

POLS 122: Introduction to American Government

Spring 2022

MWF 10:00-10:50

Morgan 316

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Office Hours (Virtual, Email, or Phone will be the default, but I can meet face to face with advanced notice in a larger room than my office):

MWF 11-Noon, Tuesday 4PM-5PM

(Please let me know 24 hours in advance if you would like to video chat over Zoom or Skype or set up a face to face meeting in a conference room).

Course Description:

American Government affects each of us on a daily basis. It is my hope that this class will help you to become more aware of your own interactions with government. Furthermore, this class will introduce you to various arguments about the size, scope, and functions of government. Finally, this course will introduce you to the institutions and organizations that carry out the work of governance.

Course Objectives, Your Responsibilities, and My Responsibilities

The most important course objective is to provide an environment in which genuine learning takes place. To this end, each of us has an obligation to read (and re-read if necessary) the assigned works prior to each course session. Additionally, each of us has an obligation to respectfully listen AND speak to other students and the professor. Finally, for each course meeting, we all must bring our questions and concerns related to the readings and discussions. In addition to, or perhaps in pursuit of, this overarching objective, the following outcomes are also desirable:

To identify about government institutions, organizations, actors, groups, and processes

To develop citizenship skills

To develop an appreciation for the many challenges and controversies in American government To have fun!

My commitment: I will be 100% available for any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions that you wish to proffer. You may call, e-mail, visit my office, or leave an anonymous note with the department's office manager at any point during the semester. I promise that I will do all I can to answer your questions and consider your suggestions to improve the course. This course is for YOU, so take advantage of these opportunities!
Your commitment: To attend each course session unless a major catastrophe or health concern prevents you from doing so; To come prepared to ask questions, offer insightful comments, and listen to your classmates. To offer the highest quality versions of your own original work for performance evaluation (grading).

Required Text:

Janda, et. al. *The Challenge of Democracy* (14th Edition). Cengage. ISBN: 9781305954922

Academic Integrity: Please refer to you undergraduate or graduate handbook for WIU’s policy on Academic Integrity (for Plagiarism and other forms of cheating). It is impossible to learn from one another if any of us recycle the ideas of others. Please turn in your own original work, use quotation marks “ “ when quoting a source, and use a recognized citation style (preferably APA). Please do not speak to one another during the course of an exam..

Decorum/Proper Conduct

Policy on Face Coverings in the Classroom

All students and faculty are required to wear a face covering at all times in the classroom.

Western Illinois University will provide two (2) cloth face coverings to all instructors and students, and replace them when necessary. Individuals may use a personally purchased alternative face covering as appropriate. Employees and students are responsible for laundering their reusable cloth face coverings. It is the responsibility of University units to ensure compliance from employees and students under their purview. Units can also refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on face coverings with regard to type and fit, wearing, and washing. Additionally, no food or drink will be

allowed in the classroom.

**Please find a more detailed explanation of this policy at:
http://www.wiu.edu/policies/covid_facecovering.php**

Disciplinary Policy on Refusal to Wear a Face Covering

Exceptions to the policy require approval by WIU’s Disability Resources Center (DRC) located within the Student Development and Success Center (SDSC) and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access. If a student refuses to comply with the policy, and does not have appropriate approval from the DRC, instructors and University officials can request that the student leave the class or activity. If a student is found to be in repeated violation of this policy, instructors and University officials can sanction the student through the student conduct process for violating the WIU Code of Student Conduct code number 17: “Failing to comply with the directions of or obstructing University officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties and/or failure to positively identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so.”

Treat one another (and me) with respect and civility. Don't be afraid to express your opinions,

but also don't be afraid to listen to (and maybe even learn from) the opinions of your classmates. I reserve the right to ask you to leave the course if you are disruptive, violent, etc

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

TITLE IX

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online

at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>. Web

address for student rights and responsibilities: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> Web

address for Academic Integrity Policy: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

COURSE INFO CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE

Assignments and Grading

I. 5 DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS (5 points each, 25 points total)

Assignments for Class Discussion (Due on Wednesdays throughout semester)

**THESE ASSIGNMENTS WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED ONLINE,
VIA WESTERN ONLINE'S DISCUSSION BOARD**

(5 total, 5points each, 25 points total)

You will be asked to complete five assignments for class discussion throughout the semester and to make a comment or ask a question on a classmate's post for each assignment (**5 times throughout the semester, due the same day as your corresponding assignment**). Instructions for each assignment are below. **Please post these assignments to the discussion board on WesternOnline prior to class time on the day they are due. Pay attention to due dates, always on WEDNESDAY.**

ASSIGNMENT	TITLE	INSTRUCTIONS DUE DATE
1	Ideological Inventory	<p>You may choose the Idealog inventory (www.idealogy.org) Or The Political Compass Inventory (www.politicalcompass.org)</p> <p>How well do you know yourself? How would you classify your political ideology? You will complete one of two inventories, the IDEALOG or the Political Compass inventories. Once you've taken one, respond to the following questions:</p> <p>Where did you land?</p> <p>Is this where you thought you'd end up?</p>

		<p>Were there any flaws with the manner by which questions were asked on either inventory?</p> <p>Bring your results and your reaction to class</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DUE WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 3</p>
2	Interest Group Website Evaluation	<p>Find the web or social media site for an interest group at any level of government (e.g., the National Rifle Association, Greenpeace, NAACP, NOW, ALEC, MADD, etc.). After reviewing the website, respond to the following questions:</p> <p>What is the mission of the group?</p> <p>How do they recruit members?</p> <p>Do they lobby primarily at the local, state, federal, or international level?</p> <p>With which other group(s) would your group find conflict?</p> <p>With which other group(s) would your group find common interests?</p> <p>Would you consider membership? Why or why not?</p> <p>Bring your findings and responses to class.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DUE WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 6</p>

3	Free Writing Assignment	<p>How are things going for you? Take a few minutes and reflect on your semester and/or overall college experience.</p> <p>What advice would you offer incoming WIU students?</p> <p>Is there anything I can do to help you succeed in this class?</p> <p>Are there any resources on campus about which you would like to know more?</p> <p>DUE WEDNESDAY, WEEK 8</p>
4	Public Agency Website Evaluation	<p>Choose a public agency at any level of government (FBI, CIA, WIU, FDA, CDC, etc.). Visit this agency's website and respond to the following questions:</p> <p>How did this agency come to exist?</p> <p>In which policy area(s) does this agency specialize?</p> <p>What information can you find regarding the agency's mission and/or larger goals?</p> <p>Which interest groups support/fail to support the work of this agency?</p> <p>Find one news story involving this agency and summarize important details.</p> <p>DUE WEDNESDAY, WEEK 12* You will have an opportunity to revise this assignment.</p>

<p>5</p>	<p>Social or Economic Policy Position Statement</p>	<p>Pick a social policy that interests you (gun control, abortion, legalized cannabis, student loan forgiveness, etc.). and explain your stance on this issue.</p> <p>Why do you feel the way you do? How might your childhood and early adulthood experiences have led you to feel this way?</p> <p>In what ways, if any, has an introductory course in American Politics changed or reinforced your opinion?</p> <p>DUE WEDNESDAY, WEEK 13</p>
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II. Quizzes, 2.5 points each (25 points total)

There are 10 quizzes in this course, all of which are available on WesternOnline. You may use notes, textbooks, or online information for each of these quizzes), and you may take each of them an unlimited number of times before the due date.

Quiz Number	Due Date	Number of Attempts Allowed
Quiz 1	Friday, Week 3 (February 4)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 2	Friday, Week 5 (February 18)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 3	Friday, Week 6 (February 25)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 4	Friday, Week 7 (March 4)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 5	Friday, Week 8 (March 11)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 6	Friday, Week 10 (March 25)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 7	Friday, Week 13 (April 15)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 8	Friday, Week 14 (April 22)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 9	Friday, Week 15 (April 29)	Unlimited until due date
Quiz 10	Friday, Week 16 (May 6)	Unlimited until due date

Exams: 25 Points Each x 2 = 50 Points

There are two examinations in this course, a mid-term and a final. The mid-term should cover material up to the middle of the semester. The final will not be cumulative, per se, but will require you to use knowledge acquired during the first half of the course. Test questions may be multiple choice, short answer, matching, essay, or some other format. You will have at least one day of class dedicated to reviewing for each exam. You will have two exams available on WesternOnline.

Total: 100 points possible (100%)

Grading: A=90+; B+=85-89; B=82-84;B-=80-81;C+=75-79; C=72-74; C-=70-71;D+=65-69; D=62-64; D-=60-61; F= <60.

Extra Credit Statement: Other than potential bonus questions on exams no other forms of Extra Credit will be given or considered.

Schedule: Please Note that the scheduled contained in this syllabus is subject to change and/or revision at the discretion of the instructor. Please come to class so that you may keep up with the activities of this course.

Additional reading assignments (e.g., Journal Articles, etc.) will be announced as the course progresses. Please make sure that you complete ALL readings before the class session in which they will be discussed. All Articles Listed on this Syllabus are available on J-Stor or On-line.

Total: 100 points possible (100%)

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COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic and Readings
Week 1 January 19, 21	Course and personal introductions Discussion of Social Contract Theories READ: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/
Week 2	Purposes of Government and Ideology

<p>January 24, 26, 28</p>	<p>READ: Janda, Chapter 1</p>
<p>Week 3 January 31 February 2, 4</p>	<p>Colonial Experiences, <i>Articles of Confederation, Constitution</i></p> <p>READ:</p> <p>Janda, Chapter 3</p> <p>What if we rewrote the <i>Constitution</i> today? https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/12/what-if-we-could-rewrite-constitution/617304/</p>
<p>Week 4 February 7, 9, 11</p>	<p>Federalism</p> <p>READ:</p> <p>Janda, Chapter 4</p> <p>The Great American Cannabis Experiment https://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2019/10/14/cannabis-legal-states-001031/</p>
<p>Week 5 February 14, 16, 18</p>	<p>Public Opinion, Political Socialization, The Media</p> <p>READ:</p> <p>Janda, Chapters 5-6</p>
<p>Week 6 February 21, 23, 25</p>	<p>Citizen Participation</p> <p>Janda, Chapter 7</p>

Week 7 February 28 March 2, 4	Interest Groups Janda, Chapter 10
Week 8 March 7, 9, 11	Midterm Review and Midterm Exam Due Online by Friday
Week 9 March 14, 16, 18	SPRING BREAK!
Week 10 March 21, 23, 25	Political Parties and Elections READ: Janda, Chapter 8 https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/ https://www.gop.com/platform/
Week 11 March 28, 30 April 1	Congress READ: Janda, Chapter 11 https://profbrown.org/p/notes/fenno_homestyle
Week 12 April 4, 6, 8	Supreme and other Courts READ:

	Janda, Chapter 14
Week 13 April 11, 13, 15	The Presidency READ: Janda, Chapter 12
Week 14 April 18, 20, 22	The Bureaucracy READ: Janda, Chapter 13
Week 15 April 25, 27, 29	Public Policy READ: Janda, Chapters 17-18
Week 16	Final Exam Review
FINAL EXAM	MONDAY, 10 AM