

Good evening and an early welcome to the six week POLS 110 course on American Government. This web based course will survey the major areas of American Government, from the basic constitutional foundations through public policy. Just a few hours ago I submitted grades for the spring semester and I'm now in the process of preparing your summer class. Since the course software just became available last week we will be going with the given objective assessments. Once I get some of the basics in place I hope to open the class up before the official date of the 18th. While I strongly recommend that you purchase the package developed for this course and available through the campus bookstore, you do have the option of purchasing a purely electronic version once I open the class web page. The material for this class is as follows: Morris Fiorina et al. *The New American Democracy* 6th ed. Pearson/Longman, 2009 with MyPoliSciLab web based access card. The most important component is the access card; you will need it in order to register with the publisher and obtain access to the material posted on their server. You can't complete the class without it.

Normally I prefer to use written assessments instead of objective ones but since this material was just made available I simply don't have the time to development them. So instead we will go with the assessments provided, a series of short multiple choice quizzes. Since each quiz question is hard coded at five points each (four more than I normally use), the following grade scale is high:

9,000 – 10,000 = A
8,000 - 8,999 = B
7,000 - 7,999 = C
6,000 - 6,999 = D
<6,000 = F

8,800 of these points are derived from assessments under the “Chapter” and “Multimedia” tabs. For the record, you will have the entire six weeks to work on assignments but obviously pace yourself throughout the next six weeks. Before tackling any of the simulations, comparative, timeline, debate, or visual literacy assignments located under the chapter headings, I strongly recommend that you read the respective chapters first. The ABC News, Debate, and Roundtable videos can be tackled once you have read the respective material in the text. This will all become quite clear to you once I open the web page. While your first task that you should undertake once the page is open is to get registered with the publisher, the second should be a comprehensive tour of the class web page. A ton of material is provided; while much of it will only come in handy in an indirect manner, you should know what has been provided for an introductory American government student.

You may be asking, what about the other 1,200 points? Since I would like to generate some student-professor interaction, I will create two forums in the “Discussion Board” tab, one for general course questions and the other to discuss various political topics of interest to you. I also hope to post some assignments from the *Wall Street Journal* here as well and I will use this column in the gradebook in order to credit those of you who complete the weekly PoliSci News Review quizzes. Since they change week to week and since I have no idea what they will cover or even the number of questions provided, all I

can do is promise you that for each correct answer five points will be provided. You will, however, need to email me your results on a weekly basis since it is impossible to link such assessments to the gradebook in advance. Instructions are provide for doing so at the end of each weekly news quiz.

Since in a sense, this “welcome” email is in fact turning into a temporary syllabus, I should make a few more points. While you will be able to save and return to your quizzes later, you cannot retake them. In other words, you only have one attempt and I cannot reset attempts. So make sure that your PC is in good working order because I can’t be responsible for PC or internet problems. Since there are so many exercises and quizzes this should not be an issue. Take care and I will write you once I open the class web page.

Oh, one other issue. Feel free to write me if you have any questions, at least until I open the appropriate Discussion Board forum. Keep in mind, however, that my anti-spam program deletes all email addressed to Mr. McKenna in whatever format; I did this years ago in order to greatly diminish the number of unsolicited email that I receive. You really don’t need to use anything when writing me but if you do stick to “Frank”, Dr.” or “Professor.” I prefer “Frank” but I leave that up to you if you must use a greeting line.

Frank

Francis E. McKenna Jr. Ph. D.
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
Bowling Green State University
www.dacor.net/mckenna