

POLS 122: American Government and Politics

Morgan Hall Room 316

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM

Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. MaCherie M. Placide

Office: Morgan Hall Room 411A

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Virtual Office Hours²: Tuesdays 1:00-2:00 pm, Wednesdays 12:00-2:00 pm; set-up an appointment between these hours to meet virtually on Zoom or Google Meet

COURSE OVERVIEW

This 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).

¹ 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.

² Prefer to meet virtually via Zoom or Google Meets because it is much easier.

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 10th edition. Sage/CQ Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

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

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Covid-19 Pandemic: The country is still in a pandemic! Vaccinations have helped reduce the number of infections but the virus continues to mutate. **All students are required to wear a mask in-class.** If you refuse to wear a mask, you will be dismissed from class and disciplinary action can begin against you. The variance in infections will also direct the attendance and meeting times of this class. In other words, our class schedule may become flexible.

Student effort: A university course is collaboration between student and professor. You are expected to do all the readings for the course and to read them on time. Lecture material supplements, it does not repeat text material, the reading assignments are yours, not mine to do for you. As a rule, you should be prepared to spend at least 2 hours of your time working on this course outside of class for every hour you spend in class. It is your responsibility to do the reading, studying and outside assignments for the course. If you are having difficulties understanding the material and/or the assignments, I will be glad to work with you outside class; however, you have the primary responsibility to give the course the attention it demands. You are expected to do the following:

- Read all the assigned course readings, prepare thoroughly;
- Participate in class discussions;
- Display appropriate courtesy, leave personal conversations in the hall;
- Adhere to course deadlines and timetables;
- Provide constructive feedback; challenge each other intellectually, be respectful of others and different opinions. We all have different views, let's agree to disagree accordingly.

Attendance: This is not High School! Class attendance is strongly encouraged. Regular attendance is expected and it is extremely difficult to do well in this course without attending on a regular basis. Participation is a factor in determining your final grade—it is impossible to participate if you do not attend. I may feel it necessary to take attendance in order to provide extra points on exams for those who are putting forth the effort to come to class.

Smokeless Tobacco Use: If you are one who indulges in the use of smokeless tobacco, leave this outside the class. The discharge of unwanted tobacco juice in class is a distraction to others and has public health risks. So before coming to class, **UNPACK THE LIP!**

Participation: Ask questions concerning the readings, instructor discussion, and comments of your classmates. Participation challenges intellect! Don't be afraid to ask questions or pose interesting comments. Provide constructive feedback and respect the exchange of information from your classmates.

Make-up Examinations: All exams are delivered online and you have several days to complete them. If a student has a University-approved excuse (via Student Development and Orientation) AND if the instructor is notified PRIOR to the examination, arrangements for a make-up will be made. If a student fails to notify the instructor, the student will receive a zero for the exam. Please note: I reserve the right to develop and administer a different exam if a make-up is given. Exams missed due to court appearances in which you are a defendant; do not count as a legitimate excuse. For any other questions regarding approved excuses consult: <http://www.sdo.wiu.edu/handbook/handbook.pdf>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING³

UNDERSTAND THE ASSIGNMENTS

This is an in-class course meaning we will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM. However, the course outline shows, the course is divided into eight (8) modules. Each module has chapter readings, PowerPoints, an online discussion and written assignment **You will have thirteen (13) days to complete a module, which begins on Tuesday, August 23 at 12:01 AM. The module will close on the second following Monday 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. **All online discussions, written assignments and exams must be submitted electronically to course website at Western Online.**

In-class meetings will have overview of topics and chapters assigned as well as in-depth discussion on related current political events. 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.

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

³ During the semester there are scheduled weeks we will not meet, however, online discussions, written assignments will be due on scheduled dates.

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 (1st original post + 2 other student responses) and quality of your participation. A rubric is 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 modules 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 three regular exams are worth 100 points.** Exams will open for four (4) days on designated dates. **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.** Exam three is the 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 = 240
Written Assignments	6@50 = 300
Exams	3 @100 = 300
Total Points	840

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

$830/840 = .98 \times 100 = 98\%$ 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

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). 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 24-48 hours after I receive your message. That said, since all communications are not done in real-time, you should not expect instant responses from your fellow students and me. **I cannot stress this enough; when sending an email or text please indicate what class you are attending (POLS 122, POLS 300, POLS 494, etc). I have three classes to teach this semester. Otherwise I will not respond!**

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 discussions can still be a 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 composing 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. 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: <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/sex-discrimination/title-ix-education-amendments/index.html>

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
MODULE 1 8/23-9/5	Politics: Who Gets What and How and American Citizens and Political Culture	Barbour and Wright Chapter 1-2 Discussion 1 Due: 9/5@ 11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment 1: <i>Political Typology</i> Due: 9/5@ 11:59nPM at Western Online
MODULE 2 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 Discussion 2 Due: 9/19@11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment 2: <i>Understanding the Constitution</i> Due: 9/19@11:59 PM at Western Online
MODULE 3 9/20—10/3	Federalism	Barbour and Wright Chapter 4 Discussion 3 Due: 10/3 @11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment 3: <i>University of the Republic</i> Due 10/3 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online Exam 1 Covers Chapters 1-4 and 16. Exam opens 9/24/2022 @ 12:00 AM and closes 9/29/2022 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online

MODULE/DATE	TOPIC(S)	READING, DISCUSSION, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
MODULE 4 10/4—10/17* <i>Week of 10/17-10/21 there are no in-class meetings. Work will be online.</i>	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	Barbour and Wright Chapter 5-6 Discussion: 4 Due: 10/17@ 11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment 4: <i>Written Exercise</i> Due: 10/17 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online
MODULE 5 10/18—10/31	Congress, President, The Judicial, and Bureaucracy	Barbour and Wright Chapters 7-10 Online Discussion: 5 Due: 10/31@ 11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment 5: <i>Finding a U.S. Supreme Court Case</i> Due: 10/31 @11:59 PM at Western Online Exam: 2 Covers Chapters 5-10. Exam opens 10/23/2022 @ 12:00 AM and closes 10/27/2022 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online
MODULE 6 11/1—11/14* <i>* Week of 11/7—11/11 there are no in-class meetings. Work will be online.</i>	Media and Public Opinion	Barbour and Wright Chapter 11 and 15 Online Discussion: 6 Due: 11/14 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment 6: <i>Writing Exercise</i> Due: 11/14@ 11:59 PM at Western Online
MODULE 7 11/15—11/28* *Thanksgiving Week 11/21-11/25 No classes	Elections	Barbour and Wright Chapter 14 Online Discussion: 7 Due: 11/28@ 11:59 PM at Western Online Written Assignment : NONE
MODULE 8 11/29—12/12	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Barbour and Wright Chapter 12-13 Online Discussion: 8 Due: 12/12 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online Final Paper: <i>What Political Party Do You Favor?</i> Due: 12/12 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online
FINAL EXAM WEEK 12/11—12/16		Exam: 3⁴ Covering Chapters 11-15* Exam 3 opens 12/11/2022 and closes 12/15/2022 @ 11:59 PM at Western Online

⁴ Exam 3 must be completed on or before December 15, 2022 @11:59 PM

