Introduction to Governance

Course Number: NONCR-GP.989.001.FA13
Schedule: August 28-30, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Location: GCASL 265

Instructor:
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Course Overview:

This course is intended to provide a brief overview of how the United States is governed as a basis for further coursework as a graduate student at the Wagner School. At the end of this course, students will understand the: process through which the current system of governance in America was developed; branches of the federal government, including their powers and composition; election process and the role of political parties and interest groups; dominant US political ideologies; and general functions of state and local governments.

Grading:

There is no grade nor any homework, this course is solely for your review and preparation.

Readings:

If you would like to get a text for this review, lectures will be based on the following book.

This reading is 100% optional


Copies will be placed on reserve at the Bobst Library for your review. Additionally, you can use alternate versions of this text instead of the 13th Edition – any edition from the 8th edition to the most current is reasonable although students should note that chapters may be in different orders in other editions. The 10th and previous editions back were published by Houghton MIlls but the content is the same. Please check with me if you are confused on which chapters to read from an alternate addition.

Daily Lecture Topics & Optional Readings:

Day 1 – Reading: Chapters 2 & 3
Topics Covered:
- Systems of Government: Understanding the “Ideal” Types
- History of the US Government and Framing of the Constitution

Day 2 – Reading: Chapters 13, 14, & 16 (chapter 15 optional)
Topics Covered:
- The Legislative Branch: Senate and House of Representatives
- The Executive Branch: President, Cabinet, and the Departments
- The Judicial Branch: The Supreme and Circuit Courts

Day 3 – Reading: Chapters 9, 10 & 11 (chapter 8 optional)
Topics Covered:
- Political Parties, Interest Groups and Elections
- Political Ideologies in America
- State and Local Governments