**SOC 303: Exploring U.S. Government: The Constitution**

**The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities**

**Spring 2023, MWF 9:00, 10:00, 11:00**

Dr. Sean A. Scott [seanscott@bsu.edu](mailto:seanscott@bsu.edu)

Wagoner 149, hours: MWF 8:00-8:50, 12:00-12:50; M 2:00-5:00; or by appt.

**Course Description:** The course explores U.S. government by focusing on the history and role of the Constitution. The course will provide students with both a historical background and a modern working knowledge of the Constitution and the American political system. The course will examine important legal cases with special attention to issues of current relevance.

**Attendance, Unexcused Absence Policy, and Classroom Etiquette**: The Indiana Academy regards any absence from class as unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, or extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from class, the instructor reports the absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The instructor does not have discretion in this matter. Four or more unexcused absences will lead to academic and residential consequences beyond the scope of this class determined by the Office of Academic Affairs (i.e., residential groundings, parent-principal conferences, or detentions).

Any homework assignment missed because of an unexcused absence will not be made up for credit and will be given a zero. Any unexcused absence on the day of an exam or project will result in a 30% deduction for that assignment.

Come to class engaged and prepared to learn. I record attendance in powerschool a few minutes before class. If you are late, please see me afterwards to remind me to change your absence to tardy. Any student arriving fifteen minutes after the start of class will be counted absent for that period. There’s no reason to have your phone out during class, and inappropriate use of a phone during class will result in an unexcused absence.

**Academic Integrity**: Academic integrity is foundational to achievement at the Academy and throughout your college life. Cheating on tests, plagiarism on papers, and all forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please understand that severe penalties will arise for violating academic integrity and review the relevant policies outlined in the Academy Handbook.

**Disability**: Students with documented disabilities should notify me by the end of the first week of class, and I will make reasonable accommodation for you.

**Excused Absences**: In the event of a serious illness or family tragedy, please notify me as soon as possible. Appropriate documentation will be necessary to make up an exam.

**Make-up Policy**: Missed tests with an excused absence should be made up as quickly as possible after returning to class in order to keep from falling too far behind. Ideally, this will be done within 2 days of returning to class. Late homework will be accepted if a student has been sick and is excused from class, but no late submissions will be accepted under normal circumstances.

**Student Success**: I want you to succeed in this course. Please see me during office hours to discuss any concerns or questions you have about the course or assignments. I am always happy to talk about specific readings, the study of history, or life in general. If I become concerned about your performance in this course, engagement in class, or overall well-being, I will speak with you first and then may refer you to the appropriate counselor within the Academy.

**BSU Statement on Diversity**: “Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>.”

**Texts:** Readings will be posted to Canvas.

**Assignments**

1. Exams: There will be four exams over class material and reading content.
2. Quizzes: To encourage the completion of assigned readings, quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester, either at the beginning or end of class.
3. Class participation: Students will earn participation points for engagement and participation during class lectures and discussions.
4. Simulations: Students will participate in presidential, congressional, and judicial simulations throughout the semester.

**Grading**

Tests 12.5% each

Quizzes 10%

Participation 10%

Simulations 30%

Students must take all exams and complete the creative project to pass the class. Grades will be figured according to the plus-minus scale copied below:

94-100% = A “A” grades reflect the “wow” factor. This shows exceptional, extra-

90-93% = A- ordinary effort and rewards work of the highest excellence.

88-89% = B+

83-87% = B “B” grades reflect the “very good” factor. This shows effort exceeding

80-82% = B- average and work that is high quality, but short of excellence.

78-79% = C+

73-77% = C “C” grades reflect average work and satisfactory results.

70-72% = C-

0-69% = D\* “D\*” reflects unsatisfactory work.

**Course Schedule:**

Daily readings and questions will be posted on Canvas, so please follow it closely for assignments. Tests are tentatively planned for Feb. 3, March 3, April 7, and the final exam between May 8-12.