

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS POSC 2201 MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, FALL 2013			
<u>Instructor Information:</u>	Professor Paul Nolette, J.D., Ph.D. paul.nolette@marquette.edu (414) 288-5821	<u>Class Time:</u>	Mondays & Wednesdays 12:00pm – 1:15pm
<u>Office:</u>	William Wehr Physics Room 454	<u>Class Location:</u>	Marquette Hall Room 200
<u>Office Hours:</u>	Tuesday: 1:30pm-4:00pm Wednesday: 1:30pm-3:00pm and by appointment		

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to Introduction to American Politics. This course is an introduction to the constitutional framework, institutions, and political processes of American government and politics. The first objective of this course is for students to gain a deeper understanding of how fundamental aspects of American politics operate. To that end, we will examine how and why American political institutions function as they do as well as important trends in the development of non-institutional influences on the political system (such as political culture and political behavior). In addition to gaining a better appreciation of how various parts of the American political system operate, we will consider perennial questions such as: What is unique about American politics, particularly as compared to other democracies around the world? How democratic and representative is the American political system? What changes to the political system would help to improve American politics? One of my goals for this course is to spur your thinking about these sorts of bigger questions as you move forward in your college career and lives as citizens.

REQUIRED READINGS: There is one required text for this course, which is available at Bookmarq:

- (1) John G. Geer, Wendy J. Schiller, and Jeffrey A. Segal, Gateways to Democracy, Second Edition (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2014)
 - In addition to this text, additional required material will be made available on the "Course Materials" tab in Aplia. This will include material written by political scientists as well as relevant news articles.
 - Finally, you'll want to make it a daily habit to read a newspaper with extensive coverage of American government and politics. Excellent options for following national political developments include the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*. Reading the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* will be helpful for following state-level politics. Other sources you might consider for up-to-the-minute political coverage include NBC News's "First Read" (<http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com>) and Chris Cillizza's blog (called "The Fix") on the Washington Post website. I would encourage you to explore various other blogs as well, particularly to get different points of view from across the political spectrum. I think National Review's "The Corner" (conservative-leaning) and Josh Marshall's "Talking Points Memo" (liberal-leaning) are two of the best.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) **Class Attendance and Participation (15%)**. Active participation will be an important component of your grade in this class. I expect everyone to come on time prepared for class and ready to actively discuss the readings and topics for the day. Quality participation includes engaging with the readings, expressing one's own opinions of relevant issues on the topic (while respecting other students' opinions and experiences), and asking questions when you need additional clarification. In the class schedule below, I have included several discussion questions useful for you to think about prior to class. While this is a large class, you will have the opportunity throughout the course to gain participation credit by completing short in-class writing assignments. Your engagement with these in-class assignments will be an important factor in your class participation grade.
- (2) **Online Reading Quizzes (20%)**. Prior to our class sessions, each of you will take online reading quizzes on the assigned chapters of the textbook. These quizzes will help ensure that you are concentrating on the most important aspects of each week's reading. The quizzes are available through an online system (Aplia). Instructions for accessing Aplia and the reading quizzes will be distributed during the first week of class. You will need the following course code to access Aplia:

LF3E-XFMZ-2ABA

Note that these assignments are due for each section *before* the corresponding lecture on the material. For example, I expect that you will have read the materials on Congress and taken the associated online quizzes prior to the class sessions on Congress. The class and reading assignment schedule below includes the due dates for completion of each of the quiz problem sets. Aplia allows you three attempts for each problem set, which gives you the opportunity to improve your score if you are not pleased with your first attempt. If you choose to take the online quizzes more than once, the grades for each of your attempts will be averaged.

- (3) **Writing Assignments (10%)**. Every student will complete two short writing assignments each worth 5% of the total grade. The first assignment will be due on **Wednesday, September 11** and the second will be due on **Wednesday, October 30**. Each short essay should be about two double-spaced pages in length. I will give you more information about these assignments early in the semester.
- (4) **Midterm Exam (15%)**. There will be one midterm exam for this course, held during our regular 75-minute class meeting time on **Wednesday, October 16**. The exam will be closed-book and will consist of a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. The exam will draw from materials discussed in class and from the assigned readings. I will provide more information about the midterm in the first few weeks of the semester.
- (5) **Final Exam (25%)**. A final exam for the course is scheduled for **Friday, December 13 at 10:30am**. The exam will be very similar in format to the midterm exam. The final exam will be cumulative and, like the midterm, will draw from materials discussed in class and from the assigned readings. You will have two hours to complete the exam.

(6) **Constitutional Amendment Project (Option of Group OR Individual Project) (15%)**. Throughout the second half of the semester, each student will work on a constitutional amendment project. This project consists of several parts. First, each student will submit a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution by the start of class on **Wednesday, October 23**. Based upon these submissions, I will generate a list of amendments we will discuss and debate during a mock constitutional convention scheduled for the last week of class. Second, from this list of amendments, each student will rank a preference for the amendment on which he or she would like to conduct research. Based upon these preferences, I will assign each student to one of the amendments. Third, each student will have a choice of completing one of the two following options:

Option #1 (Group Project). The first option is to work as part of a small group to research your assigned amendment. If you choose this option, you will be required to complete three tasks. **First**, after you are assigned to a group based upon your amendment preference, you and your fellow group members will decide who will be researching the "pro" and the "con" sides for your amendment. You will then work with your fellow "pro" or "con" group members to conduct research developing your side of the argument. **Second**, each "pro" and "con" group will hand in a 2 to 4 page outline detailing your well-researched arguments on **Monday, November 25**. **Third**, all group members will then present their arguments during one of the two constitutional convention days I have reserved during the final week of class. Each "pro" and "con" group will take questions from the opposing side as well as audience members. If you choose this option, 50% of your grade will consist of my assessment of the group outline and each individual's performance, and the remaining 50% will consist of your group members' evaluation of your effort as part of the group.

Option #2 (Individual Project). The second option is to work individually to research your assigned amendment. If you select this option, you will be required to complete three tasks. **First**, you will choose whether you will research arguments for or against your assigned amendment. You will then conduct research developing your side of the argument. **Second**, each individual will hand in a slideshow in PowerPoint or similar presentation software containing well-researched and well-cited information about the amendment and arguments for or against the amendment on **Wednesday, November 25**. Each slideshow should contain approximately 10 to 15 carefully prepared slides. **Third**, you will be expected to actively participate as an audience member during the constitutional convention debate on your assigned amendment. This includes asking questions of group members or raising any points you believe are relevant to the debate. If you choose this option, your grade will consist of my assessment of the quality of your slideshow project and your completion of the other required tasks.

You will be required to choose one of the two options by the end of September. Regardless of which option you select, your preparation for the constitutional amendment project will occur throughout the second half of the semester. More information about this project is available on the last page of this syllabus, and I will say more about this project in class. Following the constitutional convention during the final week of class, all students will vote whether or not to approve each of the discussed amendments.

Late assignments:

I expect all students to complete required assignments when they are due. If you are unable to complete an assignment or take an exam for a compelling reason you must contact me **before** the assignment is due. Otherwise, the assignment will be marked down a half letter grade for each day past the deadline.

SUMMARY OF GRADING COMPONENTS:

<u>Class Participation:</u>	15%
<u>Online Reading Quizzes:</u>	20%
<u>Writing Assignments:</u>	10%
<u>Constitutional Convention:</u>	15%
<u>Mid-Term Examination:</u>	15%
<u>Final Examination:</u>	25%

GRADING SCALE:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Achievement</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>	<u>Cut-off</u>
A	Superior	4.0	93+
AB		3.5	87-92.9
B	Good	3.0	82-86.9
BC		2.5	77-81.9
C	Satisfactory	2.0	72-76.9
CD		1.5	67-71.9
D	Minimum Passing	1.0	60-66.9
F	Failing	0.0	Below 60

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have a disability for which you are requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact the University's Office of Disability Services within the first week of classes. For more information, contact the Office of Disability Services in Marquette Hall, Suite 005 or at (414) 288-1645. If you require any accommodations for exams or other assignments, you must notify me (along with all required documentation) at least one week in advance of the assignment due date.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: As noted in the Undergraduate Bulletin, Marquette University demands the strictest honesty and integrity of students in their various academic tasks. **Academic dishonesty of any type, including plagiarism, is completely unacceptable and will result in a failing grade for both the assignment and the course.**

- What is Plagiarism? The Undergraduate Bulletin defines plagiarism in the following manner: "Plagiarism is intellectual theft. It means use of the intellectual creations of another without proper attribution. Plagiarism may take two main forms, which are clearly related: 1. To steal or pass off as one's own the ideas or words, images, or other creative works of another and 2. To use a creative production without crediting the source, even if only minimal information is available to identify it for citation." If you use another person's writings or ideas in your own writing, you must provide a citation to the original material. If you have any doubt about the need to provide a citation to a source, it is better to be on the safe side and provide a citation. If you have any questions about this policy, please discuss it with me.

CLASS AND READING ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

Disclaimer:

There may be times when minor amendments to the reading schedule are necessary. I expect that any such changes will be rare, but in this event I will notify the class of any and all changes well in advance.

NOTE:

In this schedule, "GSS" refers to the main textbook for the course. An asterisk ("*") next to a reading indicates material I will post on D2L prior to class.

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

August 26 (Monday): Course Introduction

Reading Assignment:

(1) *No reading assignment*

Other Assignment Due:

(1) After class, sign up for and familiarize yourself with the online Aplia system, as you will be accessing Aplia throughout the semester to access assigned readings and complete your online reading quizzes.

August 28 (Wednesday): Purposes of American Government

Reading Assignment:

(1) GSS, Chapter 1 (pp. 2-29)
(2) *Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (excerpt)

Other Assignment Due:

(1) *No other assignments due*

Discussion Questions:

People everywhere with sufficient money are usually able to satisfy their private needs quite easily: just go to the supermarket and use your credit card. Not so for their collective needs, including security, good schools, and clean environments. How do the institutions of government seek to provide these collective goods? What is a "collective action problem"? How does the American political system seek to balance liberty and order? Do you think it succeeds in doing so?

<i>September 4 (Wednesday): <u>American Political Culture</u></i>	
<p>Reading Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) *Louis Hartz, <i>excerpt from "The Liberal Tradition in America"</i> (2) *Sven H. Steinmo, "American Exceptionalism Reconsidered: Culture or Institutions?" 	<p>Other Assignment Due:</p> <p>(1) Aplia Chapter 1 Problem Set due by <u>Wednesday, September 4 at noon</u>. <i>Note that because this is the first time you are using Aplia, I will grade this assignment on a pass/fail basis. All subsequent Aplia assignments will be graded.</i></p>
<p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <p>How different is the United States as compared to other industrialized democracies such as those in Western Europe? What helps to explain these differences? Institutional structures? Culture? What is the "liberal tradition" in America and how did it affect the founding era? How does it affect modern-day American politics?</p>	
<i>September 9 and 11 (Monday/Wednesday): <u>The American Constitution</u></i>	
<p>Reading Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) GSS, Chapter 2 (pp. 30-63) (2) Declaration of Independence (GSS, pp. 576-579) (3) Federalist #10 and #51 (GSS, pp. 596-603) 	<p>Other Assignments Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Aplia Chapter 2 Problem Set due by <u>Monday, September 9 at noon</u>. (2) Writing Assignment #1 due by <u>class on Wednesday, September 11</u>.
<p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <p>What were the central problems the Framers of the Constitution faced at the constitutional convention and how did they resolve them? Which issues were left unresolved? In your own words (drawing upon Federalist #10), what is a "faction"? What are modern examples of factions? In Federalist #51, why did Madison argue that it was necessary to separate governmental authority among several branches? What explains the simplicity and durability of the Constitution? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the document's simplicity?</p>	
<i>September 16 and 18 (Monday/Wednesday): <u>Civil Liberties and Rights</u></i>	
<p>Reading Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) GSS, Chapter 4 (pp. 102-137) (2) GSS, Chapter 5 (pp. 138-175) (3) The Bill of Rights [Amendments 1 to 10 of the Constitution] (pp. 588-589) 	<p>Other Assignments Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Aplia Chapter 4 Problem Set due by <u>Monday, September 16 at noon</u>. (2) Aplia Chapter 5 Problem Set due by <u>Wednesday, September 18 at noon</u>.

Discussion Questions:

Should the Bill of Rights apply to the states as well as the federal government? Why? How should we best balance civil liberties with security and order? Do you think we have the right balance, or are we undermining civil liberties too much or ignoring security too much? What is the conceptual distinction between civil liberties and civil rights? What sorts of discrimination ought to be prohibited? Which American institutions do you think are best able to protect civil rights?

September 23 (Monday): American Federalism

Reading Assignment:

(1) GSS, Chapter 3 (pp. 64-101)

Other Assignment Due:

(1) Aplia Chapter 3 Problem Set due by Monday, September 23 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

Which powers belong to the states, which belong to the federal government, and which powers are shared? What is the proper balance between state and federal government powers and authority? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a strong central government? How has the balance of power between the states and the national government evolved over time? Is federalism just a relic of a time long past or does it have a purpose in the modern era? Is direct democracy, including initiatives and referenda, a good way of making public policy?

PART TWO: THE INSTITUTIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

September 25 and 30 (Wednesday/Monday): Congress

Reading Assignment:

(1) GSS, Chapter 12 (pp. 396-441)
(2) Article I of the Constitution (GGS, pp. 580-584)

Other Assignment Due:

(1) Aplia Chapter 12 Problem Set due by Wednesday, September 25 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

In the modern era, Congress is consistently the least popular national political institution. Why do you think this is? If voters hate Congress so much, why do they nevertheless tend to support their own congressperson? Congress operates as a national legislature but its members are locally elected. From the perspective of American democracy, is this tension a fundamental weakness, preventing members of Congress from acting in the national interest? Or is it a fundamental strength, assuring local and regional interests a voice in national affairs? Is it a good thing that Congress is both bicameral and separate from the executive? Would it be better to have a system more similar to the British Parliament? What is "gerrymandering," and how much of a problem is this in modern American politics?

October 2 and 7 (Wednesday/Monday): The Executive Branch

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 13 (pp. 442-485)
- (2) GSS, Chapter 14 (pp. 486-523)
- (3) Article II of the Constitution (GGS, pp. 584-585)

Other Assignments Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 13 Problem Set due by Wednesday, October 2 at noon.
- (2) Aplia Chapter 14 Problem Set due by Monday, October 7 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

The modern president wears many hats: head of state, commander and chief, and leader of a national political party. Is there a tension between these many roles and the president's power under the Constitution? What would the Constitution's Framers say about the current state of the presidency? Has it become too powerful? To what extent is the federal bureaucracy a part of the executive branch and to what extent is it a separate "fourth branch" of government? Is it possible to "run government like a business," as many politicians argue? Have civil service exams and career bureaucrats helped or hurt the system?

October 9 (Wednesday): Presidential Mandates

Guest Lecture by Dr. Julia Azari

Reading Assignment:

- (1) *No reading assignment*

Other Assignments Due:

- (1) Analyzing Elections Problem Sets due by Wednesday, October 9 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

One of the big questions after nearly every presidential election is whether the victor won a "mandate" to carry out his policy program. What does it mean for a president to have a mandate, and what would the president have to do to fulfill it? Do you believe that President Obama won a mandate in the 2008 and 2012 elections? Are presidents who can plausibly claim a mandate for change more likely to succeed?

October 14 (Monday): The Judiciary

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 15 (pp. 524-563)
- (2) Article III of the Constitution (pp. 585-586)

Other Assignment Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 15 Problem Set due by Monday, October 14 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

Federal judges are not elected, but inevitably make policy on critical policy issues. How is judicial policy-making different than legislative policy-making? Is there any way to square the policy-making role of the federal courts with our democratic ideals? Was Alexander Hamilton wrong when he described the judiciary as the "least dangerous" branch of government? What features of the Court make it appear undemocratic?

October 16 (Wednesday): MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm will start promptly at noon, and could include questions concerning any of the materials covered in the readings or class periods to date. You will have 75 minutes to complete the exam.

PART THREE: CITIZEN GATEWAYS IN A DEMOCRACY

October 21 and 23 (Monday/Wednesday): Political Parties

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 9 (pp. 282-321)
- (2) *William L. Riordan [George Washington Plunkitt], "Holding Your District," *from Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*
- (3) **Excerpt from American Political Science Association: "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties"* (pp. 15-19)

Other Assignments Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 9 Problem Set due by Monday, October 21 at noon.
- (2) Proposed constitutional amendment due by class on Wednesday, October 23 (no more than 1 page)

Discussion Questions:

Why did the Framers distrust parties? How has the role of political parties changed since the time of Tammany Hall? What are the major differences between the modern-day Democratic and Republican Parties? Is it a good thing that both parties have become more polarized in recent years? What have caused party realignments? What is the likelihood of having future realignments? Would our system benefit from stronger third parties? Why or why not? Why do third parties have a tough time surviving in our country?

October 28 and 30 (Monday/Wednesday): Interest Groups

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 8 (pp. 248-281)
- (2) *Alexis de Tocqueville, "On Political Association in the United States," from Democracy in America [1835]

Other Assignments Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 8 Problem Set due by Monday, October 28 at noon.
- (2) Writing Assignment #2 due by class on Wednesday, October 30.

Discussion Questions:

Do interest groups do more to protect the rights of minorities or simply reflect the collective interests of the nation? Should anything be done to create a more equal balance of interest groups representing interests across the nation? How much do "special interests" threaten American democracy? What strategies do interest groups use to attract and retain members?

November 4 and 6 (Monday/Wednesday): Elections and Campaigns

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 10 (pp. 322-357)

Other Assignment Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 10 Problem Set due by Monday, November 4 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

To what extent do elections encourage accountability and responsiveness in government? What factors explain the decline in voter turnout around the 1960s? Why has it increased again in the most recent elections? How important is money to electoral campaigns? Where does the money required to finance modern campaigns come from? Are Americans fairly represented in the American political system? Why or why not?

November 11 (Monday): Voting and Participation

Guest Lecture by Dr. Amber Wichowsky

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 11 (pp. 358-395)

Other Assignment Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 11 Problem Set Due by Monday, November 11 at noon.

Discussion Questions:

How do voters decide for whom to vote? What benefits do people get from voting? Who tends to participate in American politics? Which groups have lower rates of civic engagement? What helps to explain this? Would it be a good thing to have mandatory voting, as Australia requires? Are there any other reforms to voting procedures that would be beneficial to American democracy?

November 13 (Wednesday): <u>Public Opinion</u>	
Reading Assignment: (1) GSS, Chapter 6 (pp. 176-209)	Other Assignment Due: (1) Aplia Chapter 6 Problem Set due by <u>Wednesday, November 13 at noon.</u>
<u>Discussion Questions:</u>	
How much does public opinion influence public policy? Should politicians make decisions based upon polling results? How well do polls capture public opinion? How well informed are voters? What differences in opinion exist among different demographic groups?	
November 18 (Monday): <u>The Media</u> <i>Guest Lecture by Dr. Karen Hoffman</i>	
Reading Assignment: (1) GSS, Chapter 7 (pp. 210-247)	Other Assignments Due: (1) Aplia Chapter 7 Problem Set Due by <u>Monday, November 18 at noon.</u>
<u>Discussion Questions:</u>	
How does the media impact governing? How has the role of media changed over the past 20 years, especially with the rise of social media? How should the media's role in politics be changed, if at all? What resources do politicians have that might allow them to "go around" the press and communicate with the public directly? In general, how successful are those attempts? Is the media "biased"? How would this be measured?	
<u>PART FOUR: RECONSIDERING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT</u>	
November 20 (Wednesday): <u>Domestic Policy and the Budget Battles</u>	
Reading Assignment: (1) <i>*To be announced</i>	Other Assignment Due: (1) <i>No other assignment due</i>
<u>Discussion Questions:</u>	
The first major political battle of 2013 concerned the so-called "fiscal cliff" and debates about proper levels of taxing and spending. Since then, battles over the budget have continued to be a central part of domestic policy in the United States. What are the major issues in the budget debates? Why is it so difficult to reach consensus? What does the federal government spend money on? How should the budget be reformed?	

November 25 (Monday): Wrap-Up/Conclusion

Reading Assignment:

- (1) GSS, Chapter 16 (pp. 564-575)
- (2) *Exchange between Pietro Nivola ("In Defense of Partisan Politics") and William Galston ("One and a Half Cheers for Bipartisanship"), *Brookings Institution* (April, 2009)

Other Assignments Due:

- (1) Aplia Chapter 16 Problem Set due by Monday, November 25 at noon.
- (2) Group Outlines or Individual Slideshows for Constitutional Convention due by class on Monday, November 25

Discussion Questions:

Reflecting on everything we've discussed in this course, what do you think the most important challenges to American government are today? Has your answer to this question changed since the start of the course? How do you think that the Framers of the Constitution would evaluate the modern American political system? Is increased partisanship a positive or negative development in modern American politics?

December 2 and 4 (Monday/Wednesday): Constitutional Convention

The final week of the course is reserved for our constitutional convention. There are no reading assignments or online quizzes due for this week, but you are expected to play an active role in the convention.

DECEMBER 13 (FRIDAY): FINAL EXAM (10:30am-12:30pm)

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROJECT

As mentioned earlier in the syllabus, you will have the option to complete either a group project or individual project as part of a constitutional amendment project. At the end of the semester, we will have a mock constitutional convention. During that convention, we will debate several proposed amendments developed by the class and then vote for ratification. Portions of this project will be due throughout the semester. Several of the key dates pertaining to the convention are listed below.

9/30: Choose either the group or individual project.

By September 30, each student will email me his or her choice of either the group or individual project option. Please include "Constitutional Amendment Project Preference" as the subject of your email so I can easily locate your preference.

10/23: Submit constitutional amendment.

Each student will write up a constitutional amendment. Your amendment should be no more than one page, double-spaced, and 12-point font. After you turn in your amendments in class on October 23, I will generate a list of the eight or so that students will research for the constitutional convention.

10/28 to 11/25: Work on small group or individual projects.

Once I select the slate of amendments, I will ask you to rank them in terms of which you would most like to research. These rankings will help determine which amendment you will research for either the group or individual project. Once assigned an amendment, students choosing the individual project option will begin researching and developing their slideshow. Those choosing the group option will divide themselves into smaller groups to put together an outline and presentation for or against each amendment. The small groups are required to do outside research, prepare an outline of their arguments, and prepare their presentation. Each student choosing the group option should be prepared to answer questions from their fellow delegates at the constitutional convention.

11/25: Group outline or individual slideshow due.

12/2 and 12/4: Mock constitutional convention.

12/4: Individual assessments due.

At the end of the constitutional convention, I will provide an evaluation form for all students who chose the group project option. The evaluation form will ask about each member's level of contribution and extent of participation, as well as an overall grade for each team member (only I will see these evaluation forms). These evaluations will count for half of a student's grade for the convention portion of the project. The remaining half will consist of my assessment of the group's argument and outline, observations of the individual, and his or her handling of questions. The final grades for those choosing the individual project option will consist of my assessment of the individual's slideshow and completion of the other required portions of the amendment project.