

Political Science 105
Spring 2021
office hours: TTh 1:00-2:15 W 9-9:30
(held by chat on Microsoft Teams)

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American Government and Politics

Explore Society (3 credits asynchronous lecture)

Course Description: The official course description for this class says simply that you will learn the “organization, principles, and actual working of the American national government in all its branches.”

Politics all too often seems bitter, divisive, selfish, and idiotic. What is the remedy to these disappointments? The best answer is civic knowledge—having informed, engaged, and well-meaning citizens. We need citizens who understand American history and political practices, who think actively about what kind of community they want to live in, and engage in civil, productive dialogue with their fellow citizens to help bring those visions about. An engaged populace can prompt government to do positive things, and holds politicians accountable. This course helps students hone their political knowledge and citizenship skills by studying the institutions of American government, elections, policies, and informal arrangements like political parties and interest groups. There is no prerequisite for the course.

This course’s signature question: How do people understand and engage in community life?

Student Learning Outcomes

- Describe the major components of the US government, including the Constitution and its interpretation, federalism, and the branches of government.
- Examine key public policies and learn the roles of citizens, groups, and elections in the making of policy.

Logistics

Grading: These are the components of your final grade:

10 chapter worksheets due week by week, each worth 10 points	100 points
3 exams	50 pts. each
weekly questions/comments for Question Time and News Segment	<u>50 points</u>

300 points

I use a standard scale 93% and above = A, 90-92.9% = A-, 88-89.9 = B+, etc.

Textbook: You are required to purchase and read *We the People* 12th Essentials edition by Benjamin Ginsberg and coauthors. This book can be bought either used from the UW Oshkosh bookstore or may be purchased in an on-line version. Please note that there are many different editions of this book, but to all be on the same page, you should order this specific edition.

Course Lectures: Will be recorded on Collaborate Ultra and posted to the Module “Recorded Lectures.” There will be approximately two hours of recorded lectures per week, typically divided up into two separate recordings of one hour each. Find recordings at this link: <https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/3f02d687fade41049ac6f82bf6f2eee7>.

Office Hours: You can find me on Microsoft Teams during office hours, Tuesday and Thursday from 1-2:15 and Wednesday from 9-9:30. I am also available by email and by appointment.

What a typical week will be like in this class:

Sunday night	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lectures Posted to Canvas	listen to lectures and post a question or comment to the open Canvas Discussion panel (by end of day on Tuesday)		Question Time (9:30) recorded and news item introduced	complete textbook chapter worksheet or test by 5 PM Fri.	
		--read assigned textbook chapter--		post comment on news item by 5 PM Fri.	
	worksheet for chapter posted		listen to question time recording		

Course Components

Chapter Worksheets: Once you complete your reading of the textbook chapter I have assigned for the week, you will complete a chapter worksheet. These worksheets will be posted in Canvas under Quizzes either on Monday or Tuesday. You may use your book for the exercise, but understand that this increases the difficulty of the questions I ask. You have until 5 PM Friday to complete your worksheet. You are expected to do your own work on these—any sharing of answers will be penalized. Questions from worksheets may be repeated on exams.

Question Time: I am requiring each of you to submit a question or a comment to me about my lecture week by week. You should submit this comment or question in the appropriate Canvas Discussion box by the end of the day on Tuesday. I will select a number of questions and comments to respond to in what I call “Question Time.” This will be in our course’s Collaborate Ultra chat room from 9:30-10:00 every Wednesday, a discussion that will be recorded and posted and the information from which will be fair game for exams.

You are welcome to join me in the chat (though there is no obligation to do so because of the nature of the course). The link is here: <https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/3f02d687fade41049ac6f82bf6f2eee7> or

you can dial in at 1 (571) 392-7650 PIN: 897 300 3903. Those in attendance are welcome to follow up on any issue or item in the news that you want to talk about.

News Segment: Each week that there is not a test I will introduce a news article from a reputable source at the end of my Question Time discussion. The news will be something that pertains to our subject of study that week, like the Constitution for Week 2. I will prompt a discussion, also on Canvas, and you are expected to read the article and comment on it in a timely fashion. The discussion box will be open from Wednesday through 5 PM on Friday. Respond to the question and/or your peers' views.

Grading for Question Time and News posts: Together, your comments and questions for Question Time and the News Segment are worth one sixth of your grade. Each post will be graded with a 2 or a 1 or a 0. A 2 is given for questions and comments with significant meaning. A 1 is given for attempted comments or questions that are poorly written or show little meaningful connection with the lecture or news item. A 0 is reserved for posts that are either not done or have no redeeming value.

Exams: Exams in the course will consist of a variety of assessment mechanisms, multiple choice, identification of terms, and essay questions. Work on tests is required to be your own. Since everyone will take tests in their own space, tests are open note and open book. Be aware that such an arrangement prompts me to write questions that are more challenging. Each of the three tests are worth 50 points. You have Thursday and Friday of the week of the exam to complete it. Please note that on the last exam there are a set of comprehensive questions that cover material from throughout the course, our departmental "post-test."

Course Topics, Activities, Readings, and Assignments

Week of February 1st through 5th

lecture: course introduction and syllabus; the citizen and government

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 1

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

no worksheet—but take the ungraded course "pre-test" by Friday at 5 PM

Week of February 8th through 12th

lecture: the Constitution—its shape, its purposes, and its origin

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 2

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #1 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of February 15th through 19th

lecture: federalism

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 3

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #2 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of February 22nd through 26th

lecture: civil liberties and civil rights

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 4

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #3 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of March 1st through 5th

lecture: public opinion

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 5

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

Exam #1 due by Friday at 5 PM

Week of March 8th through 12th

lecture: media

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 6

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #4 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of March 15th through 19th

lecture: political parties, participation, and elections

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 7

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #5 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of March 22nd through March 26th No Class—Spring Break

Week of March 29th through April 2nd

lecture: interest groups

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 8

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #6 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of April 5th through 9th

lecture: Congress

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 9

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #7 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of April 14 and April 16

lecture: the presidency

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 10

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

Exam #2 due by 5 PM Friday

Week of April 21 and April 23

lecture: the bureaucracy

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 11

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #8 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of April 28 and April 30

lecture: federal courts

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 12

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #9 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of May 5 and May 7

lecture: domestic policy

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 13

submit question time comment or question by the end of the day Tuesday

read news item introduced Wednesday and post comment by Friday 5 PM

worksheet #9 due by Friday 5 PM

Week of May 12 through May 14

Lecture topic: foreign policy

reading assignment: *We the People*, chapter 14

Exam #3, featuring 20 question “post-test,” due by Friday 5 PM

Course and University Policies

Please Note: If you have trouble meeting the requirements in the course because of such things as limited computer access, personal illness, or family emergency please let me know. If circumstances warrant I will make reasonable accommodations.

Explore Courses are designed to acquaint you with the breadth of knowledge required of a well-rounded college graduate. With your other University Studies Program courses you are offered a **liberal arts education**, one that helps acquaint you with what human beings have considered important, what they have learned, but also to appreciate how much we don't know. This course fits into that liberal arts education by acquainting you with important rules, processes, and practices used in our society and by offering an understanding of our history, traditions, challenges, policies, and choices.

Early Alert takes place in the fourth or fifth week of the semester. We do this to make students in danger of performing poorly in a class aware of their status and to suggest that you take advantage of additional resources offered to boost your grade.

Expectations: Barring a documented medical necessity or a pre-approved University-sanctioned event, tests must be taken on time. All tests must be taken to pass the course. All written work is to be your own, unless you are explicitly instructed to work together.

Academic Honesty: A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Assignments are designed to work on these very things. Taking others' work as your own, having others do work for you or copying their answers, quoting or paraphrasing without attribution, and other forms of academic dishonesty short-circuit the

learning process and are not acceptable. Plagiarism is using others' ideas without giving them credit. Most of it is inadvertent; some is intentional; some covers a small amount of text, others involve a whole paper. If you have plagiarized, University rules require me to meet with you, to show you what I believe has occurred and ask you for your explanation. Examples of academic dishonesty and possible sanctions are here (see UWS 14.03 and 14.04): <https://www.uwosh.edu/stuaff/images/Chapter%20UWS%2014.pdf>

Office Hours on MS Teams: The Political Science Department uses Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) for holding office hours. This system is available to all UWO students. Faculty will be available during the hours noted on your syllabus. When logging into MS Teams, look closely at the status symbols for your instructor. A green dot by the professor's icon (which may be their picture or their initials) means they are available. A red dot means they are busy. Generally, you are able to join office hour meetings and talk openly in the forum or use the chat function freely. At times, your instructor may be in a private meeting with a student during office hours, and will mark my availability as "busy" (a red dot).

We hope that using MS Teams for office hours for all of our courses will help students become more accustomed to virtual office hours during the pandemic. *The main point to remember is that we are available to you. Please use our office hours freely and often. We are here to help.* I am also happy to set up meetings outside of my office hours if you have a conflict with the posted times.

Class Quality and Feedback: The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at kruegerj@uwosh.edu. Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

Disability Accommodations: It is the policy and practice of UW Oshkosh to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 920-424-3100 or dean1@uwosh.edu. For more information, visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website at: <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/disability-services>.

Note: If any major changes are made to this schedule and these policies, I will announce them in a timely manner via your UW Oshkosh email account and make a revised syllabus available.

The following URL contains a description of students' consumer protection rights required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>

Political Science majors (and prospective majors): You should be taking Political Methodology (PS 245) in your sophomore year (or, if you cannot, in the first semester of your junior year at the latest). PS 245 is a prerequisite for our capstone course Political Analysis (PS 401) and cannot be taken concurrently with PS 245. You should save all your graded work from this class and the others in the major.