**POLS 101Y – Introduction to Political Science**

Fall 2021

Tuesdays and Thursday, 2-3:15, Lamoine Room (University Union)

Instructor: Julia Albarracín Office: 428 Morgan Hall 298-1055

Email: J-Albarracin@wiu.edu Office Hours: M and TH 1:15-2:15;

W 1:00-3:00 PM; or by appointment.

**Description**

In what ways is the midterm election important to my life? How do people decide who to vote for? How is the UK government different from the government in the US? Why aren’t governments able to stop drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and other ills of modern society? Politics affects almost every aspect of our lives. However, politics can seem like a complicated world for those not familiar with it. A main purpose of this course is to make students informed citizens who can responsibly participate in the political process. This course can also serve as the foundation for those planning to take additional political science classes. More specifically, this course will introduce students to the central ideas, institutions, and practices which structure government in the United States and other countries. The first part of this class focuses on understanding basic concepts, the relationships/tensions between society and government, and institutions of government. The second part of this course analyzes different important issues

Our course goals are for each student to:

1. Understand the meaning of politics and its implications for students’ lives.
2. Realize the different ways in which society and government interact with each other.
3. Comprehend the roles and functions of different institutions of government in the US and other countries.
4. Know how different issues pose challenges to our country today.

**Required Readings**

a. *Political Science: A Comparative Introduction, 8thth Edition or earlier,* by Rod Hague and Martin Harrop (Palgrave). This is the primary textbook for this class and should be available at the bookstore. This book is identified in the schedule of readings as (T). IF YOU USE A DIFFERENT EDITION, GO BY CHAPTER TOPIC AND NOT #

b. Other required readings are indicated in the syllabus and can be accessed through the class website. These readings are identified in the schedule of readings as (W).

Films are part of the required readings and questions on them will appear on exams.

**Examinations & Course Requirements**

**Participation points assignments (20 points):** Students are expected to complete assigned readings for each week of class and the participation points assignments indicated in the syllabus. These assignments will account for 15% of your grade.

**Exams (60 points):** There will be 3 written examinations (worth up to 20 points each). Make-up exams will be arranged only in DOCUMENTED special circumstances, and students are responsible to notify the instructor within 24 hours after the exam.

**Report (20 points)**: Students will write a research report on a major challenge facing the Obama administration (economic crisis, wars, immigration reform). During the **last day of class**, each student will turn in an individual 4-page report summarizing the issue chosen, possible solutions and their potential impact, and a policy recommendation. Further guidelines will be distributed in class. Students will also turn in a report proposal on 11/14.

**Grades**

**Grade Breakdown.** The following table summarizes the breakdown of the final grade for the course:

Weekly exercises                             20%

Exams                                              60%

Report 20%   
Total 100%

**Grading Scale.**

92-100 =A, 90-91 = A-, 88-89 = B+, 82-87 = B, 80-81 = B-, 78-79 = C+, 72-77 = C, 70-71 = C-, 68-69 = D+, 62-67 = D, 60-61 = D-, and 0-59 = F.

**Other Course Policies**

**Academic Honesty.** I expect all students to adhere to the university’s standards of academic honesty in their class work. Please see <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

**Students with Disabilities.** 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 accommodation. You just need to let me know. If you have questions, you can contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512.

**Policy on Student Absences**

Absence from class will be considered excused if the absence is (1) due to a required isolation or quarantine based on a (2) documented directive from a public health official or health provider, and (3) if the instructor of record receives notification through WIU Student Services. The student (4) remains responsible for contacting instructors to arrange to complete missed work as soon as possible and is (5) ultimately responsible for material covered in class.

**Policy on Taking Attendance and Seat Assignments**

WIU’s COVID protocols require that faculty for all face-to-face classes maintain a seating chart and take attendance to facilitate contact tracing. Students are required to sit in their designated seat during all face-to-face class sessions.

**Policy on Disruptive Students**

Students will face disciplinary action if they are found to be non-compliant with WIU’s COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy (http://www.wiu.edu/policies/covid\_safety.php). Non-compliance may be considered disruptive student behavior and disciplinary action will follow general process outlined in disruptive student behavior procedures (http://www.wiu.edu/policies/disrupst.php) and/or other applicable enforcement measures applicable to the Code of Student Conduct.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

**Part 1- Basic Concepts**

**Week 1: Foundations**

8/24: Introduction

8/26: Chapter 1 (T)

**Week 2: Foundations: Democracy**

8/31: Chapter 3 (T)

9/2: Freedom House Reports? – **Participation points assignment -**

**Week 3: Democracy and Authoritarian Rule**

9/7: Chapter 4 (T)-Review 7 PM at the library’s basement.

9/9: Exam 1

**Week 4: Political Culture**

9/14: Chapter 12 (T)

9/16: Best Culture for Democracy

**Week 5: Participation**

9/21: Chapter 13

9/23: [Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital by Robert Putnam, *Journal of Democracy, 6,* Jan 1995, 65-78](https://ezproxy.wiu.edu/login?url=http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.wiu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v006/6.1putnam.html).

**Week 6: Elections and Voters.**

9/28: Chapter 16 and 17 (T)

9/30: **Primaries and General Elections**

**Week 7: Interest Groups**

10/5: Chapter 18(T)

10/7: The future of unions - **Participation points assignment -*Announce exam review Monday night.***

Week 8: Political Parties

10/12: Exam 2

10/14: Chapter 11 [Where Do America Political Parties Stand?](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-15/us-election-political-parties-explained-democrats-vs-republicans/12708296) - **Participation points assignment (read article and bring hard copy)**

**Week 9: Executives and Legislatures**

10/19: Chapter 9

10/21: Chapter 8

**Part 3 – Debating the Issues**

**Week 10: Political Issues**

10/26: The Biden Presidency (materials distributed in class)

10/28: The Future of the GOP (materials distributed in class).

**Week 11: Arms Trafficking**

11/2: **Lord of War-Movie**

11/4:**Lord of War Movie--Paper Proposal Due**

**Week 12: Issues on Globalization: Immigration**

11/9: Immigration Lecture.

11/11: Should America restrict immigration? **Participation points assignment (materials will be distributed in class)**

**Week 13: Immigration to the US**

11/16: **Projection of Movie *Wetback***

11/18: **Projection of Movie *Wetback-* Participation points assignment.**

**Thanksgiving: 11/22-26**

**Week 14: Extremism and Terrorism**

11/30: The Situation in Afghanistan (materials distributed in class)

12/2: Domestic Terrorism (materials distributed in class)

**Week 15: Freedoms and Rights**

12/7: Voting Rights (materials distributed in class)

12/9: Wrap up and review. **Final Report Due**

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 14th at 3 PM, Lamoine Room.**