

# **POLS 122: American Government and Politics**

## **Online Course**

### **Fall 2021**

**Instructor: Dr. MaCherie M. Placide**

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**Telephone/Text: (651) 246-7708<sup>1</sup>**

**Virtual Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 1-2 PM by Zoom/Google Meets appointment.**

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This online version of the American Government and Politics class is an introduction to the study of the governmental and political system of the United States. It examines the institution processes, functions of, and actors in our political system. This course will cover the following:

- Historical and constitutional foundations of American government. We will explore the evolution of the Constitution along with key political developments in our history.
- Focus on major institutions of the U.S. national government. We will examine the structure and function of national political institutions.
- Analyze the politics of ordinary citizens. We will assess how ordinary citizens form opinions about politics and participate in the political process.

As indicated in the undergraduate course catalog, “this course meets the state requirements that all candidates for graduation pass an examination on the Federal and Illinois State constitutions.” The course is required for all students who are getting a minor in political science, public administration, and/or international relations (students whose minor is in international relations have an option to take POLS 101: Introduction to Political Science class in lieu of POLS 122).

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<sup>1</sup> When you call, text or email, let me know what course you are taking so I can answer your question. I have more than one class online.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this class is to help you better understand the forces that have shaped American government and politics so that you may become a more informed, sophisticated, and engaged participant in the American political system. More specifically, it aims to help you:

- Understand the origin and constitutional underpinnings of our form of government;
- Appreciated the multifaceted structures and roles of our national political institutions;
- Comprehend the process by which ordinary citizens learn about politics and public affairs, develop political attitudes and preferences, and arrive at political decisions;
- Identify the impetus behind the participation of ordinary citizens in the political process;
- Critically and independently evaluate a variety of political issues facing our nation and the world;
- Develop the capacity and skill to better communicate and exchange ideas and opinions about the political world.

## COURSE MATERIALS

The required textbook: Barbour, Christine and Wright, Gerald. (2022). Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics 10<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage/CQ Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

You may use later editions (8 or 9) of this textbook.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This course is taught exclusively online, which does not mean that the course is easier than classes meeting in an in-class setting. As the course outline shows, the course is divided into eight (8) modules. To take the course, students must regularly check your email and Western Online. Inabilities to access Western Online because of technical malfunctions are NOT ACCEPTABLE reasons not completing assignments. **You will have thirteen (13) days to complete a module, which begins on Monday in August 23 at 12:01 AM. The module will close on the second following Sunday of the week at 11:59 PM. Once closed it will not reopen;** therefore, I suggest that you not wait until that Sunday to do all the work. Manage your time wisely because there are many chapters to cover. Your success with this class will depend on you completing all assigned written assignments, discussions and exams.

### Online Discussions (240 points)

Your participation will be measured through your activity with the discussion exercises. You are expected to respond in a minimum of one paragraph (ideally two or more paragraphs) to the topic. Your textbook will be the basic source of answering the discussion question, however, you are certainly free to cite and draw on other materials (including published scholarly articles, current event articles). But you should NOT simply copy the text or any other sources, but make efforts to compose a response in your own words (thus, citing references in your response). In addition, you must respond to another student's post to receive the full points. You may post as many responses as possible. You will be graded on the quantity (1<sup>st</sup> original post +

2 other student responses) and quality of your participation. A rubric will be available to guide you in your response and to get the most points. **You will earn up to 30 points for your original post plus your response to a fellow student's response of the weekly discussion question for up to 240 points total for eight discussions.**

### EXAMS (300 points)

This course will have three regular exams. The exams have true/false, multiple choice, and some matching. The source of the exams will come from the textbook, PowerPoints, and class notes. The last exam will only cover the module 6 thru 8 and is **noncomprehensive**. All exams will be online non-proctored. You may use your notes, textbook and PowerPoints to complete but you must not work together or share the exam information with other students. The exams will be timed allowing you 75 minutes to complete. Make sure you properly submit your online exams. **The four regular exams are worth 100 points. Do not wait until the last hour of the last day to complete the exam as it will turn off at 11:59 PM and you will not be able to get back in to complete it.** There is no final exam.

### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (250 points)

This course will have six written exercises. These assignments are designed to help you understand how government functions. **Each written assignment is worth 50 points.** Further information on each of these assignments can be found at Western Online under Written Assignments. No written assignment in Module 7 which is during the week of Thanksgiving.

### GRADING EVALUATION

Grades are determined by the point scale totaling 890 points. The more points you acquire the better your score which is defined by the following scale:

Course Evaluation	Total Points
Online Discussions	8 @30 = <b>240</b>
Written Assignments	6@50 = <b>300</b>
Exams	3 @100 = <b>300</b>
Total Points	<b>840</b>

To determine your grade, divide your total points earned by total points of the course materials, multiplied by 100.

Example: Your Total Points Earned = 830

Total Points of Course Materials = 840

$830/840 = .98 \times 100 = \mathbf{98\%}$  your possible grade

## GRADING SCALE

A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	62-60
F	<60

## COURSE POLICIES

### GUIDELINES FOR CLASS COMMUNICATION

This course is delivered completely online. As such, all communications between you and the professor (me) and among students enrolled in the course will be primarily done via WIU email (I can be best reached by email at [m-placide@wiu.edu](mailto:m-placide@wiu.edu)). However, you may contact me by phone at (651) 246-7708 and leave a message on my voice mail if I'm not available to take your call. You may text me as well. I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours after I receive your message. That said, since all communications in our online classroom are not done in real-time, you should not expect instant responses from your fellow students and me.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This course is taught online which does not mean the course is easier than classes that meet in an in-class setting. As the course online shows, the course is divided into 4-modules. To take this course, you must have access to internet capabilities. **Moreover, you must login to the assigned course website (Western Online) regularly to review the course curriculum and complete assigned exercises and exams. Inabilities to gain access to Western Online because of technical difficulties are NOT ACCEPTABLE reasons for not completing assignments.**

Online communication can still be very efficient and effective tool for exchanging and sharing facts, ideas, and opinions. As you probably are aware, however, it has its downsides. It would not be very unusual to

misunderstand the intent of what others write to you or post on the discussion board, since written words and expressions can be particularly ambiguous and seen as carrying multiple meanings at times, when they are presented without the help of non-verbal gestures and expressions. Thus, as a general rule, when you compose a message to share with members of the class, please do maintain a civil tone and do not use sarcastic and overly strong words. Please be sure to treat your fellow students with respect. All of us share the responsibility to keep up decency in our classroom communications.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct is a serious offense and constitutes grounds for failing the course regardless of your grade on other assignments. Academic misconduct includes:

1. Plagiarism including:
  - a. Turning in a paper someone else has written.
  - b. Copying directly from the book you read
  - c. Using material obtained via electronic sources without proper documentation.
  - d. Failure to properly document quotations used in your paper.

Any and all of these activities will result in an **F** for the course. The penalties for plagiarism apply whether you plagiarize inadvertently or deliberately. If you have any questions about how to cite sources, ask before you turn in your assignment.

***Incomplete Policy:*** In accordance with University policy, incompletes will only be given in rare instances where a student cannot complete the course requirements during the semester due to circumstances beyond their control. You must keep me informed regarding such circumstances in a timely manner. However, the decision to allow an incomplete is at the discretion of the instructor.

For more information regarding academic misconduct and incomplete refer to your student handbook at <http://www.sdo.wiu.edu/handbook/handbook.pdf> Please refer to the WIU Student Academic Integrity Policy at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php> it is your responsibility to strictly follow this policy.

***Accommodations:*** In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies faculty of a specific need for accommodation. It is imperative that students bring such needs to the faculty member's attention, as faculty are not legally permitted to inquire about such particular student needs. Students who require special assistance in emergency evacuations should contact their faculty to discuss emergency procedures. Contact Disability Support Services (298-2512) for additional services.

## Title IX

WIU values Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibiting 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 anonymous online at [http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](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>

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

The basic source of information will come from the textbook I have outlined the course schedule on the calendar at Western Online-this should help you with following the process (discussions, written assignments and exams).

I reserve the right to change the schedule as needed and I will notify you of any changes at Western Online (Announcements) and by email.

MODULE/DATES	TOPIC(S)	READING, DISCUSSION, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
<b>MODULE 1</b> 9/23—9/5	Politics: Who Gets What and How and American Citizens and Political Culture	Barbour and Wright Chapter 1-2 <b>Discussion 1</b> <b>Written Assignment 1:</b> <i>Political Typology</i>
<b>MODULE 2</b> 9/6—9/19	The American Founding  Let's Take a Moment to Understand Policy: Social and Environmental	Barbour and Wright Chapter 3 and 16 <b>Discussion 2</b> <b>Written Assignment 2:</b> <i>Understanding the Constitution</i>
<b>MODULE 3</b> 9/20—10/3	Federalism	Barbour and Wright Chapter 4  <b>Discussion 3</b>  <b>Written Assignment 3:</b> <i>University of the Republic</i>  <b>Exam 1 Covers Chapters 1-4 and 16</b>
<b>MODULE 4</b> 10/4—10/17	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	Barbour and Wright Chapter 5-6 <b>Discussion: 4</b>  <b>Written Assignment 4:</b> <i>Written Exercise</i>
<b>MODULE 5</b> 10/18—10/31	Congress, President, The Judicial, and Bureaucracy	Barbour and Wright Chapters 7-1 <b>Discussion: 5</b> <b>Written Assignment 5:</b> <i>Finding a U.S. Supreme Court Case</i>  <b>Exam: 2 Covers Chapters 5-10</b>

MODULES/DATE	TOPIC(S)	READING, DISCUSSION, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
<b>MODULE 6 11/1—11/14</b>	Media and Public Opinion	Barbour and Wright Chapter 11 and 15 <b>Discussion: 6</b> <b>Written Assignment 6:</b> <i>Writing Exercise</i>
<b>MODULE 7 11/15—11/28</b>	Elections	Barbour and Wright Chapter 14 <b>Discussion: 7</b> <b>Written Assignment : NONE</b>
<b>MODULE 8 11/29—12/12</b>	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Barbour and Wright Chapter 12-13 Discussion: 8 <b>Final Paper:</b> <i>What Political Party Do You Favor?</i> <b>Exam: 3<sup>2</sup> Covering Chapters 11-15</b>

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<sup>2</sup> Exam 3 must be completed on or before December 12, 2021 @11:59 PM