

Manar Shorbagy

Fall 2019

Time: UW 2:00- 3:15 p.m.

Room: C 152 Waleed

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Office Hours: W 1:00 – 2:00 or by appointment

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POLS 3403- American Government

In August, 2019, a white man opened fire in El Paso, Texas, killing 22 and injuring dozens of others. Police stated that, in a manifesto he wrote shortly before his killing spree, the perpetrator repeatedly referred to the ‘great replacement’ of the white race and expressed a clear hatred of non-whites. As the events were unfolding, people around the world were watching with dismay; isn’t this the same US that had twice elected the first Black president?! And why is it that the US fails to enact laws to reduce gun violence?

What is exactly going on in the US? What do we make of the racial tension in America? What is ‘white nationalism’? And precisely, what do the institutions of government do and/or fail to do and why?

These, and related questions, will be at the center of our work in this course. We will study the American political system in detail and work to understand the intricacies of its institutions and the complex processes they make possible i.e. we will struggle to understand how the political system works in theory and in practice. We will look at the complexities of race and ethnicity in the US. Throughout, however, we will also engage the broader theme of the likely fate of the American democratic experiment.

Course Requirements

The course material is designed in a way so as to deal with each topic from various angles, thus providing exposure to different points of view on the same issue. Therefore, class work and the material and *not identical*. What we do in class is we discuss *together* the topic, explore different dimensions thereof, and develop the links to other issues and topics. Therefore, attendance, prior reading and class participation are basic requirements for this course. Otherwise, you will miss the point of class discussion and may not be able to handle the material. Missing class, and thus the discussions, will negatively affect your performance in both presentations and exams. ***Please do not hesitate to come and discuss with me any ambiguities as soon as they occur. The sooner you come the easier it will be for me to help you.***

Grading

* Exams: Three exams (20% each)

* Dates of Exams

First Midterm: Oct. 2nd.

Second Midterm: Nov. 3rd.

Third Midterm: Dec. 4th.

* Research and presentations (30%).

* Class performance and attendance 10% (including pop-quizzes)

* **All grades in this course are NON-NEGOTIABLE.**

* **NO MAKE UPS in this course.**

Attendance and Academic Integrity

* Please note that more than the equivalent of 3 weeks of absences can result in an F in this course.

* Students are expected to commit to the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons' work as one's own, using Internet or other sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc. Plagiarism for assignments and/or reports may result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or the report in question. Cheating during an examination may result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, would also be implemented. You should be aware that all written work might be submitted to "Turnitin.com", the detection prevention software. Any detected plagiarism will have to be reported. *The University's statement on academic integrity, from which the above statement is drawn, is available at <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity/Pages/default.aspx>*

Readings

We will work mainly from the following:

1. Edwards, Wattenberg and Lineberry, Government in America, 11th edition, (Boston: Longman, 2011). Available in both the bookstore and on reserve in the library.
2. Chip Berlet and Mathew N. Lyons, Right Wing Populism in America, Too Close for Comfort, (New York: Guilford Press, 2000). (Blackboard).
3. Eddie S. Glaude Jr., Democracy in Black, How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul, (New York: Broadway Books, 2016). (Blackboard).
4. Sandra L. Momper, "Implications of American Indian Gambling for Social Work Research and Practice", Social work, Vol. 55, No. 2, 2010. (Blackboard).
5. Ta-Nehisi Coates, The First White President, The Atlantic Monthly, October 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/the-first-white-president-ta-nehisi-coates/537909/> (Blackboard).

Please note that these are extraordinary times in the US. We will be doing our work in class while events unfold. New material will be added via blackboard or as handouts. The months ahead promise to be exciting and important. Ongoing developments will be used to illustrate broader course themes and hopefully will make class discussions lively and engaging for us all.. Therefore, you are advised to follow events as they unfold mainly through *reliable American* sources.

Course Outline

We will proceed according to the following plan. Any changes will be announced well ahead of time. (Please note that we will give time in class to discussing important unfolding events. Therefore the outline will remain somewhat flexible).

The US Constitution:

Edwards Chapter 2 and Chapter 9: pp. 288- 294

Race in America

Edwards Ch.5

‘New Faces for White Nationalism.’

‘Democracy in Black’.

Political Parties: Edwards Chapter 8

Interest Groups: Edwards, Chapter 10

‘American Indian Gambling’.

Congress: Edwards, Chapter 11

Presidency: Edwards, Chapter 12

‘The First White President’.

National Security: Edwards et al, Chapter 17