



University of Wisconsin Oshkosh at Fox Cities

American Government and Politics (POL 105)

About your Professor:

Dr. Amber Lusvardi
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Pronouns: She/her/hers

Find me:

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Department website:
<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/>

About this class:

American Government & Politics
POL 105-004/5
3 credit hours
When: MWF 9:10-10:10 a.m.
Where: Fox M1845 & PTP at FDL C-102
How long: Sept. 6-Dec. 15

“Can I ask you a question?”



About Student Hours:

My student hours are time set aside specifically for you. We can discuss course content, any barriers you are facing, or broader questions about political science. I highly encourage students use this available time to discuss their class progress or college journey. If you are not available during my office hours, please let me know and I can accommodate you.

Student Hours

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays (Fox) and 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Thursday (Oshkosh) in person (preferred) or via Teams.





Struggling? Find me!
On Canvas
Via E-mail
In person: Sage
4619 (Osh), M1502
(Fox)

Mental Health Help:
uwosh.edu/counseling
Call/Text: 888- 531-2142
Emergency: Text 988

The best predictor of student success is **class attendance.**

Check Canvas:
Announcements
Messages
Rubrics
Prompts
Readings



“A Nation That Isn’t Broken – But Simply Unfinished”

Amanda Gorman, Youth Poet Laureate

What to Know 🧠

Getting Started in this Course

“Are you ready for it?”

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 as well as the role that outside parties play in American politics.

Strategies for Success

- ✓ Check your Canvas page regularly for dates, grades, and assignments.
- ✓ 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.

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, 14th Essentials Edition. Ginsberg et al. ISBN 978-0-393- 53887-8

All other reading materials will be supplied via Canvas.

Grades

Your final grade will be based on a first-week writing assignment, in-class activities, online quizzes, Constitution assignment, voter registration assignment, final project, and final self-assessment.

There is a five-day grace period on all assignment submissions. After that, *no submissions will be accepted* without first meeting with me.

Assignments

First-week writing assignment (20) - I will provide 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.

In-Class Activities (4 X 10) - 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.

Constitution Assignment (40) – The United States Constitution was written in 1787 and has been in continuous use since then, making it the oldest living Constitution in the world. This is your chance to modernize the Constitution. You will take a Word doc of the Constitution (available on Canvas) and make edits in Track Changes. Your motivation is to improve the Constitution and to reflect the type of democratic structure you prefer.

Extended quizzes (3 x 25): We will have three essay quizzes completed via Canvas to assess what information and themes you have taken from the course. I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Voter registration information (40): You will create some creative piece of media that is sharable that informs your peers (broadly defined) on how to become a Wisconsin voter. We will share and discuss as a class.

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.

Final Self-assessment (50) – This final assignment will ask you to evaluate your own learning over the course of the semester. To consider: What are the most important concepts you learned this semester? How do they help you understand the social world? What is something you did that you are proud of?

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

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.

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. 6, 8: Introduction: American Political Values, WTP Chapter 1, "Forget Norms, Our Democracy Depends on Values" (Julia Azari)

Sept. 11, 13, 15: Constitution: WTP Chapter 2, Ologies Podcast "Nomology", in-class activity: Pin the Tail on the Constitution

Sept. 18, 20, 22: Federalism: WTP Chapter 3, "States Divided: The Implications of American Federalism for Covid-19" (Kettl)

Sept. 25, 27, 29: Civil Liberties: WTP Chapter 4, "Some Truths are not Self-Evident" (Howard Zinn)
Extended Quiz 1

Oct. 2, 4, 6: Civil Rights, WTP Chapter 5, "Black America and the Dilemma of Patriotism" (Brian Gilmore)

Oct. 9, 11, 13: Public Opinion: WTP Chapter 6

Oct. 16, 18, 20: The Media: WTP Chapter 7, "Americans are too Worried about Misinformation" (McGregor & Kreiss)

Oct. 23, 25, 27: The media, continued, *Extended Quiz 2*

Oct. 30, Nov. 1, 3: Political Parties: WTP Chapter 8, "Joe Manchin is Dreaming." (Janelle Bouie).

Nov. 6, 8, 10: Participation, Campaigns, and Elections, WTP Chapter 9

Nov. 13, 15, 17: Congress: WTP Chapter 10, "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent Yes." (Jane Mansbridge)

Week of Nov. 20: Reading week, Thanksgiving break

Nov. 27, 29, Dec. 1: President: WTP Chapter 11, *Extended Quiz 3*

Dec. 4, 6, 8: Supreme Court: WTP Chapter 13, "The Supreme Court Hasn't Followed Public Opinion for 50 Years. Why Would it Start Now?" (Washington Post)

Dec. 11, 13, 15: Final project presentations

All About YOU

The author bell hooks writes in *Teaching to Transgress*, "The professor must genuinely value everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources" (8). In this spirit, I affirm that without exception every person is a valued member of this class. Your experience and contribution as a member of this class is important to me. If you are experiencing barriers that are preventing you from being a fully present member of this group, please come speak to me.

All About Others

The scholar Brené Brown says (paraphrased) that we cannot understand other people's point of view by pretending to walk in their shoes. This is insufficient because we are only imagining what they have experienced. It is better to actually listen to other people. Listen to them and believe them about their experiences. This is where understanding begins.

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.

In other words: *Hi! Don't be the problem.*

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.

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/>

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.

Caregiver statement:

I recognize that some of you may be caregivers to others (siblings, children, partners, parents, etc.) and that places an added consideration to your availability. If you are a caregiver, please reach out to me if there are additional ways that I can support you.

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.

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.

Artificial Intelligence statement:

Increasingly the use of AI programs such as ChatGPT are used to assist in generating ideas and responding to writing and editing prompts. However, the goal of our course is to be intellectually curious and grow our writing and critical thinking skills. As such, I expect anything written for class to be generated by you from the idea stage to the writing stage.

Course Prerequisites:

None – this course is open to students at any level and in all majors and is the first in a series of introductory courses in Political Science.

Fond du Lac dates:

Sept. 15, Oct. 6 & 13, Nov. 3 & 10, Dec. 1

Early Alert:

A few weeks into the semester your instructors will send you an early alert message if they think that you are struggling with class. This message will let you know whether your instructors have noticed any academic problems, attendance problems, or both. When you get such a message it is a chance to address a problem and improve on your work. We suggest meeting with your instructor.

