

**POLS 122: Introduction to American Government**

**Fall 2022**

**MWF 10-1050**

**Morgan 316**

**Dr. Casey LaFrance Office: Morgan 413**

**E-mail: [tc-lafrance@wiu.edu](mailto:tc-lafrance@wiu.edu)**

**Office Hours (Virtual, Email, or Phone will be the default; Face to face meetings are available upon request and appointment) MWF 11-12, Tues 1:30-2:30**

**(Please let me know 24 hours in advance if you would like to video chat over Zoom or Skype or set up a face to face meeting in a conference room).**

**Course Description:**

American Government affects each of us on a daily basis. It is my hope that this class will help you to become more aware of your own interactions with government. Furthermore, this class will introduce you to various arguments about the size, scope, and functions of government. Finally, this course will introduce you to the institutions and organizations that carry out the work of governance.

**Course Objectives, Your Responsibilities, and My Responsibilities**

The most important course objective is to provide an environment in which genuine learning takes place. To this end, each of us has an obligation to read (and re-read if necessary) the assigned works prior to each course session. Additionally, each of us has an obligation to respectfully listen AND speak to other students and the professor. Finally, for each course meeting, we all must bring our questions and concerns related to the readings and discussions. In addition to, or perhaps in pursuit of, this overarching objective, the following outcomes are also desirable:

To identify about government institutions, organizations, actors, groups, and processes

To develop citizenship skills

To develop an appreciation for the many challenges and controversies in American government To have fun!

**My commitment: I will be 100% available for any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions that you wish to proffer. You may call, e-mail, visit my office, or leave an anonymous note with the department's office manager at any point during the semester. I promise that I will do all I can to answer your questions and consider your suggestions to**

**improve the course. This course is for YOU, so take advantage of these opportunities! Your commitment: To attend each course session unless a major catastrophe or health concern prevents you from doing so; To come prepared to ask questions, offer insightful comments, and listen to your classmates. To offer the highest quality versions of your own original work for performance evaluation (grading).**

#### **Required Text:**

**Janda, et. al. *The Challenge of Democracy* (14th Edition). Cengage. ISBN: [9781305954922](#) CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY**

**Academic Integrity:** Please refer to you undergraduate or graduate handbook for WIU's policy on Academic Integrity (for Plagiarism and other forms of cheating). It is impossible to learn from one another if any of us recycle the ideas of others. Please turn in your own original work, use quotation marks “ “ when quoting a source, and use a recognized citation style (preferably APA). Please do not speak to one another during the course of an exam. If I suspect that you may be cheating, I will contact the University Judicial Office or take other necessary measures. If your actions are judged as academically dishonest, you will receive an automatic zero on the assignment.

#### **Decorum/Proper Conduct**

**\*\*\*Policy on Face Coverings in the Classroom (Should we revert back to masking, etc.)\*\*\***

**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. 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)**

Treat one another (and me) with respect and civility. Don't be afraid to express your opinions, but also don't be afraid to listen to (and maybe even learn from) the opinions of your classmates. I reserve the right to ask you to leave the course if you are disruptive, violent, etc

Students with Disabilities

*Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, [disability@wiu.edu](mailto:disability@wiu.edu) or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.*

## **TITLE IX**

*University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit 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 anonymously 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>. Web*

*address for student rights and responsibilities: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> Web*

*address for Academic Integrity Policy: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>*

**Assignments and Grading**

**I. Participation 50%**

**25% Assignments for Class Discussion (Due on Wednesdays throughout semester)**

**THESE ASSIGNMENTS WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED ONLINE, VIA WESTERN ONLINE'S DISCUSSION BOARD**

**(5 total, 5 points each, 25 points total)**

You will be asked to complete five assignments for class discussion throughout the semester and to make a comment or ask a question on a classmate's post for each assignment **(5 times throughout the semester, due the same day as your corresponding assignment)**. Instructions for each assignment are below. **Please post these assignments to the discussion board on WesternOnline prior to class time on the day they are due. Pay attention to due dates, always on WEDNESDAY.**

ASSIGNMENT	TITLE	INSTRUCTIONS	DUE DATE
<b>1 Ideolog/Political Compass Inventory Discussion Board Classmate Question or Comment Due</b>	How well do you know yourself? How would you classify your political ideology? You will complete one of two inventories, the IDEALOG or the Political Compass inventories. Once you've taken one, print out the results	page. Where did you land? Is this where you thought you'd end up? Were there any flaws with the manner by which questions were asked on either inventory? Bring your results and your reaction notes to class.	Weds, Week 3

2	<b>Interest Group Website Evaluation</b>  <b>Discussion Board Classmate Question or Comment Due</b>	<p>Find an interest group at any level of government, involved in any issue. What is the mission of the group? How do they recruit members? Do they lobby primarily at the local, state, federal, or international level? Would you consider membership? Why or why not? Bring your findings and responses to class.</p>	Weds, Week 7
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3	<b>Free Writing Exercise</b>  <b>Discussion Board Classmate Question or Comment Due</b>	<p>Take a few moments to reflect on your time at WIU. What have you learned about yourself as a student? As a citizen? What would you tell next year's freshman class?</p>	Weds, Week 8
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4	<p><b>General Education Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Discussion Board Classmate Question or Comment Due</b></p>	<p>Find the website of a public agency. In which policy arena(s) does this agency work? Which other agencies/political officials interact with this agency? What is the agency's mission? How does it intend to achieve its goals en route to fulfilling this mission (look at mission statement,</p>	<p>Weds, Week 12 *First Draft*</p>
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		<p>strategic reports, and/or budget documents)?</p> <p><b>*You will be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit this assignment for assessment purposes*</b></p>	
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5	<b>Social or Economic Policy Position Statement Discussion Board Classmate Question or Comment Due</b>	Pick a social policy that interests you (gun control, abortion, same-sex marriage, etc.) and reveal your stance on this issue. Why do you feel the way you do? How might your childhood and early adulthood experiences have led you to feel this way?	Weds, Week 13
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### **25% Quizzes (25 points total)**

There are several quizzes in this course, all of which are available on WesternOnline. You may use notes, textbooks, or online information for each of these quizzes).

Depending on the course of the semester, you may have a group or individual activity or a list of questions to which you must respond. Typically, these will take place on select Fridays throughout the semester. Plan on Online Only Quizzes for now.

### **MAKE UP POLICY FOR ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, and QUIZZES**

You are a valuable member of this learning community, and our class will suffer in your absence from our discussions. Because of this, I will only CONSIDER offering makeup opportunities if you provide documentation to explain and excuse your absence. You have a one-week window from the time you missed an assignment or quiz to petition for a make-up. After this one-week window has closed, I will not consider your request for a makeup. If you miss an exam, and have a VERY COMPELLING reason, I will consider offering a make-up exam. Late assignments will automatically receive a 10 percent deduction for each class session past the due date IF you are

allowed to turn them in. I will not consider make-up work for quizzes/group assignments missed due to unexcused absences. It is your responsibility to inquire about make up assignments.

Come to Class and Stay on Schedule, and you'll never have to worry about making up an assignment or quiz or exam.

**Exams: 25 Points Each x 2 = 50 Points**

There are two examinations in this course, a mid-term and a final. The mid-term should cover material up to the middle of the semester. The final will not be cumulative, per se, but will require you to use knowledge acquired during the first half of the course. Test questions may be multiple choice, short answer, matching, essay, or some other format. You will have at least one day of class dedicated to reviewing for each exam. You will have two exams available on WesternOnline.

**Total: 100 points possible (100%)**

Grading: A=90+; B+=85-89; B=82-84;B-=80-81;C+=75-79; C=72-74; C-=70-71;D+=65-69; D=62-64; D-=60-61; F= <60.

**Extra Credit Statement: Other than bonus questions on exams no other forms of Extra Credit will be given or considered.**

**Schedule: Please Note that the scheduled contained in this syllabus is subject to change and/or revision at the discretion of the instructor. Please come to class so that you may keep up with the activities of this course.**

**Additional reading assignments (e.g., Journal Articles, etc.) will be announced as the course progresses. Please make sure that you complete ALL readings before the class session in which they will be discussed. All Articles Listed on this Syllabus are available on J-Stor or On-line.**

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*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>.

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Web address for Academic Integrity Policy: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

**Name, Pronoun, or Other Requests:** Please let me know if you prefer to be called by a name other than the one indicated on the official university roster. Please also feel free to let me know if there are any preferred pronouns you'd like me to use when discussing your ideas.

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## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1:**

#### **Monday 08/22-Friday 08/26**

Introduction to the Course and Each Other :)

Roles/Purposes of Government/Social Contract Theory

Original vs Modern Dilemmas: Freedom vs. Order and Freedom vs. Equality

Please Read:

<https://iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/#SH2a>

<https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/2022/01/how-thomas-hobbes-shapes-modern-politics>

## **WEEK 2**

Monday 08/29-Friday 09/02

Ideology and Types of Government Arrangements

Models of Democracy

Please Read:

Janda, Chapters 1-2

## **WEEK 3**

09/05: LABOR DAY!!

Class meets 09/07-09/09

The Articles of Confederation

The Constitution

The Founding

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 3

## **WEEK 4**

09/12-09/16

Federalism & Intergovernmental Relations

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 4

## **WEEK 5**

09/19-09/23

Public Opinion

Political Socialization

## Media & Government

Please Read: Janda, Chapters 5-6

### **WEEK 6**

09/26-09/30

Citizen Participation

Civic Engagement

Empowerment Seminar!

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 7

### **WEEK 7**

10/3-10/7

Pluralism and Lobbying

The True Desires of Interest Groups

Brief on Campaign Finance and Lobbying

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 10

### **WEEK 8**

**10/10-10/12**

**10/12: Midterm Exam!!**

**10/14: FALL BREAK!!!**

### **WEEK 9**

10/17-10/21

Political Parties in Government and Electorate; Party Organizations

Campaigns and Elections

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 8-9

### **WEEK 10**

10/24-10/28

Supreme Court

Federal Court System

Please Read: Janda, Chapters 14-16

**WEEK 11**

10/31-11/04

Congress

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 11

**WEEK 12**

11/7-11/11

The Presidency

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 12

**WEEK 13**

11/14-11/18

The Bureaucracy

Please Read: Janda, Chapter 13

**WEEK 14**

**11/21-11/25: THANKSGIVING!!!**

**WEEK 15**

11/28-12/2

Introduction to the Policy Process and Brief on Economic and Social Policy

Please Read: Janda, Chapters 17-18

**WEEK 16**

12/5-12/9

**FINAL EXAM REVIEW**

**Week 17**

**12/12**

**FINAL EXAM!!!**

**MONDAY 10 AM**