

# American Government and Politics

Political Science 122, Section 2

Spring Semester 2021



*"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free  
...it expects what never was and will never be."*

**--Thomas Jefferson**

*"Free government requires active citizens."*

**--George W. Parker**

## Course Professor

**Dr. Richard J. (Rick) Hardy**—Professor of Political Science

Class Hours: 9:00 – 9:50 a.m., MWF, Currens Hall, Room 205

Office Hours: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., MW, 8:00 – 8:50 F, or by Appointment\*

Professor's Office: 445 Morgan Hall

Email: [RJ-Hardy@wiu.edu](mailto:RJ-Hardy@wiu.edu) Office Phone: 309-298-1534

*\*We live in difficult times. Because I am in the "high risk" category regarding Covid-19, my physician strongly recommends that, if at all possible, we avoid one-on-one meetings in my office. I will still hold office hours and be available for phone calls during those times. And, of course I will return emails in a prompt manner. RJH*

## Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of government in the United States--including Illinois government. Central to the course is a presentation of the strengths, as well as weaknesses, of the institutional and theoretical bases of American government--democracy, the U. S. Constitution, federalism, civil rights, civil liberties, interest groups, attitudes, public opinion, political culture, political socialization, political symbolism, political parties, political ideology, the electoral system, the bureaucracy, Congress, the President, the Supreme Court, plus the Illinois Constitution. Moreover, the course will attempt to demonstrate how various personalities and forces interact with these political institutions and processes to shape governmental policies. In short, we will try to discern "Who gets what, when, and how."

## Textbook

The required readings will be drawn from the following source: **James A. Monrone and Rogan Kersh. *By the People: Debating American Government. Brief Fourth Edition (paperbound). New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. (ISBN 978-0-19-092872-8)*** This text may be purchased from the University Book Store in the Union. However, to save money, students may also purchase the eBook edition (ISBN 978-0-19-092873-5) or buy a used Third Edition online. Copies of both the U.S. Constitution and Illinois Constitution may be found online and downloaded free. Additional online readings may be assigned at no cost to you.

## Lecture Format

This is a three-hour course that meets three times per week, MWF, for 50 minutes each class period. This class will follow a traditional lecture format but with a generous amount of discussion as the topics merit. The lectures are intended to provide a *balanced treatment* of American government and stimulated your thinking about politics and policies. While the lectures make no attempt to duplicate the readings verbatim, for the sake of continuity, every effort will be made to dovetail the lectures and readings. In recognition of the fact that college students are responsible adults who can make their own decisions about how and when to study, it is assumed that an understanding of those matters not necessarily touched on in the lectures will be obtained from the readings. This implies, of course, that readings and lectures are each an integral part of the class, and the truly successful student will be one who attends both the lectures regularly and scrutinizes the readings.

## Special Note on Lectures

**Please note that your professor does not loan out his lectures.** It is each student's responsibility to take good lecture notes. In the event that you cannot attend lecture, say for illness or a family emergency, **it will be your responsibility to get notes from a classmate.** At the outset of class, you will have an opportunity to introduce yourself to your fellow classmates and exchange contact information. Then, if you happen to miss a lecture or two, you will have one to three classmates from whom you may borrow notes. If, after borrowing notes, you are still confused about a particular lecture, then feel free to email your professor and ask for clarification. **Again, if you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the class lectures from a classmate and ask for clarification.**

## Class Rules and Norms

- 1. Assigned Seating to Assure Social Distancing.** *To comport with university rules and regulations in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, each student has been assigned a particular seat in the Currens 205 to ensure proper social distancing. Assigned seats are located at least two rows and two seats apart. Please sit in your assigned seat each every class period.*
- 2. 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.*
- 3. No Food or Drink.** *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](http://www.wiu.edu/policies/covid_facecovering.php)*

4. **Attendance.** There is a high correlation between poor grades and poor attendance. You should therefore make it a practice to attend each and every class. *Attendance will be taken and figured into your final course grade. However, those adversely affected by Covid-19 will not be penalized according to university regulations.*
5. **Be punctual for class.** All students should be seated and ready to take notes at 9:00 a.m. sharp! When your professor states, “Let us begin,” it is time to get quiet. Each class lasts 50 minutes. Please do not rattle your notes or get ready to leave until you are instructed to do so. Your professor will make sure you are dismissed on time so that you have ample time to get to your next class.
6. **Classroom etiquette.** Students who are enrolled in this course are entitled to hear the lectures and others opinions--not a constant flow of aimless chattering, whispering, and other juvenile gyrations. Please be respectful of others’ positions and perspectives—even when they are different from yours. *And please turn off your cell phones during class.*
7. **Lecture bias.** No person is entirely free of biases. However, I will always present BOTH sides of every issue, irrespective of my own, personal views. When presenting the liberal view, I will present it as though I really believe it. Conversely, when giving the conservative side, I want to be equally convincing. Thus, do not get upset over a particular lecture if you happen to disagree with it. Be patient. I will always give the other side. My job is to expose you to different perspectives, and allow you to make up your own minds.
8. **Audio recording.** Some students find it helpful to record my lectures. This may be essential for students with disabilities, and that is quite understandable. But be careful not to rely too heavily upon audio recordings. First, I believe you learn more by actively taking notes than you do by passively recording lectures. Second, students who record lectures often stop taking notes altogether, thinking that they will simply replay them just before the exams. This rarely works because students must distill 15 or 16 hours of lectures before each exam. This is not an effective use of time. Finally, please do not take my lectures or class discussions out of context.

## **Examinations**

Examination Format. There will three 120-point examinations. The examinations will be administered in Currens 205 and consist of 60 multiple-choice questions (worth 2 points each). On every examination, approximately 70 percent of the content will be drawn from directly the lectures and 30 percent will stem from the textbook and assigned readings. Some questions will naturally overlap both lectures and readings. There will be no “pop” or surprise quizzes.

Examination Schedule. Below are the dates and times for the three examinations. With the exception of the final examination, the dates may be adjusted due to unforeseen factors, such as adverse weather or illness. If there is a change in test dates, your professor will give you plenty of advanced notification.

- Examination #1** (in-class, multiple-choice examination)—*Wednesday, February 24—9:00 am*
- Examination #2** (in-class, multiple-choice examination)—*Wednesday, March 31—9:00 am*
- Examination #3** (in-class, multiple-choice examination)—*Wednesday, May 5—8:00 am*

Examination “Curves.” Examinations will be challenging but neither impossible nor unfair. This helps spread out the scores and enables your professor to distinguish between those who do and do not study. Note, however, that each examination will be adjusted, if necessary, to approximate a "normal" or "bell" curve. Say, for example, that on Exam #1 the top score in the entire class was a 114/120. Your professor will then throw a curve of 6 points to assure that at least one person scores 100 percent on the test. All other students will then be given 6 additional points. Rarely, if ever, will your professor throw out specific questions. This causes too much confusion and creates hard feelings for those who may have answered the question correctly the first time--for whatever reason. Instead, I will merely apply the curve points, in this case 6 points, to any three questions you think are unfair. Thus, if you think questions #12, #31 and #55 are "unfair," then use the curve points for those questions. In sum, class curves *always* work to the benefit of the students; I always assume that the examinations are not perfect, but I assume that at least one student in this is “perfect.”

Makeup Examination Policy. Requests to take examinations early will be denied. If, for some valid reason (e.g. illness, death in the family, or school related conflict), you are unable to take the examination at the scheduled time, then you should notify your professor in advance of the examination. *Leave a message with Political Science Department office (309-298-1055) or e-mail me (RJ-Hardy@wiu.edu). Failure to apprise me of your plight and produce the necessary documentation for your excuse will result in an "F" for that examination.* There will be no exceptions to this rule. *All make-up examinations will consist of short-answer essay questions and must be taken within a "reasonable" time (usually one week) after returning to class.* Finally, students taking make-up exams may not take advantage of possible class curves given on regularly scheduled examinations. Why? Because you have more time to study and you are not taking the same examination as the rest of the class. To give you curve points would simply not be fair.

Reviewing Examinations. You can expect to see the results of your test within one week--at the very latest. Tests will be handed back in class and you will have an opportunity to look over the examination and ask questions. I will be happy to explain why you may have missed a particular question and exactly where each question was drawn. Remember that I do not pull questions out of thin air. There is a source for each and every question. ***Once you have had an opportunity to review the exam, your test must be returned after class. Nobody is to take an examination--for any reason--out of the classroom or my office. Students who fail to return each and every page of the examination booklet will receive an "F" grade for the examination.*** All examinations will be kept on file for at least two semesters before being destroyed. Thus, you have one year to appeal your final course grade.

Class Attendance and Participation. As noted *passim*, class attendance is critical to earning a high grade in this class. Likewise, participation in class discussion is also an essential part of civic life. Your ideas and thoughts are important and will be respected. Therefore, class attendance and participation will count for 40 points of your final course grade. Please observe that this grading is arguably somewhat subjective—students who attend class regularly and take part in class discussion will naturally earn more points than students who attend sporadically and appear disinterested in the topics at hand.

## Constitutional Essay

In early November, you will be given a written assignment to compare and contrast the U.S. Constitution and the Illinois Constitution. This take-home assignment, **worth 100 points**, will ask you to write several essays comparing and contrasting the two documents using information from the web. *Your project will be due on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 8:00 am.*

### Summary of Points

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Points</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> Exam	120
2 <sup>nd</sup> Exam	120
3 <sup>rd</sup> Exam	120
Constitution Essay	100
<u>Attendance/Participation</u>	<u>40</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

### Grading

In sum, grades will be based on 500 total points. Western Illinois University uses plus-minus grading for undergraduate classes. Because all quizzes and examinations are adjusted or "normally curved" as the semester progresses here is a convenient method of calculating your grade: **Students are required to earn at least 450 total points (90%) to get an "A-" grade, at least 400 total points (80%) to get a "B-" grade, at least 325 total points (65%) to get a "C-" grade, and at least 250 total points (50%) to get a passing "D-" grade. These are the standard "breaks" for determining letter grades.** Of course, within each category there will also be additional grading. (See the cutoffs and grading scale on the next page.) Final grades will range from A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F. Over the years approximately 85 percent of the class has earned C or better in the course.

### Grading Scale

<u>Cutoff</u>	<u>Point Range</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
97%	485-500	A+*
94%	470-484	A
90%	450-469	A-
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87%	435-449	B+
84%	420-434	B
80%	400-419	B-
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75%	375-399	C+
70%	350-374	C
65%	325-349	C-
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60%	300-324	D+

55%	275-299	D
50%	250-274	D-
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49%	000-249	F

\*WIU does not award A+ grades, but your professor may make note of the accomplishment in letters of recommendation for scholarships and employment.

Finally, since class attendance, participation and bonus points will already be figured into your grade, do not expect to "negotiate" with your professor for a higher letter grade. The only justification for altering a final grade is an error in computation. All examinations will be kept on file for one semester, during which time you may appeal your grade to the Chair of the Political Science Department (309-298-1055 or [KA-Boeckelman@wiu.edu](mailto:KA-Boeckelman@wiu.edu)). Thereafter, all materials will be destroyed and you may lose your right of appeal.

## **Students' Rights and Responsibilities**

Disabilities and Accommodations. *"In accordance with University Policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor or such need. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for such accommodation(s) through the Disability Resource Center and provide it to the instructor. 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 student needs. 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 the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512 for additional services."* For more information on and current university policy on these situations, please consult a campus webpage at <http://www.wiu.edu/studentlife/> or <http://www.wiu.edu/drc>.

Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated! Anyone who plagiarizes (submitting work written by another person without proper attribution), cheats on an examination (looking off of another's answer sheet, copying someone else's words, writing answers on one's arms, glancing at notes under a coat or a seat, etc.), knowingly assists another student to cheat (writing answers boldly, passing notes, whispering answers, etc.), allows another to take his or her examination, sneaks any part of a test booklet out of the classroom or who has unauthorized possession of an examination will be dealt with severely. Academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action, and all tainted examinations and assignments will adversely affect the student's grade. The web address for student rights and responsibilities is <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students/> and for the university's policy on academic integrity is <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

Respect for Others' Opinions. This university is comprised of students from varied backgrounds and perspectives. You have a right to speak out on issues that you feel strongly about. And so do others who may disagree with you. *Again, please be respectful of others' opinions, even if those views do not comport with yours.* A university should be a marketplace of ideas.

## Suggestions for Study

Perhaps the most frequently asked question in this course is "*How should I study for examinations!?*" While no study method can guarantee you an "A" in this course, the following suggestions might prove helpful:

1. Attend classes on a regular basis. As noted repeatedly, there appears to be a rather strong correlation between not attending classes regularly and getting a low grade in the course. Note that on each examination at least 40/60 multiple choice questions and most essays will be drawn directly from the lectures, and that there will be at least one (and sometimes four or five) questions drawn directly from any *particular* lecture. Again, should you miss a lecture, then it is your responsibility to borrow somebody's notes. Remember, however, that borrowed notes are never as useful as your own.
2. Take thorough notes in class. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that you can simply listen to a lecture and then recall what was said three or four weeks later on a test. The human mind has an amazing capacity, but it also has a way of playing tricks on us. I have found that the most successful students are those that jot down all of the main ideas with at least some illustrative material. I will often repeat (almost ad nauseam) important points in lecture. Listen for key phrases such as, "*To reiterate. . .*," "*Again, let me repeat. . .*," "*Remember that . . .*," "*The main point is . . .*" or "*Be sure to note that . . .*" These points will inevitably show up on a test.
3. Review your lecture notes on a weekly basis. Many students find it salutary to rewrite their lecture notes periodically in an outline form. By whatever method you employ, a quick review can help you recall readily what was said in the lectures. And if you don't understand something in the lectures, then email your professor for clarification.
4. Keep abreast of the readings. The readings are not particularly long or difficult--provided you do them regularly. I have found that better students do relatively little "cramming," and tend to get at least seven hours of sleep the night before an examination. Keep in mind that on each examination about 20/60 questions will be drawn directly from the text, By the People (Marone/Kersh) or assigned reading. Expect these questions to be quite specific.
5. Concentrate on learning concepts. Some psychologists maintain that most college students forget about 90 percent of what they learned in college within three years of graduation. If this is the case, then I can see very little utility in memorizing dates, graphs, lists of governmental officials, and countless statistics. My general philosophy is "concentrate on the concepts, and the details will fall into place." This is not to say that there will not be any detailed questions on the exams. In fact, I have a penchant for requiring students to learn the major provisions of the Constitution and numerous landmark cases. Moreover, you should count on about two or three "picky" (not unfair) questions per test to help me discriminate between students who do and who do not do the readings. By and large, however, I will make every effort to point out what is and what is not considered important to learn.



9 Due Process and Rights of Accused

10 Civil Rights—Equal Protection and Privacy Chapter 5

**Examination #2—Wednesday, March 31, 9:00 –9:50 a.m., Currens 205**

11 Congress Chapter 10

12 The Presidency Chapter 11

13 The Supreme Court Chapter 13

14 The Bureaucracy Chapter 12

**Examination #3—Wednesday, May 5, 8:00 –9:50 a.m., Currens 205\***

\*Please note that university policy has scheduled this examination for 8:00 am!

**U.S./State Constitution Essay Assignment Due, Wednesday, May 5, 8:00 a.m.**

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*“Always bear in mind that you own resolution to succeed  
is more important than any other one thing.”*

**—Abraham Lincoln**

*“Whatever may be the general endeavor of a community to render its members equal and alike,  
the personal pride of individuals will always seek to rise above the line, and to form somewhere  
an inequality to their own advantage.—Alexis De Tocqueville*