

American National Politics

POLS 101

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Office Hours: M & W, 11am – 1pm
Spaulding Hall 304

Course Description and Objectives

The politics of the United States influence individuals and groups domestically and internationally. This course seeks to acquaint students with U.S. Government structures and institutions, as well as the theoretical basis for U.S. politics and the various actors that influence political decision making. Students are encouraged to think beyond the text, to see how what they learn is actualized in their own lives. Questions, critical thinking, and a synergistic acquisition of knowledge between students and instructor allow for the growth of a hands-on understanding of American Politics.

Course Requirements

The instructor believes that people learn best when they interact with information, thus creating a solid knowledge base. PowerPoints and class notes, along with quizzes and assignments, will be available to the student online on the bbce platform. All assignments and quizzes will be turned in/taken online. There will be Discussion Weeks in class where the focus will be on discussing how the material relates to current events, and there will be work weeks where the focus of the class will be on completing in-class activities. There will be quizzes throughout the course, and several short checkpoint and activity assignments. Students will also have one research/academic argument paper which will include a topic assignment, thesis assignment, rough draft and final draft. There will also be an in-class presentation on the same topic area as the paper.

The final grade breakdown is as follows:

Quizzes	25%
Research Paper (includes topic assignment, thesis assignment, rough draft and final draft)	25%
CheckPoint/Activity Assignments	25%
Participation	25%

Required Text and Readings

There are multiple aspects to the readings for this course. It is expected that the readings from the texts and/or other sources will be done prior to the class date for which it is assigned, enabling the students and instructor to enter into discussions reflecting information gleaned from the texts. In addition, students are expected to read the New York Times (free online at www.nyt.com – can be delivered each morning to your email address) in order to be current with events. Current Events will be an integral part of the classroom discussions, modules, presentations, and exams.

Texts:

Sidlow and Henschen. *America At Odds*, 6th edition.

Expectations:

The instructor does not tend to allow changes in the schedule. If unforeseen circumstances deemed applicable by the instructor necessitate an extension, the student must inform the instructor before the due date of the work that is due. Late papers, checkpoints, thesis, etc., will be deducted 10% after the first day late and an additional 10% for each subsequent day late.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted according to university policy. Don't do it. This means students should be sure to submit only original work, and, when writing a paper, be sure to cite any information that is not your own thoughts or well known information, whether it is a quote or summarized information. Using blocks of words from a source without quotes and then citing the source at the bottom is also plagiarism. **I will give a failing grade to any paper or checkpoint/activity that does not cite sources in text or is plagiarized in any way.**

Disability Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify the instructor during the first week of the course of any accommodations needed for the course. Accommodations will be made according to university policy.

Course Outline

I. The Basics of U.S. Government

Week One 8/24 – 8/30 DQ Week -- Introduction to course (introduce yourself)
-- American Democracy, Chpt. 1.

Week Two 8/31 – 9/6 Work Week -- The Constituion, Chpt 2.

**** Activity #1 due.**

****All topic choices due 9/6 in assignments folder online.**

Week Three 9/7 – 9/13 DQ Week -- Federalism, Chpt. 3.
-- State and Local Politics, Chpt. 17.

****Quiz #1.**

Week Four 9/14 – 9/20 Work Week – Civil Liberties, Chpt. 4.

**** Activity #2 due.**

**** All theses assignments due Tuesday 9/20 via assignments folder online.**

Week Five 9/21 – 9/27 DQ Week -- Civil Rights, Chpt. 5.

****Quiz #2**

II. U.S. Government Institutions

Week Six 9/28 – 10/4 Work Week -- Congress, Chpt. 11.

-- The Presidency, Chpt. 12.

**** Activity #3 due.**

**** Checkpoint #1 due online Thursday 10/4 in assignments folder.**

Week Seven 10/5 – 10/11 DQ Week -- The Bureaucracy, Chpt. 13.

****Quiz #3**

Week Eight 10/12 – 10/18 Work Week -- The Judiciary, Chpt. 14.

**** Activity #4 due.**

****Checkpoint #2 due online 10/18 in assignments folder.**

III. The Power of the People. . .and Other Interested Actors

Week Nine 10/19 – 10/25 DQ Week -- Interest Groups, Chpt. 6

****Quiz #4**

Week Ten 10/26 – 11/1 Work Week -- Political Parties, Chpt. 7.

**** Activity #5 due.**

**** Checkpoint #3 due online 11/1 in assignments.**

Week Eleven 11/2 – 11/8 DQ Week -- Public Opinion and Voting, Chpt. 8.

****Quiz #5**

Week Twelve 11/9 – 11/15 Work Week -- Campaigns and Elections, Chpt. 9

**** Rough draft of papers due 11/15 via assignments folder online ****

Week Thirteen 11/16 – 11/22 DQ Week -- Politics and the Media, Chpt. 10.

****Quiz #6**

11/23 – 11/29

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fourteen 11/30 – 12/6 Work Week -- Domestic Policy, Chpt. 15.

**** Activity #6 due.**

****Checkpoint #4 due online 12/6 in assignments folder.**

Week Fifteen 12/7 – 12/13 DQ Week -- US Foreign Policy, Chpt. 16.

****Quiz #7**

Finals Week 12/14 – 12/17 Work Week

**** Final draft of papers due 12/15 via assignments folder online.**