

# About the Course

## Office Hours and Contact Info

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Office: WIB240 (Across from the wave pool on the Price campus)

Office Hours: TBA

## Overview

The purpose of this course is to help the student gain awareness and interest in the US political system. Politics is a complex topic and, for many, uncomfortable. However, politics shape the world we live in and gaining a better understanding of it can help us understand ourselves and others around us on a deeper level. One of the goals of this course is to help you reflect on and develop your own opinions and beliefs.

There are six navigation tabs on the Canvas homepage. Here is a brief description of each:

- **About the Course:** Under this tab you will find a detailed description of the course, including the required textbook, an explanation of exams and assignments, the grade scale and other important information.
- **Tentative Course Schedule:** Students often say that it is difficult to complete online course because they lose track of what they should be doing. Under this tab you will find a tentative work schedule detailing where you should be during each week of the course. Of course, one of the benefits of an online class is flexibility. You are free to create your own schedule or work ahead. Just be aware that there are due dates that need to be met.
- **Section One: Constitution:** In the first part of this course we will focus on the history of the Constitution, civil rights and liberties and the US court system. Under this tab you will find section lecture outlines, the exam study guide for the textbook, links to the assignment(s) and links to both parts of the exam.
- **Section Two: Policy-Making:** In the second part of this course we will focus on policy-making, the legislative branch and political actors. Under this tab you will find section lecture outlines, the exam study guide for the textbook, links to the assignment(s) and links to both parts of the exam.
- **Section Three: Foreign Policy:** In the last part of the course we will focus on the executive branch and US foreign policy. Under this tab you will find section lecture outlines, the exam study guide for the textbook, links to the assignment(s) and links to both parts of the exam.

- **Other Material:** This tab serves as a catch all. At the beginning of the course, you will find tips for the textbook study guide and the grading rubric for the essay questions. At a later date, I may add additional materials.

**Media Gallery:** The media gallery is located on the left hand side of our Canvas page. When you go into the media gallery click on "playlists". There are three lecture playlists, one for each section of this course. The lectures are about 15 minutes long. They follow the lecture outlines which are located under each section tab.

## Objectives

Objectives are the things I hope to convey in this course. Here are some of the things I hope you get out of the course:

- An understanding of the concept of civil rights and how it connects with the U.S. Constitution.
- An understanding of why policy-making is important, and the policy-making process.
- An understanding how the president is elected.
- An understanding what American foreign policy is and why it is important.

Even more important, I hope you:

- Reflect and develop your own values, opinions and beliefs.
- Better understand how to critically assess an argument, discussion topic or media claim.
- Find social topics that interest you and have a better understanding of how they connect with the policy making process.

## Textbook

Schubert, Dye, Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy*, 17th edition, ISBN: 978-1-285-87028-1

### **Auto Access eBook: The Irony of Democracy eBook, 17e by Schubert**

This course requires all-inclusive digital materials that are provided to you at a lower price than traditional printed materials. These materials are paid for through an "Auto Access Digital Materials" charge placed on your student account when you registered for the course. **To access the materials, visit the Canvas course site.** For more details, including dates, deadlines, and opt-out info, visit your student Auto Access Portal: <https://portal.verba.io/usu/login> (Links to an external site.)

The textbook is located under the "Bookshelf" tab on the left hand side of the page. If you are not using the online edition of the book, feel free to contact me about the use of earlier editions or Kindle editions. I can also send you the first chapter of the textbook while you are waiting for your textbook order to arrive.

# Exams & Graded Assignments

The course is divided into three sections. You will need to complete one exam (divided into two sections) and one assignments per section.

- **Textbook Exams (Approximately 120 points or 25%)** : There are three multiple choice exams that cover the textbook material. You have 60 minutes to do 20 questions worth two points each. Late exams are accepted up to a certain date for up to half credit. There are some things to help you prepare for the multiple choice exams: **Study Guide**: There is a textbook study guide which will tell you which chapters to read and which sections to focus on. The study guides are found under the navigation tab for each section. **Study Tips**: There is also a description of the exam and study tips found under the "Other Material" tab. **Sample Questions**: There is a sample quiz found under the "quizzes" tab on the left hand side of this course page. These questions are not worth any points and you can open the quiz multiple times. This will help you become familiar with the structure of the quiz and the format of the questions.
- **Lecture Material Exams (Approximately 240 points or 50%)** : There are three essay exams that cover the lecture material. The lecture material exam is a timed exam (120 minutes) that will be comprised of approximately four essay questions. Late exams are accepted up to a certain date for up to half credit. There are some things to help you prepare for the essay exam: **Lecture Outlines**: You have access to the lecture outlines. They are located under the navigation tab for each section of the course. The outlines will help you identify potential essay questions. **Lectures**: As mentioned above, access to the lectures is provided through the media gallery tab. **Grading Rubric**: There is also a description of the grade scale and study tips for the essay questions found under the "Other Material" tab.
- **Graded Assignments (Approximately 115 points or 25%)**: There will be one graded assignment per section. The graded assignments will be worth 15-50 points each. There will be a link to the graded assignment under each section tab.
- **Extra Credit**: There will be on 10-15 point extra credit assignment. The extra credit assignment will be located under the "Assignments" section on the left hand side of the Canvas homepage.

All of the exams and graded assignments have due dates. However, since everything is available online you can work ahead and do things in any order you like.

## Grading Scale

Here is the grade scale for this course:

93-100% = A; 90-92% = A-

87-89%=B+; 83-86%=B; 80-82%=B-

77-79%=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72%=C-

67-69%=D+; 63-66%=D; 62%>=F

Notice that you need at least a 63% to pass the class. Anyone who is .5 or higher will automatically have their grade rounded up to the next higher grade. For example, a final grade of 86.5% or 86.6% will be entered as an 87% B+. As the professor, I reserve the right to round a grade up by .5% for effort shown. For example, let's say a student has a final grade of 86.3%. This student's grade could be entered as an 87% B+. I do this for students who have shown continued progress in their exam grades, turned in all of their exams and assignments, sought to increase their grade by taking advantage of the extra credit and optional comprehensive exam options, had reasonable attendance, and/or sought help outside of class. Under no circumstances will I raise a grade more than .5%.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism will result in 1) a written form submitted to Logan's ethics board, 2) an failing grade on the assignment for which the plagiarism occurred. If plagiarism occurs again, this will result in 1) a second notification to Logan's ethics board which may result in a dismissal from the university, 2) a failing grade in the course.

Plagiarism most often occurs in one of two ways. It occurs when students are using another student's notes, word for word, to answer an exam essay question. It also occurs when students use online material from the internet (often sources like wikipedia or sparknotes). Students often cut and paste sections of the text and insert it into their essays. I do grade a lot of exams, but duplicate answers and answers in which the concepts and description are way above an entry level student's knowledge does stick out.

I urge you to come see me if concepts in the book or lecture are unclear. Learning takes time and effort. Please don't mistakenly think a source online will clear up all your answers. I guarantee I can do it better! If you are an off campus student we can set up Skype time or a chat in Canvas.

If I suspect you of plagiarism on the essay section of the exam, I will try to sit down and talk about it before any action is taken. You may have access to your written answer and you will be asked to explain certain parts of it. I will do my best to provide questions that are reasonable.

## ADA

Classroom Accommodation For Students With Disabilities: USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

