

POS 2041: American Politics

Fall 2022 – Section 81565

Building 52, Room 162 - MWF 10:00-10:50

Instructor: Aurora Osborn

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Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays from 11:00am-12:00pm and/or by appointment via GoogleMeet. Please email me to schedule appointments in advance.

Course Summary

This course is designed to introduce students to the main actors, institutions, and processes of U.S. national politics and the concepts that tie them together. We will explore the constitutional principles on which the republic was founded, the evolution of institutions which emerged after 1789, and the development of processes and policies in response to 20th Century challenges and changes in the political culture through the 21st Century. We will approach this material as social scientists, so our goal is not only to understand how American politics works, but to explain why government, the people who are part of it, and the citizens who influence it behave as they do.

Because we will approach American politics from the perspective of social scientists, the class will emphasize critical thinking and answering questions that start with “why.” Our goal will be to seek systematic explanations for the behavior of the people involved in politics and the structure of American political institutions, and to evaluate those explanations using evidence.

Much of the class will be used to discuss major questions in contemporary American politics (such as polarization, executive power, and campaign finance), and we will apply the material to current events. To make this work all students should come to class having studied the readings and previous lecture material and prepared to participate in the conversation. It is also helpful to keep up with current events in the U.S. as these will inevitably form a large part of our conversation.

Upon completion of the course, students will have a working knowledge of the constitutional concepts supporting the founding of the American republic as well as the development of institutions and extra-constitutional actors involved in and influencing the American political system.

COVID-19 Safety

Each of us shares responsibility for the health and safety of all in the classroom environment. This is always true, but never more so than during pandemic. Mask wearing and social distancing is not required. I encourage you to not attend class if you are sick, and to get the vaccine if you have not already done so. I will work with you if you need to miss class due to illness.

General Education Statement

American Politics is designated as a General Education course. The General Education curriculum at the University of West Florida is designed to provide a cohesive program of study

that promotes the development of a broadly educated person and provides the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in university studies. This course has been approved as meeting your requirement in the social sciences. The major General Education learning outcomes for this course are critical thinking and integrity/values. Students will learn and practice critical thinking through a political letter and integrity/values through a plagiarism quiz, which will be used to assess the General Education curriculum.

If you are interested in a major in political science, pre-law, or international affairs you should contact the Reubin O'D. Askew Department of Government at (850) 474-2929. If you are undecided about your major, you should contact your academic advisor or Career Services at 850-474-2254.

Learning Objectives

Students will develop and demonstrate:

- An understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.
- An understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.
- Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and *functions* of our institutions of self-governance.
- An understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.
- An ability to solve problems using social science methods.
- An ability to reason ethically in an appropriate disciplinary context.

Required Readings

Main Text: Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Wier, Caroline J. Tolbert, Andrea L. Campbell, and Robert J. Spitzer. *We The People: An Introduction to American Politics* (13th Essentials Edition), New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-393-53888-5
Referred to as “WTP” on syllabus.

Supplemental: Additional articles and supplemental sources may be provided via e-mail or linked in Canvas.

NOTE: The required book for this course is available on Reserve at the Circulation Desk at the John C. Pace Library for a 2-hour loan period (books must stay in the Library). Please take advantage of this resource, but keep in mind that copies of textbooks for each course are limited and may be in use by another student, particularly right before an assignment or reading is due, so plan your textbook use accordingly.

Canvas

We will use *Canvas* for our course website. Students will be able to find the syllabus (including any changes), assignments, drop boxes to turn them in, and most current grades on *Canvas*. Please inform me of any technical difficulties or if anything appears to be missing or incorrect on the website.

Course Policies

Student Responsibilities

Lateness and early departures are distracting to your classmates and your instructor. Please arrive on time and do not pack up before the end of class. Please exercise common courtesy by refraining from holding side conversations with your classmates during class time. If you are talking out loud to each other (not participating in class discussion), while I am trying to run a class, I will not be able to hear myself think – I'll be hearing you talk and your classmates will be distracted, as well. This is considered disruptive behavior and should be avoided.

Assigned readings are the core of the class material and it is necessary to have completed them in order to be prepared for class. Failure to do the reading not only harms you, but also your classmates who will not benefit from your insightful questions and comments if you are unprepared. In this class, we will cover topics that are controversial and about which people have strong feelings. I expect everyone to treat each other with respect even when we disagree. Respect is especially important regarding issues of identity such as race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran status, nationality, ethnicity, age, and disability.

Instructor Responsibilities

The same expectations of promptness, preparation, and respect that apply to you apply equally to me. In addition, I will give fair warning of any changes in the syllabus or schedule, and be available by appointment as much as possible. I have high expectations of my students, but am committed to being as available as possible to help you meet them.

Attendance

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class period by calling the roll, or (once I have learned your names) by silently marking you present or absent on my roster. Students may miss up to three classes free of penalty (aside from the missed material and participation), but any unexcused absences beyond three will result in a 3-percentage point penalty on the participation grade. Excused absences are those resulting from religious observances, legal and military obligations, extracurricular activities, illness, family emergency or other reasons accepted by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to inform me in advance when an absence is excused and to provide appropriate documentation upon returning.

Attendance is expected and will be documented for all students, including FTIC (first time in college) students, and for students who stop attending the class the last date of attendance will be reported to the university. Students should be aware that failure to attend class or cessation of attendance can affect financial aid.

Information for students who receive financial aid: To receive financial aid on the normal distribution timeline, attendance must be confirmed within seven calendar days of the course start date. A student may review confirmed attendance status by using the "My Classes" app in MyUWF. A student who stops attending class for any reason will not automatically be withdrawn and will still be responsible for any missed work. A student who stops attending class may be awarded a grade of NF. This grade may affect financial aid eligibility or require repayment of funds awarded.

Late Work

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized 10 percentage points (one letter grade) for every day they are late, with the penalty taking effect immediately after deadline.

Cheating/Plagiarism

The Student Code of Conduct sets forth the rules, regulations, and expected behavior of students enrolled at the University of West Florida. Violations of any rules, regulations, or behavioral expectations may result in a charge of violating the Student Code of Conduct. It is the student's responsibility to read the Student Code of Conduct and comply with these expectations.

The Academic Misconduct Policy defines various forms of academic misconduct and describes the procedures an instructor should follow when he or she suspects that a student has violated the Academic Misconduct Policy. In addition, students are required to complete two tutorials on academic integrity and take a quiz (see grade item below).

Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, devalues your work and that of your classmates. In addition to possible university sanctions, academic dishonesty will result in a zero on the assignment in question. Severe cases of plagiarism or cheating, defined as copying/stealing the majority of an exam or assignment, may result in a zero on the participation grade or an F in the class.

Email & Canvas Communications

Check your university email and the *Canvas Announcements* regularly, as any changes to the syllabus, schedule, or other relevant information will be communicated via email and/or *Canvas*. Please give me 48 hours to respond, but after 48 hours feel free to contact me again until you get a response.

Technology in Class

The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc. is permitted in class; however, research shows that people retain information better when they take notes by hand. Avoiding screens also allows for more meaningful and engaging conversation.

Disability

The University of West Florida supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos and podcasts, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with the Student Accessibility Resources (SAR). Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the individual. For information regarding the registration process, e-mail sar@uwf.edu or call 850.474.2387.

Religious Observances

Religious observances count as excused absences, but I need to be notified of these within the first three weeks of class so that we can reschedule any exams or due dates that may be affected.

Veterans Service Statement

The UWF Military & Veterans Resource Center (MVRC) serves as a leading campus advocate for military and veteran students, working to ensure the needs of these individuals are met through coordinating with multiple university offices and services. The center aids with the following: GI Bill ® education benefits, active duty tuition assistance, out of state fee waiver, tutoring, paper reading, counseling, disability accommodations, coordinating academic advising and referral to state /federal resources and services. The MVRC is located in bldg. 38. For more information on MVRC service, call 474-2550 or visit <http://uwf.edu/militaryveterans>

Counseling and Psychological Services

The university provides free counseling and psychological services to UWF students. Please take advantage of this if you want or need to. Visit the following webpage for more information. <https://uwf.edu/academic-engagement-and-student-affairs/departments/counseling-and-psychological-services/>

Career Development & Community Engagement

Career Development & Community Engagement (CDCE) is a free, on-campus resource designed to equip UWF students and alumni with the tools necessary for professional success. CDCE is located in Building 19 and offers resume reviews, assistance with your job or internship search, interviewing tips, and many other strategies to become career ready. For more information, check out Handshake (uwf.joinhandshake.com), visit uwf.edu/career or call 850-474-2254.

Writing Lab

The Writing Lab can help with the writing assignments in this course. Graduate and undergraduate Writing Lab assistants are available to review the mechanics of writing with you and help you upgrade the quality of your papers before you submit assignments.

Paper reading services are offered online and face-to-face either by appointment (through Navigate) or as walk-ins at the Main Lab (51/157) and at the satellite Writing Labs in the College of Business and College of Education. These services include face-to-face and online Interactive paper reading sessions as well as paper reading via the OWL/Online Writing Lab that allows students to place their to-be-edited papers in the Canvas dropbox.

Paper reading services, along with one-on-one and interactive group tutoring, the Grammar Hotline, and Real-Time writing assistance, are available during the Writing Lab's regular hours of operation from 10 to 5 daily and occasional weekends.

Note: It may take up to 48 hours or more to receive your work back from the Writing Lab. **It is your responsibility to turn your assignment in on time. Take this into consideration when utilizing the Writing Lab.**

Tutoring and Learning Resources

Tutoring and Learning Resources offers free services designed to help you improve your academic performance. Available services include Course-Based Tutoring, Study Skills Assistance, Academic Coaching, Academic Success Workshops, Smartpen Loans, and more.

Services are available in Building 52 and the 2nd Floor of Pace Library. For more information visit www.uwf.edu/tlr, email tutoring@uwf.edu, or call (850) 474-3176.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on performance on three exams, weekly discussions (participation), weekly quizzes, and two short writing assignments. Graded items are broken down as follows:

Plagiarism Quiz – 5%

Exam 1 – 15%

Exam 2 – 15%

Exam 3 – 15%

Assignment 1 – 15%

Assignment 2 – 15%

Weekly Quizzes – 10%

Participation – 10%

Plagiarism Quiz (5%): Follow this link to the UWF library's tutorial on the ethical use of sources: http://uwf.edu/library/research_help/using-sources-ethically/. Watch the videos called “Academic Integrity” and “Avoiding Plagiarism.” Then follow the link to the “Plagiarism Quiz” in the paragraph above the videos to take the quiz. The quiz has 10 questions. *Do not* take the quiz that is offered with each video. Only use the one from the link at the top of the “Using Sources Ethically” page. Enter *my* email address (aosborn@uwf.edu) at the top of the page when you take the quiz. I will get a confirmation that you took the quiz and will enter the grade. If you have taken the quiz and I have not uploaded the grade to Canvas within two days you should ask me if I got the confirmation.

Exams (15% each x 3 = 45%): Exams will be multiple choice and non-cumulative. You will take them on Canvas. Exams are 40 questions, timed (60 minutes) and once you begin an exam you must complete it, so prepare ahead of time. The third exam will be at the end of the last week of class.

Written Assignments (15% each x 2 = 30%): There will be two short essays due during the semester. The first assignment will ask you answer two out of four specific questions. The second assignment will ask you to write a persuasive letter on a political issue of your choosing, make an argument for that position, acknowledge the reasons some people disagree, and then find out how you would send it to a newspaper of elected official.

Weekly Quizzes (10% total): You will have a brief quiz to complete by the end of **Friday (11:59pm)** of each week on Canvas. The quizzes will be short (5 questions or fewer) and will come from the assigned reading. They are intended to be easy points for those who do the reading. *I do not accept late quizzes unless there are extenuating circumstances.*

Participation (10%): Participation may take many forms, but is centered on class discussion. I may occasionally provide a discussion question in advance so that everyone has time to think about it. Discussions will also often be informal and driven by topics that are particularly interesting to you. The most useful way to participate (in my opinion) is to ask questions.

All grades will be on the following scale:

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

Course Schedule

Week 1 Aug 22 (M) Aug 24 (W) Aug 26 (F)	Introductions, Drop/Add, Syllabus Guest: Diversity 101 with UWF Diversity Coordinator, Jade Doswell
Week 2 Aug 29 (M) Aug 31 (W) Sep 2 (F)	Ch 1: The Citizen & Government Ch. 1 Quiz due by 11:59pm; Plagiarism Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 3 Sep 5 (M) Sep 7 (W) Sep 9 (F)	Ch. 2: The Founding and the Constitution LABOR DAY – NO CLASS; Online Lecture Guest: Academic Integrity with UWF Librarian Melissa Gonzalez Online Lecture; Ch. 2 Quiz due by 11:59pm on Friday, September 9
Week 4 Sep 12 (M) Sep 14 (W) Sep 16 (F)	Ch 3: Federalism Ch.3 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 5 Sep 19 (M) Sep 21 (W) Sep 23 (F)	Ch 4: Civil Liberties & Ch 5: Civil Rights Ch. 4 & Ch. 5 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 6 Sep 26 (M) Sep 28 (W) Sep 30 (F) Oct 2 (Sun)	Ch 6: Public Opinion Guest: Civil Discourse with UWF Diversity Coordinator; Online Lecture Ch. 6 Quiz due by 11:59pm Exam 1 (Chs. 1-6) due by 11:59pm on Sunday, October 2

Week 7 Oct 3 (M) Oct 5 (W) Oct 7 (F) Oct 9 (Sun)	Ch 7: The Media Online Lecture (NO CLASS); Ch. 7 Quiz due by 11:59pm Assignment 1 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, October 9
Week 8 Oct 10 (M) Oct 12 (W) Oct 14 (F)	Ch 8: Political Parties and Interest Groups Ch. 8 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 9 Oct 17 (M) Oct 19 (W) Oct 21 (F)	Ch 9: Participation, Campaigns, and Elections Ch.9 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 10 Oct 24 (M) Oct 26 (W) Oct 28 (F) Oct 30 (Sun)	Ch 10: Congress Ch.10 Quiz due by 11:59pm Exam 2 (Chs.7-10) due by 11:59pm on Sunday, October 30
Week 11 Oct 31 (M) Nov 2 (W) Nov 4 (F)	Ch 11: The Presidency Online Lecture (NO CLASS); Ch.11 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 12 Nov 7 (M) Nov 9 (W) Nov 11 (F) Nov 13 (Sun)	Ch 12: The Bureaucracy VETERAN'S DAY – NO CLASS; Online Lecture; Ch.12 Quiz by 11:59pm Assignment 2 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, November 13
Week 13 Nov 14 (M) Nov 16 (W) Nov 18 (F)	Ch 13: The Federal Courts Ch. 13 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 14 Nov 21 (M) Nov 23 (W) Nov 25 (F)	Ch 14: Domestic Policy THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS; Online Lecture; Ch. 14 Quiz due by 11:59pm on Friday November 25
Week 15 Nov 28 (M) Nov 30 (W) Dec 2 (F)	Ch 15: Foreign Policy Ch. 15 Quiz due by 11:59pm
Week 16 Dec 5 (M) Dec 7 (W) Dec 9 (F)	Finals Week: Classes do not meet this week. Your only responsibility is to complete Exam 3 on time. Exam 3 (Chs.11-15) due by 11:59pm