

# PS 105: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh  
Spring Semester 2024  
Class meets online asynchronously  
**3 CREDITS**

Associate Professor James Krueger  
Department of Political Science  
Office: 4621 Sage Hall  
Office hours: T 10-11:30(ON TEAMS), W  
10-11:30 (IN PERSON), and by appointment  
e-mail: [kruegerj@uwosh.edu](mailto:kruegerj@uwosh.edu)

## Course Description:

This course examines the organization, principles and actual working of the American National Government in all its branches.

Through this class we will ask: What are the underlying values, theories of government, and compromises which make up our public institutions? How do these institutions and the perspectives of those who engage them combine to produce our public policy? How can you, as a citizen-activist, participate effectively in our democracy? To begin answering these questions, we will examine the relationship between citizens and their government in the United States, with an emphasis on the many ways in which individuals participate in the political process. The product of our class will be a deeper understanding of the issues, institutions, and inputs to government, and how we can influence them. As members of a democratic society, we cannot escape the influence of government on our lives, but we can affect how it does so.

This course is categorized as Explore-Society for the University Studies Program.

This course has no prerequisites.

## 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.
- Learn how to effectively influence local, state, national, and international public policy processes
- Improve written and oral communication skills

## Course Readings:

-Ginsberg, et al. *We The People ESSENTIALS* 14th Edition, Norton. *Students do NOT need access to Inquisitive for this course.*

-Additional required readings will be available on Canvas.

## Online Course Adjustments:

-This course will be taught online via our class Canvas Page. For help with Canvas, check the help page: <https://uwosh.edu/online/current-students/canvas-information/>

-Lectures and class assignments will be completed asynchronously. Weekly lectures and other materials will be posted ahead of each week's starting date (each Monday of the semester).

-Assignment deadlines are weekly and not flexible. Our format allows you to study when it is convenient for you each week, but assignments are due weekly and face a penalty if submitted late.

## Grading Scale and Assignments

I use a **93/90/87** grading scale in this course (which means that 93 is the cut-point for an A, 90 for an A-, 87 for a B+, etc.). Your grade will be determined by several assignments and exams, detailed as follows:

**Weekly Assignments (30%):** In weeks where no exam or essay are due, students will complete two short assignments. Assignments are due Sunday by midnight.

**Chapter Quizzes:** Students will take a short quiz to test their reading comprehension. Questions will be multiple choice or true/false. Students may use their books and notes. Please do not use outside resources or work with others to complete the quizzes.

**Post and Share Assignment:** Students are asked to keep up with the news each week and post a story that connects to class along with a short summary of the story and a clear connection to that week's course material. More information will be provided in the Canvas module for Week 1.

**Exams: (65%):** Students will have three exams, each worth ~22% of their course grade. Exams consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and essay questions. All exams are open book and open note. Students are not allowed to work with others or use outside resources. The exams will be **due: March 10, April 14, and May 17.**

## Political Partisanship and Ideology Reflection (5%):

-Begin by learning about yourself: complete the following two quizzes, record their results, and comment on how well your beliefs fit with your party identification.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/?group=b8a39d3100d35068c8da26067d31bb57>

<https://www.isidewith.com/>

-Then write a paper that answers these questions: You should address your ideology and partisanship in one paragraph and then evaluate how well they connect with one another. Is there a specific area where your ideology and partisanship diverge? How well does your ideology match what you heard during the lecture? How well do their policy goals align with yours? In which areas do you find agreement? Disagreement?

-Your paper should be 1-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Grades are determined not by what you believe, but by your ability to answer all questions and make connections between your quiz results and the talk. This paper is due on Canvas on **March 23** by midnight.

**Early Alert:** Early Alert is a program that provides you with an Early Grade Report from faculty. Early Grade Reports will indicate if you have academic performance or attendance issues and specific steps you can take and resources available to help you improve. It is common for students to be unaware of or over-estimate their academic performance in classes so this will help you be aware early on of your progress and provide strategies for success in the classroom. You will receive an email during the 5th week of classes. It is important to read the entire email carefully. Your early alert assignment for this class will be your Vision Wall reflection essay.

**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. (AAC&U; [http://www.aacu.org/leap/What\\_is\\_liberal\\_education.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/What_is_liberal_education.cfm)) Our approach to liberal education is articulated through the University Studies Program, but is similar to the general education programs of all other four year universities.

**The University Studies Program:** The University Studies Program (USP) is your gateway to a 21st century college education at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. 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](http://uwosh.edu/usp) *The course also counts as the introductory course for the Political Science major and minor and the Civic Engagement minor.*

In this course, you are addressing your third Signature Question: **How do people understand and engage in community life?**

**What is Civic Learning?** Civic knowledge consists of an awareness and understanding of the various political and social processes that impact the nature and quality of life in local, state, national, or global communities. It also encompasses the cultivation of skills which may be useful in public life, like effective communication and ethical reasoning. Civic engagement means having an appreciation for and applying the values gained from civic knowledge in real world settings, directed at improving the quality of life in the communities of which one is a part. Civic knowledge and civic engagement emphasize learning, reflection, and action in order to create better communities. The **UW Oshkosh Center for Civic and Community Engagement** is located in Pollock House (across from Albee Hall on Algoma) at 765 Algoma Boulevard. The University Studies Program is located in the same space. Our class will help create programming for the Center and attend their events. In doing so we will work with the Center's Director, Mike Lueder, and student Civic Influencers and Civic Engagement Interns. More information about the Center is available here: <http://uwosh.edu/community-engagement/students-community/>.

**Campus Resources:** In the University Studies Program, we want you to be successful. Below is a list of campus services available to support your success. More information about these resources is available at: <http://www.uwosh.edu/home/resources>

**Center for Academic Resources:** The Center for Academic Resources (CAR) provides free, confidential tutoring for students in most undergraduate classes on campus. CAR is located in the Student Success Center, Suite 102. Check the Tutor List page on CAR's website ([www.uwosh.edu/car](http://www.uwosh.edu/car)) for a list of tutors. If your course is not listed, click on a link to request one, stop by SSC 102 or call 424-2290. To schedule a tutoring session, simply email the tutor, let him/her know what class you are seeking assistance in, and schedule a time to meet.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center helps students of all ability levels improve their writing. Trained peer consultants help writers understand an assignment, envision possibilities for a draft, and improve their writing process. They even help writers learn to identify their own proofreading errors. Students can make a free appointment or stop by to see whether a consultant is available. For more information, view their website (<http://www.uwosh.edu/wcenter>), call 920-424-1152, email [wcenter@uwosh.edu](mailto:wcenter@uwosh.edu), or visit them in Suite 102 of the Student Success Center.

**Reading Study Center:** The Reading Study Center is an all-university service whose mission is to facilitate the development of efficient college-level learning strategies in students of all abilities. The center offers strategies for improved textbook study, time management, note-taking, test preparation, and test-taking. For more information, email [readingstudy@uwosh.edu](mailto:readingstudy@uwosh.edu), view the website (<http://www.uwosh.edu/readingstudycenter>), visit them in Nursing Ed Room 201, or call 424-1031.

**Polk Library/Information Literacy:** You have been introduced to Information Literacy in your Quest Speaking and Writing courses. As a reminder, Polk Library offers many professional librarians who can help you find library resources for your research. Specifically, Ted Mulvey, the Information Literacy Librarian, is available to assist you as you access, evaluate, and use information in University Studies Program classes. Phone: 920-424-7329; email: [mulveyt@uwosh.edu](mailto:mulveyt@uwosh.edu). You may also set up a research advisory session with a librarian at: [rap@uwosh.edu](mailto:rap@uwosh.edu).

**Late Papers and Make-Up Exams:** You have several assignments due in this class. No extensions will be given on these assignments unless you are subject to one of the three excused absence instances above (hospitalization, death in the family, and required school activities) and can give me proof of this absence. All papers are subject to a penalty of one letter grade for each day they are late. You are welcome to turn the project in early if you are unable to on the day the assignment is due.

Please note that computer problems are not accepted excuses for late papers. You should always, always, always back up your work and allow plenty of time for submission.

I will give a make-up exam in one of the excused absence circumstances above, but also with good reason if you know beforehand, provided you tell me you need a make-up exam *at least one week* in advance of the test. For instance, if you know at the beginning of class you must be out of town for a family event, I will give you a make-up if you tell me a week or more before the test date. The make-up test will contain different questions than the test given in class.

**Office Hours:** Some of my office hours are held on Microsoft Teams (MS Teams). This system is available to all UWO students. I 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 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. Many faculty are also happy to set up meetings outside of office hours if students have conflicts with the posted times.

**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:

<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>

*Use of ChatGPT or other AI services:* Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not permitted for any stage or phase of work in this class. All written work submitted for this course must be completed by you, personally. *You may not use AI tools to draft your work, even if you edit, revise, or paraphrase it.* Use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate text is strictly prohibited but you may use simple word processing tools to update spelling and grammar in your assignments. Submission of any content generated by AI will be considered a violation of academic integrity, including any AI-generated work that you have summarized or edited. The use of AI tools will be considered cheating and will be subject to the Academic Misconduct policy.

**Regrading:** I will be glad to take another look at a paper or test you feel is not graded fairly, with the following conditions: you must speak to me about it during my office hours or by appointment, you must wait 24 hours after the paper or exam is handed back, and you must tell me in writing why you think you deserved more points. The reason for this is that I would like for you to take the paper/exam home and carefully read and think over comments before we talk. If I feel your paper was graded unfairly, I'll change the grade in your favor, but I also reserve the right to lower your grade upon rereading the paper if, after reevaluation, I think you received too high a grade.

**Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments are given in the course calendar in this syllabus (below). Assigned reading for a class day is given as the "Reading Assignment" below each entry. I expect you to have done the reading for each class ahead of time, and I reserve the right to quiz you if I feel you are not doing the reading ahead of time. Reading assignments are subject to change, and any change will be announced in class.

**Other policies:** I check my email often, and I am happy to answer questions via email. However, please use proper grammar, punctuation, and communication when emailing your professor. If you fail to do so, I will ask you to try again. Also, I am not able to answer questions about grades unless you are using your Oshkosh email address. All class announcements will be sent to your Oshkosh address.

*Note to Political Science Majors:* Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. If you have questions about this requirement, your course schedule, possible internships, or career preparation please reach out to your faculty adviser. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisers at least once per year. If you are unsure who your adviser is, you can check TitanWeb or email Ms. Angelee Hammond at [hammond@uwosh.edu](mailto:hammond@uwosh.edu).

**Accommodations Policy:** It is university policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Please contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations you might need and provide appropriate documentation.

**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. Tracy Slagter. She can be reached at [slagtert@uwosh.edu](mailto:slagtert@uwosh.edu). Should she be unable to resolve your concerns, she will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

**Disclosure statement:** “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/>.”

**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.

### **Course Schedule:**

Each week is a separate course module in Canvas. Each module contains course readings, lectures, and assignments. Modules open Monday mornings and all assignments are due by midnight on Sunday. Students are encouraged to develop a weekly routine which works best for them. An example routine would be: Monday - Friday, complete assigned readings. Saturday, complete the chapter quiz. Sunday, complete the “Post and Share” news assignment. There are four weeks in which you have an exam or essay due instead of your regular weekly assignments. These are listed below in bold.

*Week 1: February 5 - 11*

*Course Introduction*

Read: Syllabus, Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 1

Complete: Chapter 1 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 2: February 12 - 18*

*The U.S. Constitution*

Read: U.S. Constitution (link on Canvas), Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 2

Complete: Chapter 2 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 3: February 19 - 25*

*Federalism*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 3

Complete: Chapter 3 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 4: February 26 - March 3*

*Civil Liberties*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 4

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHE08GSThZs>

Complete: Chapter 4 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 5: March 4 - 10*

*Civil Rights*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 5

**Complete: Submit Exam 1 (by Sunday at midnight) No quiz or “Post and Share” this week!**



*Week 6: March 11 - 17*

*Public Opinion*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 6,

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/01/09/tuning-out-americans-on-the-edge-of-politics/>

Complete: Chapter 6 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 7: March 18 - 22*

*The Media*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 7

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNmwwntMF5A&t=193s>

Complete: **Submit Ideology and Partisanship paper (by Sunday at midnight)**

**\*\*\* March 24-31 Spring Break \*\*\***

*Week 8: April 1 - 7*

*Parties and Interest Groups*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 8

Complete: Chapter 8 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 9: April 8 - 14*

*Elections*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 9

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpBRGXK-QNs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM2U3XAnv1k>

Complete: **Submit Exam 2 (by Sunday at midnight) No quiz or “Post and Share” this week!**

*Week 10: April 15 - 21*

*Congress*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 10, Libby “Roadmap to Lawmaking”

Complete: Chapter 10 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 11: April 22 - 28*

*The Presidency*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 11

Complete: Chapter 11 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 12: April 29 - May 5*

*The Bureaucracy*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 12

Complete: Chapter 12 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 13: May 6 - 12*

*The Courts*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 13

Listen: <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/02/1198908186/throughline-draft-11-02-2023>

Complete: Chapter 13 quiz and “Post and Share” news assignment (by Sunday at midnight)

*Week 14: May 13 - 17*

*Public Policy*

Read: Ginsberg, et al. Chapter 14

Complete: **Submit Exam 3 (by FRIDAY at midnight) No quiz or “Post and Share” this week!**