

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Department of Political Science



**WHERE IS YOUR
PROFESSOR?**

DR. AMBER LUSVARDI

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

SHE/HER/HERS

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About This Class

American Government and Politics

Classroom: Fox Main 1847 point to point with FDL C- 102

Class times: MWF 9:10-10:10 3

credit hours

About Office Hours

My office hours are time set aside specifically for you. We can discuss course content, any barriers you are facing, or broader questions about political science. If you are not available during my office hours, please let me know and I can accommodate you.

Office Hours: 10:20 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays in person (preferred) or via Teams



What to Know

Getting Started in this Course

Political science is a social science - sciences that study human and social behavior. In political science we are particularly interested in power. As Harold Laswell said, "Who Gets What, When, and How?"

In this course, we will look at the foundations of American Government (the Constitution, political institutions) as well as the role that outside parties (voters, the media, interest groups) play in American politics.

Strategies for Success



Check your Canvas page. There, you will see due dates reflected on your calendar, can see your updated grades, and can access course readings and assignment rubrics.



If you find you are not performing as well as you would like in this course or your courses generally, please reach out to me. I can help to accommodate you or see if we can address any barriers you are experiencing together.



Class attendance is the greatest predictor of academic success in college (Crede, Roche, and Kieszczynka 2010). I count on your attendance as a valued member of this class. If you are not attending class regularly, I will reach out to you for an office hours meeting.



Course Description

Organization, principles and actual working of the American National Government in all its branches.

About this Course

The course will help students better understand the human experience by examining structures established and redefined by the American people. We will discuss the foundations of government, the branches of government, linkage institutions, and, citizen participation in government. Three themes running through the course are America's democracy, the structure of institutions, and American political culture.

"A Nation that isn't Broken, but Simply Unfinished-"

Amanda Gorman

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should have a solid ability to:

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

Required Textbook

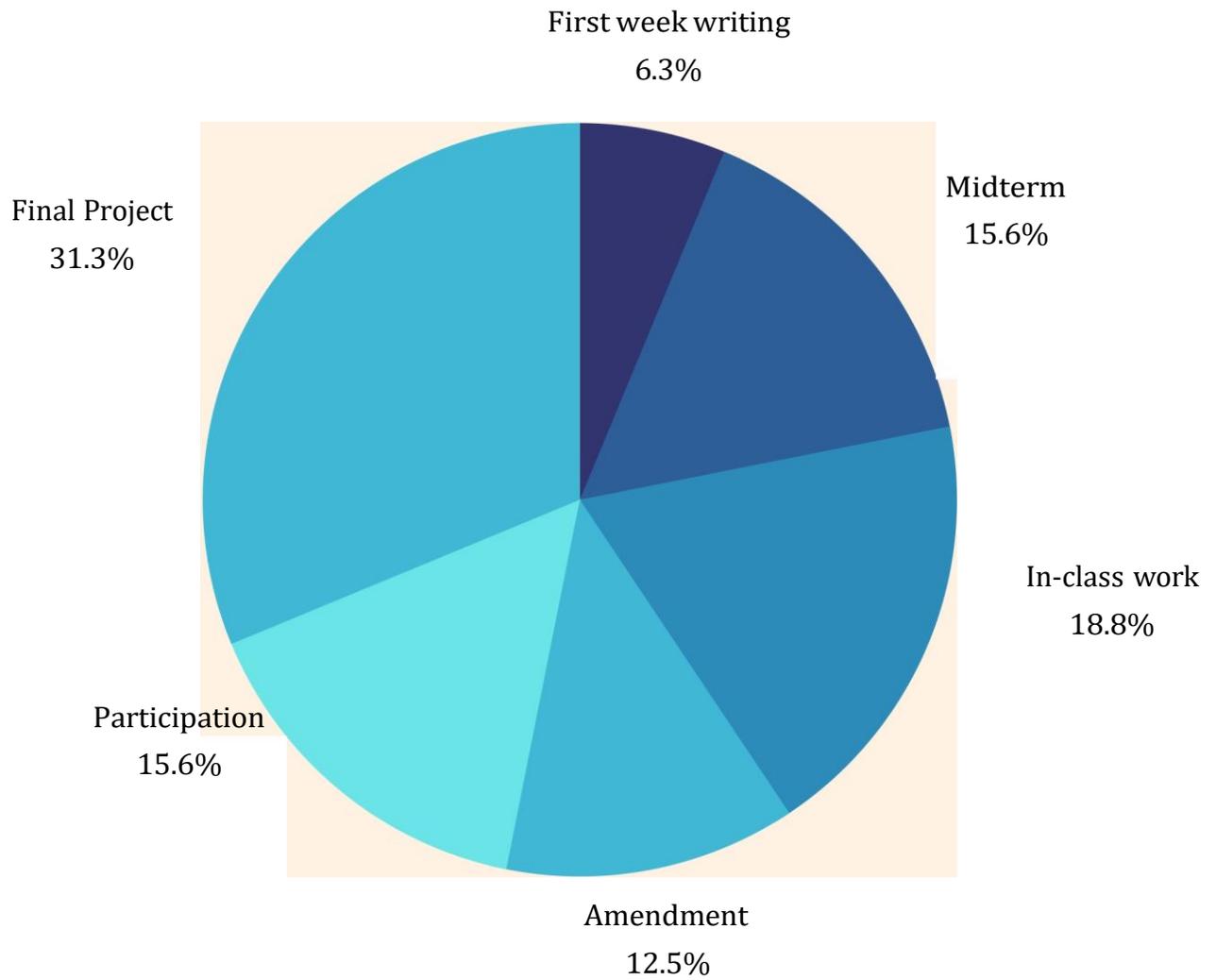
We the People, Essentials Edition.
Ginsberg et al. ISBN 978-0-393-53887-8

All other reading materials will be supplied via Canvas.



ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be based on a first-week writing assignment, midterm, an amendment assignment, in-class activities, participation, and a final project.



Assignments

First-week writing assignment (20) - I will provide you a prompt on our first day of class to help you reflect on how to best be a successful student during this semester. You have a week to complete your two-page typed response. Due Sept. 12.

Midterm (50) - The midterm exam (Oct. 24) will cover content from the first half of the semester and include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

In-Class Activities (6X10) - Throughout the course of the semester, I will give you activities to either do in class or something I want you to bring to class to share. Each of these is worth 10 points.

Amendment assignment (40) - It has been 30 years since the last amendment to the U.S. Constitution (27th) was ratified. Imagine you are a member of Congress and you plan to propose a new amendment to the Constitution. What would you do? You will write a proposed amendment to the Constitution with a two-page justification (with citations) for why it is needed. You will write one page on how you think your amendment will be received in the states, considering state ideological leanings. Due Oct. 14.

Participation (50) - You are present and active in class and free from distractions. If you need to miss class, you communicate with your professor. We will have a check-in at mid-semester. At the end of the semester, you will submit a paragraph in which you grade yourself on participation for the semester (I may or may not accept your grade).

Final project (100) - This project will combine elements you have learned throughout the semester about parties, ideologies, presidential politics, and campaigns and elections. You will create a new political party and write the party platform, introduce your candidate, write a campaign speech, and a campaign poster. You will introduce this to the class during the final week.

** Detailed descriptions and rubrics of all assignments are on Canvas.

Grading Scale

Your final grades are calculated by points earned/total points.

100-97 - A+

97-94 - A

93-90 - A-

89-87 - B+

84-86 - B

80-83 - B-

79-77 - C+

76-74 - C

73-70 - C-

69-67 - D+

66-64 - D

63-60 - D-

59 and below - failing

Weekly Schedule

Sept. 7 & 9

Introduction: American Political Culture, WTP Chapter 1, "Forget Norms, Our Democracy Depends on Values" (Julia Azari)

Sept. 12, 14, & 16

Constitution: WTP Chapter 2, Ologies Podcast "Nomology", in-class activity: Pin the Tail on the Constitution

Sept. 19, 21, & 23

Federalism: WTP Chapter 3, "States Divided: The Implications of American Federalism for Covid-19" (Kettl)

Sept. 26, 28, & 30

Civil Liberties: WTP Chapter 4, "Some Truths are not Self-Evident" (Howard Zinn)

Oct. 3, 5, & 7

Civil Rights, WTP Chapter 5, "Black America and the Dilemma of Patriotism" (Brian Gilmore)

Oct. 10, 12, & 14

Public Opinion: WTP Chapter 6

Oct. 17, 19, & 21

The Media: WTP Chapter 7, "Americans are too Worried about Misinformation"
(McGregor & Kreiss)

Mid-semester check-in, Midterm preparation

Oct. 24, 26, & 28

Oct. 24 - Midterm exam

The media, continued

Oct. 31, Nov. 2, & 4

Political Parties: WTP Chapter 8, "Why Andrew Yang's New Third Party is Bound to Fail." (Janelle Bouie).

Nov. 7, 9, & 11

Participation, Campaigns, and Elections, WTP Chapter 9

Nov. 14, 16, & 18

Congress: WTP Chapter 10, "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent Yes." (Jane Mansbridge)

Nov. 21

Catch up week

Nov. 28, 30, & Dec. 2

President: WTP Chapter 11

Dec. 5, 7, & 9

Supreme Court: WTP Chapter 13, "The Supreme Court Hasn't Followed Public Opinion for 50 Years. Why Would it Start Now?" (Washington Post)

Dec. 12, 14, & 16

Final project presentations

Note: If substantive changes are made in course syllabus, such as changes in schedule or assignments, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available.

All About YOU

You have the right to be called by whatever name and pronouns you prefer.

You are a valued member of this class. Your experience as part of this class is important to me. If you are experiencing barriers to your success in this course, please reach out to me so I can assist you or can help you find the correct resources.

On Language

Each person in this course is a valued member of the group and you should feel free to share your experiences as they are relevant to this class. No student in this class is ever expected or believed to speak for all members of a group. Do be thoughtful and inclusive in your language when adding to class discussion.

What About My Technology

You will never be required to bring a laptop or tablet to class. I discourage students from the use of laptops or tablets in my courses due to the extensive research that shows it to be a hindrance to learning and a distraction to classmates (see Dontre 2020). It is your choice whether to use your laptop/tablet while we are taking notes, but it should be stowed away at other times. As engagement and discussion are important, please refrain from wearing headphones during class.

Note to Poli Sci Majors

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Political Science 245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. It is open to students at any level and in all majors, and is the first in a series of introductory courses in Political Science. In Introduction to Comparative Politics (84:101) we introduce students to the democratic and non-democratic political systems of several different states (e.g., Germany, China, Iran), taking a look inside each one to determine how they function. In Introduction to American Politics (84:105), we give students an in-depth look at the working of the American system of government. And in Introduction to International Relations (IR; 84:115), we show you how states work with and against each other in the global system. Political Science majors are required to take all three, but they stand independently so that non- majors can benefit from them as well.

Student Right to Know

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>

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.

Disability Statement

This course is for all UWO students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that could negatively impact one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space or content of this course, please contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I am happy to discuss how to best accommodate you. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessibility Center in Dempsey Hall 215 or at accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu for further assistance.

Grievance Statement

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.