

Lewis-Clark State College

Political Science 101: American National Government

Fall 2022

Course Information:

Tuesday/Thursday 12:00PM-1:15AM

Room: Administration Building, 16

Instructor: Dr. Britzman

Email: kjbritzman@lcsc.edu | Office: 306 Spalding Hall

Office Hours: 10:30AM-11:30AM on Thursdays, 1:30-2:30PM on Wednesdays (via Zoom ID: 823 8946 2470) or by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the study of U.S. government, politics, and policy. We will discuss the institutions that comprise the American system, the nature of individual participation in the political process, and the interactions among citizens, elected officials, and other political actors and organizations (e.g., the media, political parties, and interest groups). Our approach to these topics will be theoretical and analytical: we will go beyond simply describing the characteristics of the American political system to investigate the reasons: why it is organized as it is and how it has changed over time, how individuals develop their political attitudes and patterns of behavior, and how the actions of both elites and the mass public combine to shape public policy outcomes. By the end of the course, students should have a firm understanding of the broad workings of the U.S. government, an increased capacity to critically analyze politics, and an appreciation for the social-scientific approach to the study of politics.

Catalog Description: Students are introduced to the general problems of government. The emphasis is on the basic concepts of American politics and the major structural and Constitutional elements of national government.

Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of the semester students in this course should be able to:

- Describe the major events and ideas associated with the foundations of U.S. government
- Explain the linkages between political institutions and the mass public
- Analyze public opinion data to understand political attitudes and behaviors
- Trace the historical fight for political incorporation of marginalized groups in the U.S.
- Connect current events to theories based on political science research
- Write critically about public policy, political actors, and political behavior
- Understand the social-scientific approach to the study of politics

General Education Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to demonstrate the following competencies.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of a particular Social Science discipline (political science)
2. Develop an understanding of self and the world by examining the dynamic interaction of individuals, groups, and societies as they shape and are shaped by history, culture, institutions, and ideas
3. Utilize Social Science approaches, such as research methods, inquiry, or problem-solving, to examine the variety of perspectives about human experience
4. Evaluate how reasoning, history, or culture informs and guides individual, civic, or global decisions
5. Understand and appreciate similarities and differences among and between individuals, cultures, or societies across space and time

General Education Competency:

Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing

Required Readings:

Students are required to obtain the following textbook, which is available at the campus bookstore and via online booksellers.

Bianco, William and David Canon. 2021. *American Politics Today*. New York: W.W. Norton (**Core**, 7th edition)

There are multiple required course readings outside of the textbook. Links to these readings will be posted on the course website. These readings are marked with an asterisk (*).

Assignments and Grading:

Assignments

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|------------------------------|-----|
| Journal reflections | 25% |
| Module reading quizzes | 20% |
| Attendance and participation | 20% |
| Writing assignment #1 | 15% |
| Writing assignment #2 | 15% |
| Reflection essay | 5% |

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|--------------|----------------|
| A | 92.50 - 100 |
| A- | 89.50 - 92.59 |
| B+ | 87.50 - 89.49 |
| B | 82.50 - 87.49 |
| B- | 79.50 - 82.49 |
| C+ | 77.50 - 79.49 |
| C | 72.50 - 77.49 |
| C- | 69.50 - 72.49 |
| D+ | 67.50 - 69.49 |
| D | 59.50 - 67.49 |
| F | 59.49 or lower |

My policy is that all grade inquiries must be made **in writing** no fewer than 24 hours and no more than one week after the class in which the graded assignment is first handed back.

Course Requirements:

1. Journal reflections

Almost every week you will be required to complete at least 1 journal reflection based on the week's content. These reflections are a significant portion of your grade, and you should be thoughtful and thorough in your responses. The content for this course is nuanced and complex so these reflections will offer you a chance to wrestle with the complexities of the course topics, explain and assess your own perspectives and opinions, and demonstrate your knowledge of the course material each week

2. Attendance & participation

I believe that learning works best as an interactive process among students and a teacher. Your personal insights, analysis of the reading, and experiences will help your classmates (and me) understand the material in a unique way. Throughout the semester there will be many opportunities for discussion and small-group activities. Your attendance and participation in this class will comprise 20% of your final grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your participation, please talk to me.

3. Module reading quizzes

To assess how well students are keeping up the readings and course materials and to make sure students are completing the readings/course materials, module quizzes will be given each week. Students can take each quiz up to two times, however the final score will be the average of the two quiz scores. For example, if you took a quiz and got a 70% (C-) on it, you can retake the quiz, get a 100% (A), and end up with a final grade of 85% (B) for the quiz. Of course, students can also take the quiz only once if they are satisfied with the first score. Your lowest module quiz score will be dropped from your final grade. You can use your book to complete the quizzes. **Module quizzes are due at the end of each week on Sundays at 11:59PM Pacific.**

4. Analytical writing assignments

There will be two longer, more formal analytical writing assignments throughout the semester. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided at least two weeks before the deadline.

5. Reflection essay

At the end of the semester, you will submit a brief reflection essay to assess your own learning throughout this class.

Course Policies:

1. Late work

In order to be successful in this course, it is necessary to attend class regularly, keep up with the assigned readings, and turn in all work on time. **I recognize that life happens, and I ask that you notify me at least 24 hours before the due date to discuss a deadline extension.** Barring such an agreement, late work will be assessed a penalty of ten percentage points per day for each day past the due date. In general, you should plan ahead so that you will be able to meet class requirements and deadlines even if you have computer troubles, are sick, or are out of town in the days before an assignment is due.

2. Academic integrity

University standards for academic integrity apply in this class. Any form of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated. When you submit an assignment, make sure everything in it is your own work and that you have made the appropriate references where necessary. You are expected to know and understand the college's policies on this matter. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the student code of conduct on academic integrity (<http://www.lcsc.edu/student-affairs/student-code-of-conduct/prohibited-conduct/>).

We will discuss guidelines for written work in more detail throughout the semester, but when in doubt, do not hesitate to ask for clarification. The LCSC Writing Center (Library, room 172) is also a good resource for students who have questions about writing or would like assistance with their writing assignments. Full information about their services is provided at their website (<http://www.lcsc.edu/writing-center>). Additionally, a great online source is the [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html).

3. Course website

Our course website is your LC State Canvas page (<https://lcsc.instructure.com/login/canvas>). You will find the syllabus, course readings, assignment information, quizzes, journal instructions, class announcements, your grades, etc. on the Canvas webpage.

4. Office hours

If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact me via email. Monday through Friday I will answer emails within 24-48 hours. I will let you know if I have a conflict that will affect email response times.

Weekly in person office hours will be held on Thursdays right before class. Additionally, I am available via Zoom for virtual office hours each week. The Zoom ID is located on the first page of the syllabus. If neither of these times work we can set up an in person or virtual appointment. I want to help you do well in this course, so please do not hesitate to ask me questions and be in touch.

5. Classroom environment

Diverse backgrounds and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor at the core of university education. Therefore, I expect you to follow the Code of Conduct in your interactions with your colleagues and me in this course by respecting the social and cultural differences among us, which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender identity, citizenship and immigration status, national origin, race, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status. Please talk with me right away if you experience disrespect in this class, and I will work to address it in an educational manner.

6. Accessibility services

Students with learning disabilities will be accommodated in accordance with university guidelines. Please speak with me during the first two weeks of class and consult the LC State Accessibility Services.

7. Final grades

Final grades are based on the total points you earn throughout the semester on graded assignments, as detailed in the “Assignments and Grading” section of this syllabus. Under no circumstances should you ask for extra points to be awarded or for extra credit opportunities at the end of the semester because your final grade is not as high as you were hoping that it would be (for the purposes of scholarships, sports eligibility, or any other reason). Doing so would be asking me to treat you differently than I treat your classmates, which would be unfair to them and therefore ethically problematic. If you ever have any questions about your grades on particular assignments and/or believe that I have made a grading error, you can address your concerns to me, in writing (via email), within one week of when an assignment has been graded. Any such questions or concerns should be specific and reference the grading criteria (and rubric, if applicable) for the assignment. If warranted, we will then meet to discuss your concerns/questions to clarify how the assignment was graded.

Course Schedule

| Weekly Topics | Readings | Major due dates |
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| <i>Part I – Foundations of U.S. Government</i> | | |
| Week 1 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to class/syllabus • What is political science? • Why government? | <p>August 23</p> | *Module quizzes begin this week* |
| | <p>August 25 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 1 (pages 2-31)</p> | |
| Week 2 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional foundations of the U.S. government | <p>August 30 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 2 (pages 32-50)</p> | |
| | <p>September 1 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 2 (pages 51-73)</p> | |
| Week 3 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalism | <p>September 6 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 3 (pages 74-88)</p> | |
| | <p>September 8 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 3 (pages 89-107)</p> | |
| <i>Part II – Institutions and Policymaking</i> | | |
| Week 4 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress • Legislative behavior, organization, and rules • Representation | <p>September 13 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 11 (pages 394-416)</p> | |
| | <p>September 15 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 11 (pages 394-416)</p> | |
| Week 5 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presidency | <p>September 20 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 12 (pages 442-461)</p> | |

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| | <p>September 22 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 12 (pages 462-477)</p> | |
| Week 6 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bureaucracy | <p>September 27 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 13 (pages 478-489)</p> | |
| | <p>September 29 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 13 (pages 490-513)</p> | |
| Week 7 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The courts | <p>October 4 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 14 (pages 514-531)</p> | *Writing assignment #1 due Sunday October 9* |
| | <p>October 6 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 14 (pages 514-555)</p> | |
| <i>Part III- Linking Individuals and Government</i> | | |
| Week 8 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political parties | <p>October 11 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 8 (pages 274-290)</p> | |
| | <p>October 13 <i>No class</i> <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 8 (pages 291-309)</p> | |
| Week 9 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest groups | <p>October 18 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 10 (pages 358-371)</p> | |

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| | <p>October 20 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 10 (pages 371-393)</p> | |
| Week 10 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral politics and campaign strategy • Voting behavior | <p>October 25 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 9 (pages 310-333)</p> | |
| | <p>October 27 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 9 (pages 333-357)</p> | |
| <i>Part IV: Individuals and Politics</i> | | |
| Week 11 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political knowledge and media | <p>November 1 <u>Read:</u> *America’s ignorant voters</p> | |
| | <p>November 3 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 7 (pages 244-273)</p> | |
| Week 12 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media (continued) | <p>November 8 <u>Read:</u> *News use and social media *How to spot media bias</p> | |
| | <p>November 10 <i>No class – Professor Britzman attending Pacific Northwest Political Science Association conference</i></p> | |
| Week 13 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political attitudes and public opinion • Political polarization | <p>November 15 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 6 (pages 208-230)</p> | |
| | <p>November 17 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 6</p> | |

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| | (pages 231-243) | |
| <i>Fall Break (November 21 – November 25)</i> *Writing assignment #2 due Sunday November 27* | | |
| Week 14 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil rights • Civil liberties | November 29 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 5 (pages 156-207) | |
| | December 1 <u>Read:</u> Bianco and Canon Chapter 4 (pages 108-136) <i>Optional:</i> Finish Chapter 4 | |
| Week 15 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course summary | December 6 No readings | *Reflection essay due Sunday December 11* |
| | December 8 No readings | |