

American Government and Politics

(POLS 122)

M/W, 1:00pm – 1:50pm (Spring 2021)

Fridays, Online

316 Morgan Hall, Western Illinois University

Professor: Jonathan Day
Office: 415B Morgan Hall
***Office Hours:** MW: 1:50pm – 2:20pm,
F: 11:20pm – 2:20pm,

*Office hours will be virtual. I will not be in my office at these times, but I will respond more quickly to email during these times. If you would like to meet in person to discuss anything, please feel free to meet with me after class or set up an appointment.

Email: jp-day@wiu.edu
Website: <http://westernonline.wiu.edu>

Texts: **Printed Primary Sources given by Professor**

Course Description and Objective

During this course, we will explore the basic structure, function, and processes of American government and politics. Primarily we will focus on national politics and government. Topics we will explore include the Constitution, public opinion, elections, political parties, interest groups, Congress, presidency, courts, domestic and foreign policy. We will seek to understand some of the implications that the current structure, function, and processes of government have on our society and how we in turn influence the government. We will exercise our critical thinking skills by analyzing important problems and questions that are relevant to our lives. This course, hopefully, will make us better-informed residents and citizens by giving us a greater understanding of our role in government.

Expectations

We should attend all scheduled classes, so that we can use that time to help each other understand the material and practice our critical thinking skills. We should read the assigned material so that we have the same information available for our discussions in class. We should participate as much as we feel comfortable in class so that we can all gain an understanding of different perspectives.

Grading		Final Grade Determination	
Attendance/Participation	= 400 (40%)	92 – 100	A
		90 – 92	A-
Writing Exams / Papers (2)	= 300 (30%)	88 – 90	B+
		82 – 88	B
Final Exam	= 300 (30%)	80 – 82	B-
		78 – 80	C+
Total	= 1000 points	72 – 78	C
		70 – 72	C-
		68 – 70	D+
		62 – 68	D
		60 – 62	D-
		0 – 60	F

Attendance/Participation/Reading

Our attendance is important for others to gain a different perspective and for us to understand the material and practice our critical thinking skills.

I award points for attendance and excused absences. For excused absences, you must email me the excuse. Just let me know if it was for sickness, a personal or family emergency, or university event.

For each day, take a name trifold and place it in front of you. This will allow me to count you present for the day.

Fridays (Online)

There will be an online assignment every Friday. It will be due by the following Monday's class period. Usually this will be a reading and a discussion question and will count towards your attendance. Read the document/article and then post a discussion question. You will also be required to choose one other person to reply with a comment on their post. Please be respectful at all times, especially when you disagree.

Writing Exams / Papers

Each assignment will be 3-5 pages long (double spaced; Times New Roman; 1 inch margins; name, course title, semester, and professor's name at the top). The assignment will be to answer 2-3 essay questions and possibly other short answer questions. These will be take home assessments. You can use your notes or any resource you need. No plagiarism allowed. There will be five possible grades for these: 100, 90, 80, 70, 0.

Final Exam

The final exam will be 2-3 essay questions and will be on Wednesday, May 5th at 1:00pm.

Classroom Procedures / Student Rights and Responsibilities

Please submit all excused absences to me in an email as soon as possible. Let me know before class starts if you need to leave class early for an excused absence. Each class session may be recorded via audio and/or video and made public so that anyone can access them. The purpose of this is to provide a universal accommodation to enhance the learning experience. The following website provides information on a student's rights and responsibilities at WIU: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>. We also need to maintain our academic integrity: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

Accommodations

If you have a physical and/or financial difficulty, please feel welcome to come and talk to me during office hours or set up an appointment through email or phone so that we can discuss the best accommodation to ensure that you can do your best in the classroom.

“In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services” (WIU)

Contacting Me

Please feel free to contact me at any time by email, phone, or in person. My email, phone number, and office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. If you would like to visit with me and my office hours are not convenient, we will schedule a time that works for both of us.

Class and Reading Schedule

Date	Subject
January 20	Introduction
January 22 – January 29	Declaration of Independence / Constitution and Founding
February 1 – February 12	Federalism / Civil Liberties / Civil Rights
February 19	Midterm 1 Exam Due
February 15 – 26	Public Opinion / Political Participation / Interest Groups
March 1 – 5	Elections Part 1
March 8	No Class
March 10	No Class
March 15 – 19	Elections Part 2
March 22 – 26	Congress
March 29 – April 2	Presidency
April 5 – 9	Bureaucracy
April 12 – 16	Courts
April 19 – 23	Policy
April 26 – April 30	Review Week / Open Discussion
May 5 – Wednesday	Final Exam at 1pm