wrap-Up and Closing Paperwork*

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**ESSAY EXAM #1 DUE: Monday, June 2, no later than 4:00 p.m.**

**ESSAY EXAM #2 DUE: Monday, June 16, no later than 4:00 p.m.**

Submit your exams to DW 2181 (or via Oncourse) by 4:00 p.m. on the due date. Late exams will be penalized 10% per day. Submit the exam as a Microsoft Word attachment. Essays should be properly formatted, edited, and proofread before submission. Electronic submission will be confirmed (via Oncourse email) by the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that the exam was actually received by the instructor before the 4:00 p.m. deadline. Call 520-4128 between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. with questions.
Course Requirements:

This is an active-learning course. Attendance at all class sessions is required. All students are expected to contribute to class discussions.

Work must be submitted on time. Please pay attention to the following important rules:

- Late homework will not be accepted.
- Late exams will be penalized 1 full letter grade (10%) per day.
- Students who miss more than three class sessions will automatically fail the course.

Multiple-Choice Homework: Submitted in Class (25 points each; 200 points total)

- Students should submit this assignment at the beginning of class each day.
- Students must do their own work. Do not solicit answers from others.
- Includes write-in identification of strongest argument on each side of debate.
- All eight scores will be recorded.

Weekly Participation: (based on weekly performance; 200 points total)

- Participation grades are based on both full class and small group contributions.
- Students will be given a midterm grade and final participation grade.
- Absences will affect your course participation grade.

Take-Home Essay Exams: (Exam 1: 200 points; Exam 2: 200 points)

- Essays should be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on the assigned date.
- Follow all directions carefully.
- Academic misconduct will result in an “F” in the course.

Grading Scale: total points earned/800 points possible

Based on percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>73-76</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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</tbody>
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Grades are not automatically rounded up. Purchase your own “grade insurance” by completing an extra credit project. Any mark below 60 represents a failing grade.

Posting of Grades:

All grades will be posted on the Oncourse website. You are encouraged to check the gradebook regularly. Notify the instructor immediately if you discover problems with your on-line gradebook.
Cheating and Plagiarism:

Students’ work must be their own. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any person caught violating the rules as spelled out in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (1996: 17-18) will receive a failing grade in the course. If you do not have a copy of the Code see the instructor or purchase a copy at the bookstore.

This course operates on an honor code. Students who take this course must pledge that they will not solicit nor provide answers to the homework assignments or examinations. Students must also report violations of the honor code to the instructor.

Homework assignments are designed to test each student’s individual understanding of the assigned readings. Homework is assigned to facilitate discussions informed by the course readings and to reward students for completing the reading before each class session. Students may not work together on these assignments. Soliciting or providing answers to the homework questions will be considered a violation of the honor code and will result in a failing grade in the course.

Take-home examinations are designed to test your understanding of the issues discussed in class as well as your critical thinking and writing skills. If you are concerned about your ability to perform well on these essay exams, you should speak to the instructor about writing assistance that would not constitute a violation of the honor code. All examination answers must be derived from your own synthesis of the course readings, class discussions, and your original ideas. Ideas taken from the assigned readings should be paraphrased and cited. Words taken from the assigned readings should be quoted and cited. You may have a friend or tutor proofread your work, but the arguments & writing on the exams must be your own. If you have questions, speak to the instructor.

Americans with Disabilities Act Accommodations:

If you have special learning needs, please let me know. All arrangements for special testing conditions, notetakers, or other services must be made through Disabled Student Services. Please call Disabled Student Services at 520-4479. The instructor will follow all recommendations of the Office of Disabled Student Services and will sit down with each student to discuss the recommendations and accommodations that best meet a student’s individual needs.

Modifying the Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus to reflect student interests and needs. Students will be responsible for changes to the syllabus as announced in class.
**POLY201 Extra-Credit Options:**

Students are welcome to complete up to THREE of the following extra credit assignments. Each high-quality assignment will boost your final course grade by one percentage point.

- Write a 400 – 500 word commentary for the American Democracy Project weblog or respond (in 200 - 300 words) to TWO ADP weblog entries (http://www.iusb.edu/~sbadp)

  **OR**

- Track public opinion on one of the issues discussed in this course. Report your findings in a 2-3 page paper. Document your sources. What do the majority of Americans believe? How have attitudes changed over the past three decades?

  **OR**

- Create your own public opinion poll to measure public opinion on one or more of the issues discussed in this class. Administer your survey to at least 20 individuals. Explain how you collected your data. Summarize your findings in 2-3 pages. Include charts, graphs, and words.

  **OR**

- Watch a political news program. Write a brief (2-3 page) paper describing: 1) the topic of the show, 2) the persons appearing on the show, 3) the main arguments advanced by various speakers, and 4) your own reactions to these arguments. Include a statement of your new, informed, opinion on the issue(s) highlighted by the show. (Program must be pre-approved).

  **OR**

- Read a newspaper article related to the subject matter of this course. Write a brief (1-2 page) paper describing: 1) the topic of the article, 2) what you learned by reading the article, 3) how the article relates to what you have learned in this course, and 4) your own reaction to the article.

*Participation Bonus:*

- Any student who maintains a perfect attendance record in the course will receive a 5% bonus on his or her participation grade for the semester. In order to qualify for this bonus, a student must attend ALL 12 class sessions.