

Syllabus
Current Issues in National Politics: POS 230 - 1002

Course Number: Lec 43620

Summer 2, 2008

Instructor : William Foster, Ph.D.
Faculty Associate
Arizona State University Polytechnic Campus
wafoster@asu.edu
520-440-0807

Please feel free to call me at 520-440-0807 any time, including weekends, to discuss any aspect of the class.

Course Description:

All would agree that the United States faces major challenges including:

- A recession and the return of inflation
- The war in Iraq and relations with Iran and other countries in the Middle East.
- Health care
- Immigration and Trade
- Climate change

Most would agree that the two major Presidential candidates offer different visions of how to address these challenges. The first goal of this class is for each student to be able to articulate each candidate's position on these issues as well the role of the US Congress, the Judiciary system, political parties, interest groups, the media, and the general public in the decision-making process.

Commentators have noted that Web 2.0—the explosion of user generated content and social networking tools—is having a great impact on the political process. The second goal of the course is for students to be able to articulate this impact, and hone their skills with new Web 2.0 technologies (You Tube, Blogs, Wikis, MySpace, etc.) and traditional media (articles, op ed pieces, letters to the editor, and editorials in print newspapers and TV news shows).

About the Instructor

William Foster, PhD. Has taught at ASU since 2001. He worked in and for the US Congress for 10 years and was later in charge of government relations for CIX, the world's first Internet Service Provider (ISP) association. His PhD is in Management Information Systems from the University of Arizona. His dissertation on *The Diffusion of the Internet in China* was published by CISAC at Stanford University. Dr. Foster also runs a management consulting company, Foster and Brahm. His books and articles as well as his resume are available at <http://www.FosterandBrahm.com>.

Course Texts:

There are no books required for this course. Book chapters and links to other forms of media will be posted under Course Documents section of Blackboard and on the Discussion Forum on Blackboard.

1) Discussion questions: 15 points per forum (10 forums, 150 points total)

There will be two discussion questions each week. The discussion Forums are on Blackboard. Discussion questions will be posted the Sunday of the assigned week (responses must be posted by Wed. at midnight). The second discussion question of the week will be posted Wed. evening (responses must be posted by Sat. at midnight). For some of the discussion questions, readings or video viewings will be assigned.

You will get up to 15 points on each discussion question, broken down as follows:

Contents-8 points (points will be given for knowledge of the reading, the ability to reference additional resources, and to think critically about the question as well as to think outside the box.

Baseline-4 points (you get 4 points just for posting on time. Please note that failure to post by due date will result in a zero point as late responses are not graded at all.)

Follow-up responses-3 points (You are expected to read and comment on other students' initial responses to each discussion question. You receive 3 points for posting at least two follow-up responses to each discussion question thread.

You are expected to post at least 5 days of every week.

You will receive feedback and a grade for each forum.

2) Projects: 100 Points each (500 points total)

You will produce a project each week. They are due Saturday of the week at 12:00 midnight.

The projects will be on:

- Due July 12th:
You will write a 500-1000 word essay on "The recession and the return of inflation."
A good essay has a provocative thesis sentence, then 3 to 4 paragraphs that provide information on the thesis sentence, and then a conclusion. Essay should be submitted through Safe Assignment under the Assignment Tab.
- Due July 19th:
You will write a letter to the editor to the Arizona Republic or New York Times about a published article on the war in Iraq. The letter should be 200-300 words. It should be submitted to the instructor through Safe Assignment. You should also submit the letter to the editor of the publication. You will get extra credit if it is published.
- Due July 26th : Policy on Health care.
You will write a 500-1000 word essay comparing McCain's and Obama's plans for dealing with America's health care crisis. It will be submitted to the Instructor through Safe Assignment.
- Due August 2nd: Debate on Immigration and Trade
You will write a letter to your Congressman asking for them to support a particular piece of legislation on either immigration or trade issues. It is expected that you will read the actual language of a piece of legislation. You will send the letter to your Congressman. You

will send a copy of the letter to the instructor through Safe Assignment.

- Due August 8th : Science and politics of Climate change
You will create a 5 to 10 minute video on climate change and post it on You Tube. This is easy to do if you have a Web cam. The instructor can, as an alternative, facilitate your getting a camera, tripod, and wireless microphone from ASU for a day for you to record your presentation.

If you can not make a You Tube presentation, then you have the option of writing a speech on Climate Change and presenting it to the instructor over the phone.

Grading Scheme

A+	More than 650
A	625-650
A-	600-624
B+	575-599
B	550-574
B-	525-549
C+	500-524
C-	475-499
D	200-474