

POLS 1100: US Government & Politics - Spring 2020

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Office Hours – by appointment (can be via telephone, live chat, or Zoom)

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course I will expect you to have mastered the following objectives:

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the nature and characteristics of the US political system;
- Explain how principles of American politics apply to current policy topics;
- Formulate and express your own opinions on contemporary policy debates using well-conceived arguments, grounded in principle(s);
- Demonstrate respect for the thoughts and opinions of others—appreciating this freedom of expression as an individual’s fundamental right.

Course Introduction

In this course we will study the characteristics, processes, and effects of United States government and politics. The course surveys several aspects of government—highlighting the effects of politics on government institutions—including the impact of rationality, collective action, institutions, policies, and history. We will start with the fundamental question of what government is, and continue by examining the effects of constitutional principles on the lives of American citizens.

We will focus on the Constitution as the fundamental architectural design of our political, social, and economic institutions. We will evaluate how the rules established by our founding fathers and modified by subsequent generations through amendment and statute shape the opportunities that Americans enjoy today. How do American institutions protect us? How do they limit what activities we might do? Why do conflicts arise in political processes and how are they resolved?

You will satisfy the goals of this course if you leave with an enhanced understanding of American politics and the order of government. I expect you to appreciate importance of American politics, even if you don't always agree with the outcomes.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Required Textbooks

We will use two textbooks for this course and a substantial amount of the assigned reading will be drawn from these texts:

- *American Government 2e* (2019), by OpenStax, licensed under Creative Commons. ISBN: **1-947172-66-2(PDF Version)**

(A free pdf version of the *American Government (AG)* textbook will be available within the Canvas course - under each Module)

- *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy: Selections from CQ Researcher*, 21st Edition (2020). ISBN: 978-1544374789

(Students may purchase a hard copy of the CQ Researcher text but a **free pdf version of each CQ Research Chapter will be available within the Canvas course - within each module**)

You will be responsible for a significant portion of each book. If you choose to purchase (or rent) the CQ Researcher book please select the 21st edition, as each edition has different policy topics. Your success in this course will rely on access to and mastery of the readings. ***There may be additional readings and supplemental material for each weekly learning module to help in your understanding of the weekly topics.***

Optional Videos and Readings

In some learning modules there will be optional videos and readings for students. These materials are meant to provide a more in-depth examination of the topic(s) covered in the AG textbook. Students are encouraged to review the materials to gain further insight of the material.

Course Requirements

In addition to weekly readings and online discussions and short & long essays you will complete two midterm exams and a final exam. Your grade will be determined by the following:

Midterm #1	-	30 pts
Midterm #2	-	30 pts
Online Discussions (12)	-	60 pts (5 pts each)
Short Essay Questions (10)	-	50 pts (5 pts each)
Reflective Essay	-	50 pts
Final Exam	-	<u>30 pts</u>
		250 total pts

Course Grading Policy

Grading is the main symbolic method of recording the evaluation of a student's academic performance. This academic evaluation is both the responsibility and the prerogative of the individual instructor. Where appropriate, the instructor may delegate authority but not responsibility in this matter. The instructor is the ultimate arbiter of grades in the course. All final grades must be submitted within 96 hours after the final examination for the course.

For this Political Science 1100 course the requirements have assignment point values. The final course grade will be based on the total points accrued from the requirements. The letter grade will be based on the following percentages: 94-100% (A), 90-93% (A-), 87-89% (B+), 84-86% (B), 80-83% (B-), 77-79% (C+), 74-76% (C), 70-73% (C-), 67-69% (D+), 60-66% (D), 59% and below (F).

In most cases points for late assignments will not be awarded, but the instructor reserves the right to assign partial points for late assignments in some cases.

Midterms and Final

The midterm(s) and final exam will each consist of 15 multiple choice and 3 essay questions based on the *American Government* textbook (only) and will gauge the students' mastery of the course and weekly objectives.

The exams will be timed, closed-book, and require you to use a live proctor or the university's virtual proctoring system: Proctorio. Students are responsible for arranging a proctor. [Please visit the Materials and Testing site to find a live proctor. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

If you will be using the virtual proctoring option, please read through the [Getting Started with Proctorio - Student Guide](#) to make sure you have the necessary technology to utilize the virtual proctoring.

You will also want to take the [Practice Quiz \(Remotely Proctored\)](#) to make sure everything is working correctly BEFORE attempting one of the midterms.

Online Discussions

Each week students will be expected to demonstrate their mastery of the course material by contributing to an online discussion page. Your work will meet objectives 3 & 4 of the Course Objectives. Students will be assigned smaller groups (4-6 student) for discussions. For each learning module a new page will be provided so you have an opportunity to apply principles from the *American Government* textbook to contemporary public policy topics from the *CQ Researcher* text. ***The instructor will post a specific question for each weekly discussion post. Students will be required to respond to the instructor's post on the week's discussion board earlier in the week and thoughtfully respond to at least two other posts from other students in your group by the end of the week. You must post your response to the instructor by Wednesday evening at 8pm of each week, and respond to two other students' posts by Sunday evening (same week) at 8pm.***

I want to stress that your responses to other students' posts on the discussion board should reflect your respect for their opinions. I will not tolerate disrespect, nor will I tolerate negative or inappropriate language directed towards others— your grade may suffer as a result of your disrespect.

I hope you enjoy the opportunity to communicate with you fellow classmates and their comments and opinions make you think deeper about the topics.

Short Essay Questions

For some of the modules students will be required to answer an essay question based on the readings and learning for the week. Your answers will meet course objectives 1 & 2 by giving you the opportunity to critically think about the course material, make connections between topics, and prove your understanding of the lessons (using mastery of the Weekly Objectives as a basis for your answer). ***Your answer to the Essay question must be at least a ¾ page long (double spaced) and is due by Sunday, 11:59pm of each week.***

Reflective Essay_

At the end of the semester students will be required submit a longer essay. The Reflective Essay will require mastery of all four Course Objectives and the Weekly Objectives. Students will choose their own policy topics and will reflect on all aspects of the course and apply what they have learned to a well-thought-out essay. The essay will demonstrate their knowledge of all the modules and course materials. The Reflective Essay will be 4-5 pages long, double-spaced. Students will reflect on their own preconceived knowledge/opinion(s) of the policy topic and articulate whether their knowledge/opinions have changed—explaining why or why not.

Chat Sessions

I will make myself available periodically for an hour to conduct an online chat session (maybe text or WebEx video within Canvas). The topic of the chat session is open, but I am hoping it will be an opportunity to chat about the weeks materials, including supplemental materials like videos or other readings I have provided in the learning modules to demonstrate principles of the current learning module (instructor office hours, if you will). You may also discuss logistics of the course with me during these sessions. *I will send weekly announcements indicating when the chat sessions will happen.* I will also respond to emails within 24 hours (most times even sooner).

Responses by the Instructor

In most cases students will receive responses to questions via email within 24 hours. Feedback and responses to essays and exams will usually be made within 5-7 days of the submission due date (unless otherwise noted by the instructor).

Academic Policy

All work submitted under your name must be your own and must be completed according to the rules and requirements outlined on the exam or assignment. Any evidence that you are representing someone else's work as your own or allowing someone else to use your work will result in a failure for the course. Additionally, I will report the incident to your academic department head and dean for any further action he/she may deem appropriate.

Disability Policy

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) 797-2444 voice, 797-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible.

Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

Veterans

Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

Course Fee

Effective Spring 2020 the Utah State University Course Fee Committee approved a per credit course fee for all fully online courses. The purpose of the fee is to support the digital technologies and support services required for delivering online learning.

Online Format

This course is designed for an online, asynchronous format. Although there will be no traditional classroom time, students will be responsible for reading textbook assignments, reviewing weekly learning modules, answering weekly essay questions, completing other tasks, and contributing to online discussion formats—following the schedule and timeline in the syllabus. *This is not independent study—you will have weekly assignments and your grade will depend on completing tasks on time. Please use Canvas to submit all your work.*

Course Schedule (note: schedule is subject to change by instructor)

AG - American Government text

CQ - Issues for Debate in American Public Policy (CQ Researcher)

Learning Module 0 (Week 1) – Week of January 19th

Assignment #1 (Extra Credit - 5pts)

-Due by Sunday, January 24th at 11:59pm.

Familiarize yourself with the course (being readings)

Learning Module 1 (Week 2) - Week of January 25th

American Government and Civic Engagement

AG – 1

CQ – 1 (Renewable Energy Debate)

Module 1 Discussion Posting

Essay Question #1

Learning Module 2 (Week 3) - Week of February 1st

The Constitution and its Origins / American Federalism

AG – 2-3

CQ – 16 (Federal State Relations)

Module 2 Discussion Posting

Essay Question #2

Learning Module 3 (Week 4) - Week of February 8th

Civil Liberties / Civil Rights

AG – 4 & 5

CQ – 6 (Abortion Controversies)

Module 3 Discussion Posting

Essay Question #3

Learning Module 4 (Week 5) - Week of February 15th

Midterm #1 (must be completed by 11:59pm on February 21st)

Learning Module 5 (Week 6) - Week of February 22nd

The Politics of Public Opinion

AG – 6

CQ – 7 (The 2020 Census)

Module 5 Discussion Posting

Essay #4

Learning Module 6 (Week 7) - Week of March 1st

Voting and Elections

AG – 7

CQ – 8 (Election Security and Voting Rights)

Module 6 Discussion Posting

Essay #5

Learning Module 7 (Week 8) - Week of March 8th

The Media / Political Parties

AG – 8 & 9

CQ – 5 (Privatizing Government Services)

Module 7 Discussion Posting

Essay #6

Learning Module 8 (Week 9) - Week of March 8th

Interest Groups and Lobbying

AG –10

CQ – 3 (Movie Industry Disruption)

Module 8 Discussion Posting

Essay #7

Learning Module 9 (Week 10) - Week of March 15th

Midterm #2 (must be completed by 11:59pm on March 21st)

Learning Module 10 (Week 11) - Week of March 22nd

Congress and The Presidency

AG – 11-12

CQ – 15 (The Presidency)

Module 10 Discussion Posting

Essay Question #8

Learning Module 11 (Week 12) - Week of March 29th

The Courts and State and Local Government

AG – 13-14

CQ – 9 (Title IX and Campus Sexual Assaults)

Module 11 Discussion Posting

Essay #9

Learning Module 12 (Week 13) - Week of April 5th

The Bureaucracy and Domestic Policy

AG – 15-16

CQ – 2 (Domestic Poverty)

Module 12 Discussion Posting

Essay #10

Learning Module 13 (Week 14) - Week of April 12th

Foreign Policy

AG – 17

CQ – 14 (U.S. Trade Policy)

Learning Module 14 (Week 15): *Reflective Essay Due*
(Must be submitted by 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 20th)

Study Week (Interim Days and No Test Week): April 21st – April 28th

Final Exam (April 29th – May 5th)

Must be completed by 5pm on Wednesday, May 5th