

POLS 100-501 (Power and Politics in America)

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Department of Political Science
Summer 2019

Instructor: Clarisse Warren

Office: (location redacted)

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:35-2:30 pm or by appointment

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Class Meetings: MTWRF 11:00am-12:35pm (location redacted)

Course Information

This course will provide you with an introduction into American politics, government, and the dynamics of power found within the American political system. This course will seek to meet three main objectives. First, students should demonstrate a better understanding of the American political system. Second, students should recognize the many ways citizens can become personally involved in the American system. Finally, students should develop an improved understanding of the ways political scientists have approached the study of politics.

By the end of the course, students will have gained a solid understanding of how to navigate the complex American political system and an appreciation of the connections between social science research and applied politics. Together, these will help you to become more critical and informed consumers of political news and information. Since the American political system affects our lives in many ways, having the tools necessary to be informed and engaged citizens will benefit students of all majors.

Textbook

Bond, Jon R., and Kevin B. Smith. 2016. *Analyzing American Democracy: Politics and Political Science* 2nd Ed. (New York: Routledge). **Second Edition saves you money!** (Herein after referred to Bond & Smith or B&S)

ACE Information

POLS 100 has been approved as an ACE course fulfilling requirements for Learning Outcome #6 (“Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior.”) and Learning Outcome #8 (“Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.”). Opportunities to achieve these outcomes will be provided by attending class lectures. Your ability to achieve these outcomes will be assessed in your two exams.

Course Requirements

Although this is an introductory course, you are expected to participate. This course is designed for students to be engaged with the material as well as the class. The course will be roughly 50 percent lecture and 50 percent discussion based. You are expected to read the assigned material

before each class meeting and be prepared for note taking as well as class discussions. The assignment details are listed below.

Exams

There will be 2 exams in this course. Exams will be primarily multiple choice, but may include some short answer or fill in the blank questions. Since the course covers a copious amount of information in a relatively short time period, the exams will only cover new material.

Class Participation & Reform Proposals

Participation in class is essential. Each day students should come prepared, ready to contribute to the classroom discussions. You will be graded based on the number and quality of your contributions to class. Students are expected to participate every day, but once a week there is a day in which students will be especially active in discussing the reform proposals. Reform proposals will consist of challenges to the way in which American politics currently operates. Half of the class will be asked to defend the reform proposal and the other half of the class will get to tell us why the reform is a terrible idea. This is not meant to be a structured debate, but rather a way for us to consider all perspectives surrounding the reform proposals.

Critical Connections Mini-papers

Each day, students will come to class with a “Critical Connections” paper. These Critical Connections papers are comprised of 3 short (3-4 sentences each) critical connections you have made with the readings. Critical Connections can include questions you have about the material, a current event that applies to the reading, analysis of the reading, or anything that you found interesting. I want to know how the material matters to you. These papers will be picked up at the end of class randomly throughout the semester. I may not pick them up every day, but it is in your best interest to be prepared with a hard copy. A template can be found on Canvas, and these papers can be either typed or hand-written.

Final Paper

The final paper for the course will address principles related to American politics. For this assignment, you will use the textbook as well as outside resources including journal articles and news sources to examine how ethics, stewardship, and civic engagement are important to some aspect of American politics. The paper must be 4-5 double spaced pages in length not including references. Details about the paper will be discussed during the second week of the course.

Attendance

Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences during this course without any impact on the attendance portion of the grade. For each additional absence, students will lose 3 points. If a student needs to miss class for any reason, please let the instructor know as soon as possible.

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Points
Exams	200
Critical Connections	50
In-Class Discussion	50
Final Paper	150
Attendance	50
TOTAL	500

The following grading scale will be used based on the total number of points you receive:

97-100% = A+	87-89.9% = B+	77-79.9% = C+	67-69.9% = D+
93-96.9% = A	83-86.9% = B	73-76.9% = C	63-66.9% = D
90-92.9% = A-	80-82.9% = B-	70-72.9% = C-	60-62.9% = D-
			59.9% and below = F

if you are concerned about your grade, talk to me sooner rather than later

Course Policies

Deadlines

The deadlines listed on the course schedule are set. I will not accept late assignments or allow students to take missed exams. If you have a verified excuse, such as a University sponsored event or medical emergency, you should notify the instructor immediately. If you have a valid/verified excuse you may be granted an exception at the instructor's discretion.

Questions about the Course

The best way to reach me is through email. When sending emails please include the course number (POLS 100) in the subject line as well as what the email is concerning (e.g. Question about Exam 1). I will do my best to respond to students' questions within 24 hours. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please send your email again. I am also available during office hours. Additionally, I will announce information regarding questions and assignments in class as well as in Canvas.

Conduct

We will be discussing politics and many hot-button issues. I understand that some students

may possess deeply held beliefs. The course is not meant to change beliefs, but to create an open dialogue about differing opinions and viewpoints. Students are asked to keep an open mind, attempt to understand other perspectives, and maintain a professional level of courtesy to everyone who enters the classroom. **Personal attacks will not be tolerated**, and repeated instances of it will result in expulsion from the classroom for the day. Our objective is to understand political disagreements, not promote them.

Academic Misconduct Warning

Academic dishonesty in all forms will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any violations will automatically be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. For your reference, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, and misrepresentation to avoid academic work. Ignorance of what is academically dishonest is not an acceptable excuse (nor is any other excuse you may come up with). If you are unsure about referencing a source or whether a particular action is considered to be dishonest, please ask your instructor right away.

If it is found that you have cheated or plagiarized any part of your work, you will receive an F for the entire course, no questions asked. Additionally, your name will be referred to UNL Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action, which can include academic probation or expulsion from the university (See Section 4.2 of the Student Code of Conduct)

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. If you have disabilities or special needs that require academic accommodation, I ask that you notify me of those conditions and requested accommodations during the first week of class (By June 9th). It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Changes to this syllabus: This syllabus is subject to change to accommodate student interests, current events, schedule changes (e.g., due to weather or illness), or unforeseen opportunities or challenges. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
1	6/10	Course Introduction & The Foundations of American Government	Chapter 1	
	6/11	The Constitution & Federalism	Chapters 2 & 3	Critical Connections
	6/12	Discussion of Reform Proposals: (1) We should abolish the first amendment. (2) The federal government should legalize marijuana.		
	6/13	Civil Liberties	Chapter 4	Critical Connections
	6/14	Movie: 13 th (Documentary)		
2	6/17	Civil Rights	Chapter 5	Critical Connections
	6/18	Movie: Selma		
	6/19	Discussion of Reform Proposals: (1) We should have an equal rights amendment to the constitution that protects all minority groups, including women. (2) We should limit who can contribute (and how much they can give) to political campaigns.		
	6/20	Interest Groups	Chapter 6	Critical Connections
	6/21	Political Parties Party	Chapter 7	
3	6/24	Mass Media & Politics	Chapter 8	Critical Connections
	6/25	Discussion of Reform Proposal: (1)The government should regulate the media to prevent biased or fake news from being spread. (2) We should have mandatory voting in the United States		
	6/26	Exam Review		
	6/27	Exam		
	6/28	Campaigns & Elections	Chapters 10 &11	Critical Connections
4	7/1	Movie: Journeys with George		
	7/2	Legislative Branch	Chapter 12	Critical Connections
	7/3	Executive Branch	Chapter 13	Critical Connections
	7/4	NO CLASS: INDEPENDENCE DAY		
	7/5	Discussion of Reform Proposals: (1) We should abolish the Senate. (2) We should abolish the Electoral College.		

5	7/8	Judicial Branch	Chapter 15	Critical Connections
	7/9	Movie: RBG		
	7/10	Political Socialization & Behavior	Chapter 9	Critical Connections
	7/11	Course Wrap-up & Exam Review		
	7/12	Final Exam		Final Paper due by 7/12 at 11:59pm

*This schedule is a tentative plan and is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.