

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH

POLITICAL SCIENCE 105 (001C)

A USP EXPLORE COURSE | 3 CREDITS

FALL 2021 | MWF 10:20–11:20 | SAGE 3232

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT



PROFESSOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the organization, principles, and actual workings of the American national government in all its branches. The centerpiece of the course is institutions—congress, presidency, courts, and agencies. The course examines the Constitutional framework within which the system operates, including federalism, civil rights, and civil liberties. Considerable attention is given to social and political elements that influence institutions, such as voting and citizen participation, interest groups, media, and political parties. The course also examines institutional outputs (policies), especially social policies related to race, gender, socio-economic status, and sexuality. There are no prerequisites for his course. This is an Explore course in the University Studies Program with the XS (Society) designation.

OFFICE HOURS

My office is Sage 4619. I am available during office hours MWF 11:30–12:30 or by appointment.

TEXT AND READINGS

We the People: An Introduction to American Government, 14th Edition (Thomas E. Patterson)
ISBN: 9781264085668.

The loose-leaf textbook includes a Connect access code, an online supplement for weekly quizzes. Additional readings are provided to students at no additional cost.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course-Specific Learning Goals

Describe major components of the American political system, emphasizing institutions

Discuss with classmates issues related to civil rights

Evaluate policy outcomes using a constitutional framework

Critically evaluate political ideologies and apply ideological frameworks to students' political and policy views.

Political Science Department Learning Goals

Understand and apply theory frameworks

Apply theoretical arguments and to explain or predict political phenomena

Understand and explain contemporary politics

Connect theory and history to answer “big questions” facing contemporary politics

Analyze and explain political behavior, patterns, & events

Use evidence in a variety of forms to construct arguments

Communicate effectively

Express information in ways accessible and appropriate to different audiences

INCLUSION

Law and politics affect all people irrespective of political affiliation, socio-economic status, gender, sex, race, sexuality, national origin, ethnicity, veteran status, religion, physical or learning ability, and other characteristics with which students commonly identify. So, I use inclusive pedagogies to foster input from everyone. *Input from all students is valued and expected.*

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

My classes are free speech zones. Say anything you want to say. No topic or viewpoint is off limits. Exercising freedom of speech carries the burden of being responsible for your speech. Similarly, exercising silence carries the burden of being responsible for your silence.

“Freedom of expression would not truly exist if the right could be exercised only in an area that a benevolent government has provided as a safe haven for crackpots. The Constitution says that Congress (and the States) may not abridge the right to free speech. This provision means what it says. We properly read it to permit reasonable regulation of speech-connected activities in carefully restricted circumstances. But we do not confine the permissible exercise of First Amendment rights to a telephone booth or the four corners of a pamphlet, or to supervised and ordained discussion in a school classroom.”

– *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (No. 21) (393 U.S. 503, 513, 1969)

CLASSROOM MASK REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to wear an appropriate face mask that covers their mouth and nose when they are in the classroom. Students who have a medical condition prohibiting them from wearing a face mask may present written documentation from their health care provider, stating that the individual cannot wear a face mask. Students must present this documentation to the Accessibility Center in the Dean of Students office. In these situations, face shields will be provided to that student through the Risk & Safety Office upon request from the Accessibility Center.

UWO procedure dictates that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, an instructor cannot begin class until all students are wearing a mask properly. If a student is non-compliant with the masking policy and also refuses to leave the classroom promptly when requested, the instructor is required to cancel class. Students responsible for class cancellation for these reasons will be referred to the Dean of Students office, and the student will be unable to attend class until they meet with the Dean of Students. The student may be dropped from the class by the Dean of Students.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected and required. I take attendance at the beginning of class, mainly to learn student names. Because participation in discussions and activities is required, you should remember that you cannot participate if you are absent. Absences are sometimes necessary, but it is unnecessary to contact me about absences unless it is an extended absence.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I use the 93/90/87 grading scale for this course.

A 93–100 B 83–86 C 73–76 D 63–66
A- 90–92 B- 80–82 C- 70–72 D- 60–62
B+ 87–89 C+ 77–79 D+ 67–69 F 0–59

Participation (25%)

Good participation means students read and prepare before class and actively participate in discussions. Participation comfort levels vary substantially. At one end of the spectrum, students fear public speaking (more than death) and prefer to remain anonymous in class. These students should work actively to overcome this fear. On the other end of the spectrum are gunners. Gunners are eager to speak and tend to dominate conversation. These students should be mindful that learning involves active listening and should provide others an opportunity to speak. Quality of participation is as important as quantity. Students receive the best participation grades when they demonstrate critical thinking and assimilate complex ideas, including classmates' ideas, across a range of topics. These participators contribute meaningfully to the learning of others, including the professor. There are formal participation opportunities, including group presentations.

Exams (2 exams x 25% each = 50%)

Exams will be a combination of objective, short answer, and essay questions.

Connect Quizzes (25%)

Students take regular quizzes in *Connect*. In *Connect*, there is a folder for each chapter. In each folder there is a quiz and several review exercises. Review exercises are optional; quizzes are required.

EARLY ALERT

During the fifth week of classes, you will receive by e-mail notice about your progress in this course. This is called *Early Alert*. Early Alert helps you evaluate your study skills and class attendance so you know if you are on the right track. If you need to make changes, there are tons of resources available. Early Alert grades are not permanent and do not appear on your transcript.

DEADLINES AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Turn in assignments on the due dates. Students who miss assignments will be excused only for university-approved reasons (e.g., documented illness, family death, university-sponsored activity).

CONNECT

To access Connect, you need the *Connect Access Code* that comes with your textbook if you purchased it at the campus bookstore. You can also purchase an access code online when you register. Register with Connect [here](#). You can get *temporary access* at no charge for fourteen days. Just be sure to register with an access code sometime within the 14-day period to keep your files. Further questions about Connect? Start [here](#).

EXPLORE COURSES, LIBERAL EDUCATION, AND SOCIETY

This course is an Explore course for the University Studies Program. The Explore classes are designed to provide a solid foundation for the rest of your education here, no matter which major you choose. For further information about the unique general education at UW Oshkosh and the other USP courses that are available, visit the University Studies Program website at uwosh.edu/usp.

Liberal education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

This course supports the foundation of a liberal education. Namely, it provides students with a framework for social responsibilities connected with participating in a democratic society. As such this explore course fits the XS category (Society) for USP requirements.

QUIZ GUIDELINES

1. All quizzes are posted and taken in *Connect*.
2. You may use textbooks for quizzes. Quiz questions are based on textbook material.
3. Quizzes are automatically graded. As soon as you finish each quiz, you receive your grade.
4. You may take each quiz *up to three times* before the deadline. I record the grade from your *highest* attempt. Questions are pulled randomly from a pool. If you take a quiz more than once, some questions differ.
5. Quizzes are *due at 10:00 AM before the class when we discuss that chapter*. Quizzes are available well ahead of due dates.
6. I drop the lowest quiz grade at the end of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Expectations for Academic Honesty: A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work

alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. More information can be found [here](#).

UWO is committed to academic integrity for all students. System guidelines state, "Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors." We expect students to review and adhere to procedures related to academic honesty as outlined in Chapter UWS 14, Wisconsin Administrative Code, available on the Dean of Students website [here](#). Students should direct specific questions regarding the code (and institutional procedures approved to implement the code) to the Dean of Students Office.

STUDENT CONSUMER INFORMATION

Students should see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990 available [here](#).

GRIEVANCES

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback 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.

NOTE TO POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore or first semester of their junior year. PS245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

UWO provides reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. We accommodate *flexibly* and *individually*. Register with *Accessibility Services* or Project Success to get an accommodation recommendation form.

Accessibility Services

125 Dempsey Hall
(920) 424-3100
dean1@uwosh.edu

[Accessibility Services Website](#)

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Changes to the schedule are inevitable, especially in a course on American government and politics where current events drive our focus and discussions. Changes to the schedule will be communicated in class or through e-mail. If substantive changes are made, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available.

Week 1 (Sept 6): Introductions and Course Overview

- Syllabus Review, Using Connect and Canvas
- Pre-Assessment (What do you already know about American government and politics?)

Week 2 (Sept 13): Political Thinking and Political Culture

- Political Thinking and Culture (chapter 1)
- Model of American Political System
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 1

Week 3 (Sept 20): Constitutional Democracy and Federalism

- Constitutional Democracy (chapter 2)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 2
- Federalism (chapter 3)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 3

Week 4 (Sept 27): Civil Liberties

- Civil Liberties (chapter 4)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 4

Week 5 (Oct 4): Civil Rights

- Equal Rights (chapter 5)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 5

Week 6 (Oct 11): Student Projects and Presentations**Week 7 (Oct 18): Wrap-up, Review and Midterm Exam****Week 8 (Oct 25): Public Opinion and Political Participation**

- Public Opinion/Political Socialization (chapter 6)
- Political Participation (chapter 7)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 6 and Ch. 7

Week 10 (Nov 1): Political Parties, Campaigns & Elections

- Parties, Candidates, & Campaigns (chapter 8)
- Discussion: Political parties and small town gas stations (rational choice model)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 8
- Video Lecture: [Campaigns & Elections](#) (Patterson)

Week 11 (Nov 8): Congress

- Congress (chapter 11)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 11

Week 12 (Nov 15): Presidency

- The Presidency (chapter 12)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 12
- Video Lectures
[Presidents & Domestic Policy](#) and [Presidents & Foreign Policy](#) (Patterson)

Week 13 (Nov 22): Agencies & Thanksgiving Break

- The Federal Bureaucracy (chapter 13)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 13
- Thanksgiving Break: Nov 24-28

Week 14 (Nov 29): Courts

- The Federal Judicial System (chapter 14)
- Connect Quiz for Ch. 14

Week 14 (Dec 6): Policy and Current Events

- Readings TBD

Week 15 (Dec 13): Wrap-up, Review, and Final Exam