**PSCI Dual Enrollment U.S. Government and Politics**

**Benjamin Spiers**

Explanation: This class is a similar equivalent of to Virginia Tech Political Science course 1014 U.S. Government and Politics. This class is also similar to a Dual Enrollment American Government and Politics class I took at Richard Bland College during my senior year of High School in 2007. This dual enrollment class I took ended up transferring as college credit to Virginia Tech as PSCI 1014. This class credit also went toward helping me graduating high school. This class can help students graduate high school, earn college credit, and learn about the importance of U.S. Government and Politics.

**Meeting time: Tuesday’s and Thursday’s for an hour and fifteen minutes**

Explanation: If students have to drive to a community college, meeting these two days would save them gas mileage. The specific time of day we meet would depend on the community college or school I taught at; however, back in high school my dual enrollment class met in the mornings from I believe 7:15 to around 8:30 so we could have enough time to get back to school for our other classes at high school.

**Office hours: by appointment**

Explanation: With students likely leaving college campus early in the day back for high school, and me likely having to teach at high school as well, it may be difficult to schedule regular office hours. It depends on where I end up teaching. Students could meet with me briefly before or after class. If they need to meet with me longer, we could schedule an appointment after school hours. Students could also keep in contact with me via email or phone.

**Email: sben6@vt.edu** (hypothetical, email address when I teach would be different)

**Phone: 804-731-4371** (hypothetical, my phone number may be different as well)

1. **Class Description: Dual Enrollment U.S. Government and Politics is a college level introductory course to America’s political system. This semester we will look at the foundations of America Government and Political System. We will study famous documents including the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Topics including Federalism, branches of government, political parties, elections, and citizen participation will be studied during this class. We will also look at executive branch agencies; as well study the relationship between Federal, State, and Local governments. In this class we will show how these topics and U.S. Government is very relevant to individuals’ lives today.**
2. **Main objectives:**
* **Study about the origins of American Government, including governments and documents our Government is based off of including the Magna Carta, and English Bill of Rights, as well as Colonial Governments including Virginia**
* **Investigate the importance of the Declaration of Independence and how that laid the groundwork for American Government**
* **Study the Articles of Confederation and why its shortcomings led to the need for a Constitution**
* **Investigate the events and compromises that helped produce the U.S. Constitution**
* **Study the arguments made by Federalists and Anti-Federalists, that resulted in the need for a Bill of Rights**
* **Study Federalism, as well as how Local, State, and the Federal government share power in this system**
* **Study the Three Branches of Government, and the check and balances in Government**
* **Investigate the history of political parties in the U.S., including the two major Parties today**
* **Investigate the history of Elections in the U.S. including the Electoral College, and how the process has changed over time**
* **Investigate citizen participation in American government and politics, and how it has changed throughout our history as a country**
* **Investigate Executive Branch Agencies importance in America’s government and political system**
* **Study how all of the topics discussed in class are relevant to the present day**

Explanation: The topics I discussed in the class description and main objectives are very important to cover in an introductory level U.S. Government and Politics class. Depending on how the class goes other topics related to U.S. Government and Politics may be discussed as well.

1. **Required Readings/Books:**

**McClellan, J. (2000). *Liberty, Order, and Justice: An Introduction to the Constitutional Principles of American Government 3rd Edition.* Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. Available from:** [**http://files.libertyfund.org/files/679/0088\_LFeBk.pdf**](http://files.libertyfund.org/files/679/0088_LFeBk.pdf)

**Students will also be required to read a book with my approval during the semester related to political parties and/or elections in the U.S.**

**Other required readings in the class, can be accessed online or will be provided in print copy to the class.**

Explanation: Even though *Liberty, Order, and Justice* written by former UVA professor Dr. McClellan is over an decade old, it does a very good job covering the origins of U.S. Government, U.S Constitution, Bill of Rights, Branches of Government, and Check and Balances in Government. The content is not outdated in the textbook since the book discusses topics that have not changed after 2000. However, if or when I taught this class in the future I would have more access to updated textbooks. I would also look for a textbook that covers political parties and elections as well. I would probably never have more than two required textbooks or books in a class to keep costs down on students. I have had professors that taught classes effectively with few or even sometimes no textbooks. The books that the students choose to read, online readings, online research, in class videos, discussions, PowerPoint’s, and lectures will be used in making sure the other main topics not in McClellan’s book are covered in class.

1. **Grading**

**Attendance/Participation 20% - coming to class, completing readings, and participating in class is required as more than one unexcused absence could result in losing points**

**Book Presentation 15%- students will present their findings on the book they choose with my approval to read about to the class, presentations will be around 5 minutes and PowerPoint’s, Handouts, Visuals, Charts, or other creative technology is encouraged to be used in the presentation as well** (example rubric for book presentations is at the end of the Syllabus)

**Mid-Term Exam 20%- the exam will consist of 5 multiple choice, 5 true/false, 5 matching, and 1 short essay question, each section will be worth twenty five points** (test question examples at end of syllabus)

**Term Paper 25%- students will write a 6 to 8 page double-space paper of their choice with my approval on a topic in the class that they want to investigate further** (term paper rubric at the end of the syllabus)

**Final Exam 20%- the exam will be identical in format to the mid-term, this exam is not cumulative**

Explanation: The weight of the assignments in the class is evenly distributed so one assignment cannot ruin a student’s grade and/or semester in the class. I consider attendance and participation in a class very important. The book presentations on political parties and elections will be beneficial in several ways. They will gain valuable experience in public speaking and presentation skills. Also, they will be in a way the teachers; as the information they present will help students learn more about the topic. Information presented during the book report can be fair game on exams. I believe it is important to have a short essay portion of an exam so students can elaborate on what they have learned and know. I am not a fan of pop quizzes and believe that two main exams will give less stress to students. Also, these exams will cover important points in the class, while sometimes quizzes do not. Having two mains exams is also good preparation for other college classes they will take in the future. The short essay and term paper will also help students writing skills. The term paper will also expose students to the type of papers they have to write on a more consistent basis once they get to college full-time.

1. **Class Expectations- I expect this class to have fun learning about the importance of U.S. Government and Politics. I expect to have debates on sometimes controversial issues. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, and respectful debate is encouraged. However, personal and character attacks are not going to be tolerated. Also, please ask questions in class, especially if you do not understand a topic discussed. I will be glad to help clarify information that was presented by the readings, other classmates, or me. Asking questions will help you and other students succeed in this course. Do not use cell phones in class, as that could result in losing participation points. Tests, book presentations, and term papers are to be done independently. Cheating on tests or plagiarism on the term paper will result in a zero on that assignment and possible failure of the course.**

**Class Schedule**

1. **Week One**

**Tuesday- Course Introduction**

Explanation: The first class will be a good time to introduce students to the course, give brief introduction to American government and politics, have students introduce themselves, explain class expectations, discuss major assignments like the book presentation and term paper, answer questions about the course, and hand out the class syllabus. This will be the one class that will likely not last the full 1:15 minutes.

**Thursday- Origins of American Government: England**

 **Required Reading before class: McClellan pg. 1-52**

 **Optional Reading: McClellan pg. 63-87 includes Magna Carta, Petition of Right, and the English Bill of Rights**

Explanation: It is important to discuss where the ideas for the U.S. Constitution and American Government came from. This reading covers the ideas from England well, and this class will be spent on discussing those ideas in the readings. PowerPoint and pictures may be used by me in helping to present to the material in this class, and most of the other classes during the semester to help engage students more in the topic.

1. **Week Two**

**Tuesday- Origins of American Government: Colonies and Independence**

**Required Reading- McClellan pg. 89-141, Mayflower Compact 167, Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress 171-175, Declaration of Independence 183-187**

Explanation: In this class the origins of America’s government will continued to be discussed. This time we will focus on colonial governments and American’s independence setting the framework for the Constitution. YouTube videos or other videos may be used in this class and throughout the semester in order to help engage students more in the topic. Examples of short videos that could be used in the class are *The Mayflower Compact- Drive Thru History* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbjWqsC0Lpk> and *First Continental Congress-America the Story of Us* [*http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6iITHT8LJE*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6iITHT8LJE)*.*

**Thursday- The First State Governments and the Articles of Confederation**

 **Required Reading- McClellan pg.141-164, Articles of Confederation 230-238**

Explanation: Parts of the U.S. Constitution were based off of State Constitutions and Governments. Also, the Constitution became necessary due to the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation. Usually, the readings/assignments for Thursday classes will be shorter because students do not have as much time to complete assignments, as they do before the Tuesday class. An example of a short video that could be used in this class is *The Articles of Confederation* [*http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbP0JWQeXag*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbP0JWQeXag).

1. **Week Three**

**Tuesday- U.S. Constitution: The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia**

 **Required Reading- McClellan pg. 241-292**

Explanation: In this class we will discuss the important compromises made at the Constitutional Convention including the Three-Fifths Compromise, Connecticut Compromise, New Jersey Plan, and the Virginia Plan. We will also discuss the major actors involved in writing the Constitution, and how the Constitution is different from the Articles of Confederation.

**Thursday- U.S. Constitution: Checks and Balances**

 **Required Reading: McClellan pg. 327-354**

Explanation: We will discuss in this class the check and balances, as well as the Separation of Powers put into the Constitution to make sure the Federal government, or a branch of the Federal Government does not obtain too much power. An introduction to the three branches of government will also be talked about in this class.

1. **Week Four**

**Tuesday- U.S. Constitution: Federalism**

 **Required Reading: McClellan pg. 295-326, 381-409**

Explanation: We will discuss Federalism, as well as the arguments made by the anti-federalists and federalists in the ratification of the Constitution. We will also look at Federalism’s relevancy to governmental issues today. I think it is important of in all of the classes, to make the issues discussed relevant to students today. This class is also a good lead into the Bill of Rights class.

**Thursday- U.S. Constitution: The Bill of Rights**

 **Required Reading: McClellan pg. 409-427**

Explanation: In this class we will discuss the Bill of Rights and why it was needed in the Constitution. We may also debate what the Amendments allow or do not allow. For example we might debate whether the 2nd Amendment allows certain gun control laws to be implemented or not.

1. **Week Five**

**Tuesday-Branches of Government: Legislative Branch**

 **Required Reading/Assignment: *The Legislative Branch*** [**http://www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/legislative-branch**](http://www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/legislative-branch) (can be read online or copies handed out to class) **and be prepared to discuss a current issue involving the Legislative Branch at the Federal or State level** (examples could involve Immigration reform or the recently passed Transportation bill in VA)

Explanation: In this class we will take a more in depth study of the Legislative Branch, with more of a focus on modern day issues. The online reading provides good background knowledge on the Legislative Branch. Students will probably be glad to take a break from the McClellan book and take a further look into a Legislative Branch topic that interests them, and what they may end up writing their term paper on.

**Thursday- Branches of Government: Executive Branch**

 **Required Reading: *The Executive Branch*** [**http://www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/executive-branch**](http://www.whitehouse.gov/our-government/executive-branch) **and be prepared to discuss a current issue involving the Executive Branch at the Federal or State level** (examples involve the use of Drones or the McDonnell/Star Scientific scandal in VA)

Explanation: This class will be very similar to the previous class, other than that the focus will be Executive Branch. This class will also focus more on the President, Vice President, and high level cabinet members. Executive branch agencies will be mentioned; however, we will take a more in depth look at them later in the semester.

1. **Week Six**

**Tuesday- Branches of Government: Judicial Branch**

 **Required Reading: McClellan pg. 463-525**

Explanation: In this class the third branch of government will be discussed. The reading provides good background on probably the least known branch of government. Also, we will look at modern day Judicial Branch issues and court cases. By the end of the class students will understand further that governmental/political issues like health care involve all three branches of government.

**Thursday- U.S. Constitution: Amendments and its present state**

 **Required Reading: McClellan pg. 551-600**

Explanation: In this class we will take a look the process of implementing U.S. Constitutional Amendments and the present state of the U.S. Constitution. We will look at important Constitutional amendments and discuss issues involving the U.S. Constitution today. We will also look at the endurance and flexibility of the Constitution. I think this a good class to end the first half of the semester because we can tie many of the subjects learned and discussed in previous classes to this class.

1. **Week Seven**

**Tuesday- Test Review**

 **Assignment: review notes and readings from previous class sessions**

Explanation: I think especially for seniors in high school it is important to dedicate the class before a test to a review session. Students will have an opportunity to ask questions and clear up any misunderstandings before the test.

**Thursday- Mid-Term Exam**

Explanation: Students will have one week to focus on studying and reviewing for this exam. The test should not take the whole class period, as many students will finish and can leave early. However, the whole class period is being dedicated to the exam for slower test takers.

1. **Week Eight**

**Tuesday- Political Parties: History**

 **Assignment: beginning looking at books to do your book presentation on**

Explanation: In this class we will discuss the history of political parties with a focus on the U.S. Before we discuss current political issues I think it is important to provide students with background knowledge on Political Parties with we discuss Political Parties today. I will also talk more about the book presentation assignment. I think giving students the opportunity to read different books on Political Parties and/or Elections that interest them, will provide students the opportunity to learn about Political Parties/Elections through the book presentation.

**Thursday: Political Parties: Today**

 **Assignment: decide on what book you want to read**

Explanation: The current Political Framework in the U.S. will be discussed, including the differences between the Republican and Democratic Parties. Students will also have decided what books they want to read, so they can begin reading their books after class.

1. **Week Nine**

**Tuesday-Elections: History**

 **Assignment: read book**

Explanation: This setup of this class will be similar to the Political Parties: History class, other than the focus will be on elections. We will look at issues like the Electoral College and the restriction/expansion of Voting Participation throughout American History.

**Thursday-Elections: Today**

 **Assignment: finish reading book/work on book presentation**

Explanation: This class will be similar in setup to the Political Parties: Today class, other than the focus will be on Elections. Students should have finished reading their books by this point and are beginning to work on their book presentation.

1. **Week Ten**

**Tuesday-Book Presentations**

 **Assignment: have book presentations completed**

**Thursday-Book Presentations**

Explanation: Over these two class period students will present main findings from their books and their opinions on the book they read. Presentations will be around five minutes. Students can use PowerPoint, visuals, handouts, other technology, or an oral presentation to present their information.

1. **Week Eleven**

**Tuesday-Political Parties/Elections Summary**

 **Assignment: being thinking about/researching topic of interest for Term Paper**

Explanation: If we run out of time on Thursday the last couple of students will do their book presentations. Most of the class will be spent on discussing and tying together the topics on political parties/election students talked about in book presentations to the class. I believe this will help students learn more about political parties/elections than a single textbook or lecture could cover.

**Thursday- Term Paper proposals**

 **Assignment: have Term Paper topic ready to propose to class**

Explanation: I think it is important to dedicate this class to the Term Paper. All students should have the opportunity to explain what they want to do their paper on and make minor adjustments to the topic if necessary. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions about the assignment. Also, I will talk research methods, good and bad sources for a paper, and writing skills.

1. **Week Twelve**

**Tuesday-Executive Branch Agencies: Background**

 **Assignment: Research/Work on Term Paper**

Explanation: In this class we will take an more in depth look at Executive Branch Agencies in the U.S. and at the State level. Students will learn the importance of these agencies implementing policies and how many agencies there are in Government.

**Thursday-Executive Branch Agencies: Presentations**

 **Assignments: research a Federal or State Agency website that interests you and be prepared to discuss it front of the class** (examples include EPA, FBI, CIA, State Department or VDOT at the State level)

Explanation: This class will give students the opportunity to discuss what they learned on the Federal or State Agency website they researched. This is a fun way to have students learn about multiple agencies and how they are relevant to their own lives.

1. **Week Thirteen**

**Tuesday- Local, State, and Federal Relationships: History**

 **Assignment: Research/Work on Term Paper**

Explanation: In this class we will take a closer look at Federalism, and the history of different levels of government cooperating or lack of throughout American history. Local, State, and Federal Relationships have been very tense at times in our history; as the lack of Federal/State cooperation was one of the major causes of the Civil War.

**Thursday- Local, State, and Federal Relationships: Today**

 **Assignment: Research/Work on Term Paper**

Explanation: In this class we will look at Local, State, and Federal Relationships today. We will look at current issues like immigration or unfunded mandates that result in strains in Local, State, and Federal relationships.

1. **Week Fourteen**

**Tuesday- Citizen Participation**

 **Assignment: Work on Term Paper**

Explanation: In this class we will look at citizen participation throughout American history and today. We will look at restrictions/expansions in citizen participation in American Government and Politics throughout our nation’s history up to today. This class should be particularly relevant to students as they will learn how they can become involved in the government and political process in order to advocate for change.

**Thursday- American Government and Politics Today, Term Paper due**

Explanation: This will be a good class to wrap up the semester. We will tie together and look for connections in what we have learned this semester. Relevancy will also be a key in this class, as we will see how American Government and Politics is relevant to students’ lives. Students will also have the opportunity to share their thoughts on the class in order for me to improve it for future classes.

1. **Week Fifteen**

**Tuesday- Test Review**

 **Assignment: review notes from previous class sessions**

**Thursday- Final Exam**

Explanation: Test review and Final Exam process is identical to the mid-term test review/exam.

**Syllabus is subject to change depending on weather or other factors. I will make you aware of these changes if a change in the Syllabus has to be made.**

Explanation: In my opinion this Syllabus is flexible. If a class has to be cancelled due to weather or something else, the test review sessions could probably be cut out and incorporated at the end of another class. Also, usually at the beginning of class I will give students a couple of minutes for students to ask questions about assignments like the book presentation or term paper. At the end of class I will also take time to explain what readings and assignments should be completed or worked on by next class.

**Book Presentation**

Students will select a book with my approval related to Political Parties and/or Elections in the U.S. Students will give around a five minute presentation to the class about their main findings and thoughts on the book. A well organized and well delivered oral presentation is the minimum expectation of this assignment. Having handouts, PowerPoint’s, visuals, and/or other technology to complement your presentation is strongly encouraged. The purpose of this project is for students to read a book on a topic that interests them, and for the class to learn to more about these important topics. This project will also help students on their presentation and public speaking skills when they have to present information in professional settings.

There are numerous books on Political Parties and Elections in the U.S. that students can use for this assignment. Also, remember that books on election primaries and campaigns can be used for this assignment. Make sure that the book you choose can be read within a reasonable amount of time during the semester. I have time set aside in the Syllabus for students to focus on reading their book and constructing their presentation. Books on political parties/elections can be found at local bookstores, borrowed from the Library, or you can read a book that your family has at home related to this topic. If you want to purchase a book from Amazon or another website, you may want to get your book approved with me in advance of the due date for book proposals on the Syllabus so you have enough time to read your book. If you have trouble finding a book to read for this assignment please come see me for help, and we can find a book that suits your interests.

Book Presentation Grading Rubric

* Student gives a presentation on the book that is engaging and informative
* Student gives a presentation that is well organized
* Student gives a presentation that indicates he or she was well prepared
* The presentation indicates that the student had read the book they were presenting on
* Student speaks clearly during the presentation (students with speech or vocal impediments will not be penalized for this)
* Presentation time is around 4-6 minutes (students with presentations under 4 minutes and over 7 minutes will be penalized, I will let students know through hand signal when they have gone over 5 minutes)

Students that decide to give just an oral presentation can earn an A, as long they follow the guidelines in the rubric. Using PowerPoint, visuals, handouts, and/or other technology can help bolster your grade by making your presentation more engaging and informative. Students that follow all of these rubric guidelines will earn an A, while students that do well on most of these rubric guidelines will earn an A- or B. Students that follow half of these guidelines will probably earn around a C. Students that follow only one or guidelines will earn a D and an F if no guidelines are followed. Most students that read their book, put some thought into the presentation, and give a decent presentation should earn A’s or B’s.

**Term Paper**

Students will write a 6 to 8 page (double space) paper on any topic in this class with my approval that they want to investigate further. For example a student may want to do a paper on the contested 2000 Presidential election between Al Gore and George W. Bush. There are several topics that students can choose. It is important to make sure that the topic you choose is not too broad or especially too narrow. Any students having trouble finding a topic should consult me, so we can find a topic that suits your interests. It is also important to make that your topic has enough reliable sources. A minimum of four sources is required for this paper, and Wikipedia is not a reliable source. Citations are required for this paper as you can use MLA, APA, Chicago or any other citation format as long as it is consistent throughout the paper. Plagiarism will result in getting a zero on the assignment and possibly failing the course.

This assignment has multiple purposes. One student will have the opportunity to research further a topic related to this class that they want to learn more about. This assignment will prepare students for the type of assignments they will have to complete on a more consistent basis once in college on a full-time basis. Students will obtain valuable writing skills as a result of doing this assignment that can help them further along in their college and professional careers.

Students will also learn valuable research skills that they can use further along their college and professional careers.

Term Paper Grading Rubric

* Paper meets the page guidelines (papers under 6 pages and over 9 pages will be penalized)
* Paper is well organized with an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion
* The content included in the body of the paper is logical, informative, and interesting
* At least four reliable sources are used in the paper
* Appropriate spelling and grammar is used
* Paper is properly cited
* Paper has good paragraph structure

The quality of the content presented in the paper is going to be most important factor in grading. Organization of the paper is also going go to be an important factor in grading. Less focus will be on spelling and grammar since I am more concerned about content; however, papers with numerous spelling and grammar levels will result in a lower grade. Students that do a good job in following all the guidelines in this paper will earn an A. Students that have numerous spelling and grammar errors or poor paragraph structure with good content will probably earn around a B +. Students that have good content, but poor organization will earn about a B. Students that have good paragraph structure, organization, spelling, and grammar, but poor on content will probably earn a B- or C+. Papers having multiple issues with content, spelling, grammar, organization, and structure will earn a C or less. Grading these papers is very subjective. Students that put the effort into this assignment should earn an A, B, or C+. A paper has to be very poorly written in order to get a D or F on this assignment.

**Mid-Term Exam Sample Questions** (answers in bold)

Multiple Choice example

The shortcomings of this document/form of government led to the creation of the U.S. Constitution.

1. English Bill of Rights
2. Magna Carta
3. **Articles of Confederation**
4. Mayflower Compact

True/False Example

Federalists supported a strong national government, as Patrick Henry was a prominent Federalist.

**False**

Matching examples

1. This branch of Congress representation is based off of state population and its members serve two year terms. **B.**

2. This branch of Congress representation is not based on state population and its members are elected to six year terms. **A**

A. Senate

B. House of Representatives

Short Essay example

**Out of the three branches of government at the Federal level (Executive, Legislative, and Judicial) which one do you believe today to be the most powerful branch? Why? Responses should be at least two paragraphs and use complete sentences.**

Today, I believe the Executive branch is the most powerful branch of government. One, the President has substantial war time powers by being able to introduce troops into conflicts and using drones on terrorists with little or no legislative or judicial oversight. There are checks and balances on the executive; however, there are ways for the Executive Branch to get around them. For example theoretically the Legislative Branch could cut off funding to the Executive Branch, for a war Congress opposes under the War Powers Act. However, cutting off funding for our troops would be an extremely unpopular move if the Legislative Branch decided to do that. Therefore, the best check and balance on the President in wartime is being voted out of office during the next election by the American people.

 There are other ways in which the Executive branch is the most power branch of government. The Judicial Branch has limited authority to enforce their decisions. In some cases throughout history the Executive Branch has totally ignored Supreme Court rulings like Abraham Lincoln did during the Civil War. The President also has veto powers that are very difficult to be overridden in a polarized Legislative Branch today. Congress can vote down Presidents budgets; however, Presidents can veto their budgets as well, therefore cancelling each other out. The President and agencies in the Executive Branch have a lot of authority as well in how they implement laws with sometimes little to no oversight from the other two branches of government.

Grading Essay: Grading the Multiple Choice, T/F, and matching parts of the exam is pretty straightforward; however, grading the short essay is very subjective. The main thing I am looking for in this particular essay is content and an explanation of their reasoning for their answer. Hopefully, students will use what they learned in the semester up to this point in helping them construct their answer. There is not one single right answer in this question, as a person could have argued that the Legislative or Judicial Branch was the most powerful branch of government. The key is they have to explain and provide evidence on why one of those two branches of government was the most powerful. Spelling and grammar is not taken into much consideration in this essay unless it is so poor I have trouble understanding what they are saying. However, failure to write at least two paragraphs of decent length will result in loss of points. Students that write at least two paragraphs and give a logical explanation for their answer will earn 20-25 points on the essay.

**Final Exam sample questions**

Multiple Choice example

1. A large drug operation in Southwestern Virginia has been shut down, as thousands of marijuana plants have been seized. While other agencies are involved in the drug bust, which agency has the highest authority in this case?
2. Local sheriff’s department
3. Virginia State Police
4. Virginia Department of Game and Wildlife Fisheries
5. CIA
6. **DEA**

True/False example

1. Due to the Electoral College it is possible for the President to win the popular vote, but still lose the election.

**True**

Matching examples

1. Political Party that has traditionally supported higher taxes on the wealthy, more financial and environmental regulation, as well as bigger government in general. **A**
2. Political Party that has traditionally supported lower taxes on wealthy, less regulation, and smaller government in general with the exception of more defense spending. **B**
3. Democratic Party
4. Republican Party

Short Essay example

**Do you think the Electoral College is still viable in today’s society or should it be replaced in favor of the popular vote/direct election? Responses should be at least two paragraphs and use complete sentences.**

 In my opinion the Electoral College should be discontinued and the President/Vice President should be directly elected by the people. Nearly every other elected office position in the U.S. is now directly elected by the people. Due to the electoral college the only people’s votes that matter today are the ones that vote in battleground states. This is good for us since we live in Virginia; however, people that live in non-battleground states like New York, California, or Texas their votes do not matter that much. Democrats know that the massive number of electoral votes in California and New York are in their column, while Republicans know that the large number of electoral votes in Texas is theirs.

 The electoral college discourages citizen participation in non-battleground states. The best way to encourage more citizen participation in Presidential elections is to make every citizens vote count by putting all fifty states in play. This will force Presidential candidates to travel to more states, thus engaging more people in the political process. Also, the electoral college has resulted in Presidential candidates losing an election in which they won the popular vote, like Al Gore in 2000. A Republican candidate would have been upset as well if he or she would have won the popular vote but lost the election due to the Electoral College. The electoral college is like scoring less runs in a baseball game, but still winning the game. The Electoral College may have had its place earlier in American history; however, in the twenty-first century U.S. citizens are more than capable of directly voting for our President and Vice President.

Grading essay: The guidelines for grading this test and essay are similar to the Mid-term. There is not a right answer for this essay question. The key is that students explain why they believe the Electoral College should or should not remain in place. Hopefully, students will use what they have learned in the second half of the semester to support their reasoning in the answer. Students that follow the essay guidelines and give a good response will earn 20-25 points.