

Introduction to American Government

POLS 101 - Spring 2021

Instructor name: Professor E.J. Fagan	CRN/Course Number: 42073
Office location: Zoom: 952 757 7160 Link	Times and days class meets: TTh 12:30-1:30pm
Office hours scheduling: https://calendly.com/ejfagan	Classroom location: Online
E-mail address: ejfagan@uic.edu	Office hours: M/W 3:30pm-5:00pm (virtual)

Teaching Assistant: Amir Toumie	
Office location: Zoom (link)	
Office hours scheduling: https://calendly.com/amirtoumie	
E-mail address: atoumi2@uic.edu	Office hours: Th 11:30am-12:30pm

Course Description, Goals, and Objectives

In this class, students will survey American government and politics. Students will learn the structure of American politics and policymaking at the state and federal levels. The course will also cover basic skills necessary to understand American politics, such as data literacy, analytical reading and critical thinking.

Class Location

Class will take place on Zoom. You can access the Zoom link on Blackboard.

Course Materials

Grutz and Waskiewicz, American Government 2e, OpenStax. Available for free online [here](#).

Supplemental readings, videos and podcasts as specified in the schedule below.

Course Evaluation

- Reaction papers (do 4 of 12): 32%
- Interactive written assignments (do 3 of 4): 45%
- Take-Home final exam: 20%
- Free points: 3%
- Extra credit: attend and summarize an academic talk, seminar or panel (2% each, up to 3)

Reaction Papers

The syllabus contains 12 assigned videos, podcasts and written material in addition to your textbook. Over the course of the semester, you will write four one-page reaction papers. The papers should summarize the material and briefly react to it.

Interactive Written Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will complete three interactive written assignments. These assignments will ask you to observe political activity in the real world and react to them in a 2-page written assignment.

Take-Home Final

Students will be asked to answer four questions about important themes of the course. They will be open book. A successful answer will extensively refer to lecture slides, textbook readings and assigned supplementary material.

Free Points: I like evenly divisible numbers, so you get free points!

Extra Credit: Academic Talk

UIC is an “R1” research university. Its faculty spend much (in some cases, most) of their time doing scientific research. Often, we present our research or interpretations of our research in public events at the university. You should attend these talks! They are opportunities available to you as a student at a major research university that are not available at other universities.

After attending the talk, write a one-page paper. Briefly summarize the topic, who spoke and what they said. Then, provide a brief reaction. What did you learn from the talk? What do you think about their arguments? Are they right or wrong?

The Political Science Department is sponsoring several talks this semester. I will provide scheduling information to these talks in class. However, you may go to talks sponsored by any department. Find something you are interested in!

All written assignments must be submitted to SafeAssign to check for plagiarism.

How to Succeed in this Course

- 1) **Closely read all of the assigned readings.** There will be questions on take-home exam based on material contained in the reading, but not directly covered in class. Furthermore, all of your written assignments will depend to some degree on information from the reading.
- 2) **Attend every class.** We will cover material in class that may not be present in the reading, which you will be responsible for on exams and written work. Furthermore, class instruction will reinforce and synthesize material. Students who regularly attend class will almost always perform better than students who do not.
- 3) **Pay attention to details on your written assignments.** Poorly written work will be loosely argued, sloppily written, and will not reference material from class. Well written assignments will be tightly argued with a clear thesis, well written, and will engage material from class.
- 4) **Come to office hours.** I am always happy to help any student in office hours who needs assistance understanding material, writing assignments, or connecting the course to their academic and career goals. If you are unable during my office hours, I will make my best effort to accommodate your schedule.

Policy for Missed or Late Work

Life happens. Something may happen this semester that makes it difficult or impossible to complete an assignment on time. If something happens or you are feeling overwhelmed, please email me and we can discuss an extension. However, it is very important to do so before the assignment is due. I will be less lenient with requests that come after the due date.

Unexcused late assignments will be penalized by one point per day. No assignments will be accepted more than a week after they are due. No reaction papers will be accepted late.

It is your responsibility to properly submit assignments to Blackboard. Assignments that we cannot access will be considered late.

Extra Credit Policy

Any extra credit assignments will be made available to the entire class. No individual extra credit assignments will be made available.

Grading

Grade	Cutoff
A	89.5%
B	79.5%
C	69.5%
D	64.5%
F	<64.5%

Grade Appeals

You have the right to appeal your grade on any assignment. The course teaching assistant will perform the initial evaluation of the work. If you believe that the teaching assistant made an honest mistake in grading the assignment, please email them and explain the mistake they made. The teaching assistant has the authority to change their grade if they agree with your assessment. If you disagree with the TA's assessment, you may appeal the grade to me. I will re-grade the assignment without knowledge of the grade assigned by the teaching assistant. All appeals must be made in writing (email) within one week of the assignment being returned.

Electronic Communication

My email is ejfagan@uic.edu. I will do my best to respond to emails as quickly as possible during business hours. To ensure that I see your email, please use the term "POLS 101:" in the email subject line.

Office Hours

My office hours are from 3:30-5:00pm on Monday and Wednesday. This time belongs to you. If you have any questions about the course, want to go over material that you struggled with, need help with an assignment or are just interested in talking about politics, your career or your experience at UIC, please come to my office hours and let's talk.

To schedule an office hours appointment, go to <https://calendly.com/ejfagan>. The Zoom room for office hours will be different than the one that I use in class:

952 757 7160

<https://uic.zoom.us/my/ejfagan?pwd=a2xMKzl1MGw5SjdUUGFCY3FIUVJkUT09>

If you cannot make my office hours but would like to talk, please email me to request an appointment. I will do my best to accommodate your schedule.

Attendance

I do not take attendance. However, it is in your best interest to attend all classes.

If you do miss class, please ask a fellow student what material was covered. Professors do not like to be asked in an email, "What did I miss." However, you are always welcome to come to office hours to discuss material from class, even if you did not attend that session.

Student Courtesy Policy

In this class, we will discuss important issues of public policy and politics. It is important that students can voice their opinions without feeling attacked by their peers. All students must respect their peers, even if they disagree with their opinions.

Academic Integrity Policy

As an academic community, UIC is committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, and administrators—share the responsibility of insuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists. Instances of academic misconduct by students will be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy: <https://dos.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/262/2018/10/DOS-Student-Disciplinary-Policy-2018-2019-FINAL.pdf>

Week/Day/Date	Topic/Activity During Class	Reading	Assignments Due
1/12	Course Introduction		
1/14	Democratic Government	Chapter 1	
1/19	Democratic Government	Podcast: Do We Need a Congress?	Reaction Paper #1
1/21	The Constitution	Chapter 2	
1/26	Federalism	Chapter 3	
1/28	Federalism	Podcast: Why Local Government Doesn't Work Anymore	Reaction Paper #2
2/2	Civil Rights and Race	Chapters 4-5	
2/4	Civil Rights and Race	Podcast: Devaluing Black Assets	Reaction Paper #3
2/9	Public Opinion and Elections	Chapters 6-7	Assignment #1: Local Government
2/11	Public Opinion and Elections	Podcast: Public Opinion	Reaction Paper #4
2/16	Political Parties	Chapter 9	
2/18	Political Parties	Podcast: Interview with a party activist	Reaction Paper #5
2/23	Congress	Chapter 11	
2/25	Congress	Report: Congressional Brain Drain	Reaction Paper #6
3/2	The Presidency	Chapter 12	Assignment #2: Congressional hearing
3/4	The Presidency		
3/9	The Executive Branch	Chapter 15	
3/11	The Executive Branch	Video: Net Neutrality Video: Net Neutrality II Video: Net Neutrality III	Reaction Paper #7
3/16	The Courts	Chapter 13	
3/18	Media	Chapter 8	Assignment #3: Biden Appointee
3/23	Spring Break		
3/25	Spring Break		
3/30	Interest Groups and Lobbying	Chapter 10 Podcast: Interview with a lobbyist	Reaction Paper #8
4/1	Interest Groups and Lobbying	Podcast: What are the politics of protest?	Reaction Paper #9
4/6	Public Policy Process	Chapter 16	
4/8	Public Policy Process		Assignment #4: Profile an interest group
4/13	Food Aid	Paper: SNAP benefits and academic performance	
4/15	Climate Change Policy	Podcast: Climate Change	Reaction Paper #10

4/20	<i>Foreign Policy</i>		
4/22	<i>Anti-Trust Policy</i>	<i>Podcast: Apple's App Store</i>	<i>Reaction Paper #11</i>
4/27	<i>Tax and Budget Policy</i>		
4/29	<i>Housing Policy</i>	<i>Article: The Racist Origins of Exclusionary Zoning</i>	<i>Reaction Paper #12</i>

Religious Holidays

Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the faculty member by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the faculty member at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize the student for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give the student an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. If the student feels aggrieved, he/she may request remedy through the campus grievance procedure.

<https://oae.uic.edu/religious-calendar/>

Academic Deadlines

As they apply to 15-week terms or summer sessions, see the Academic Calendar:

<https://catalog.uic.edu/ucatalog/academic-calendar/>

Disability Accommodation

The University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535 (VP/Relay) and consult the following:

<http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations.>

Grievance Procedures

UIC is committed to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity involving students and employees. Freedom from discrimination is a foundation for all decision making at UIC. Students are encouraged to study the University's "[Nondiscrimination Statement](#)". Students are also urged to read the document "[Public Formal Grievance Procedures](#)". Information on these policies and procedures is available on the University web pages of the Office of Access and Equity: <http://oae.uic.edu/>.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

Student evaluations of teaching play a fundamental role in improving course content, format, and delivery (teaching) at UIC. The Office for Faculty Affairs offers all Colleges and Departments the opportunity to participate in an *online* course evaluation system.

Students receive an email invitation in their 'uic.edu' inbox with the following title in the subject line: "UIC Student Evaluation of Teaching [Course Name] [Instructor Name] [Semester, Year]." The

body of the email will reiterate the course name, instructor name, and semester. It will contain a link and a unique student password for the online evaluation for that course. Students will need an electronic device with Internet access to complete the evaluation online. **Submitted course evaluations cannot be removed from the system** so it is vital that students pay attention to the *instructor name* and *course name* when completing their evaluations. **Students must complete the online evaluations before 12 am on the first day of finals.** No exceptions are made if the evaluation is not submitted before 12 am on the first day of finals.

For more information about the program and timelines for when the system is open to students to complete the evaluations, please visit:

<https://faculty.uic.edu/development/teachingandlearning/evaluations/>

UIC Resources

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! Come to me, or if it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your college advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus. You can get a referral to the right place, or help on the spot, from concerned advisor in the Undergraduate Success Center (USC) at usc@uic.edu.

See also:

The Writing Center, located in Grant Hall 105, offers one-on-one consultation with student writers who need help developing ideas, or need advice, guidance or additional instruction on any aspects of writing in any class. Tutors are prepared to spend fifty minutes per appointment, and there is no limit to the number of tutoring sessions you can have each semester. Make an appointment and be on time! Bring the paper on which you're working, as well as any related drafts or notes, and information about the assignment. For an appointment, call the Writing Center at (312) 413-2206, or stop by room 105 of Grant Hall. Visit the Writing Center website at for more information. <https://writingcenter.uic.edu/>

The Math and Science Learning Center, located in the Science and Engineering South Building (SES) at 845 W. Taylor St. 3rd Floor, Room 247, is a meeting place for students in Math, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Physics. At the MSLC, students can meet with graduate teaching assistants for tutoring in 100-level courses, arrange informal group study sessions with other students, or meet up with friends to attend one of the workshops, seminars, or other activities sponsored by the SLC during the semester. Visit the website at <https://mslc.uic.edu/>, call 312-355-4900 or email at mslc@uic.edu.

The UIC Library

The library is located both on east and west campus, provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person. At Daley Library on the east side of campus, stop by the reference desk in the IDEA Commons, or make an appointment for research help on either side of campus. Learn more about library policies at <http://library.uic.edu/>. To find research materials in specific subject areas view the Research Guides at <http://researchguides.uic.edu/>.

Public Computer Labs

These labs are available throughout campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For a list of labs and the hours they're open, go to: <https://accc.uic.edu/services/computing/printing/>. NOTE: Do not wait until the last minute to print out papers. Sometimes labs have long lines of students waiting for access.

The Academic Center for Excellence can help if you feel you need more individualized instruction in reading and/or writing, study skills, time management, etc. Phone: (312) 413-0031.

Counseling Services are available for all UIC students. You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center www.counseling.uic.edu. The Counseling Center is located in the Student Services Building; you may contact them at (312) 996-3490. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline from 6:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis interventions; please call (312) 996-5535.

Campus Advocacy Network

Under the Title IX law you have the right to an education that is free from any form of gender-based violence and discrimination. Crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking are against the law and can be prevented. For more information or for confidential victim-services and advocacy contact UIC's Campus Advocacy Network at 312-413-1025 or visit <http://can.uic.edu/>. To make a report to UIC's Title IX office, email TitleIX@uic.edu or (312) 996-5657.

Campus Security

As a UIC student, you've chosen to live in one of the nation's largest cities. But, as at any university, crime is a reality. At UIC, we are strongly committed to our public safety programs, and we encourage students to be proactive in learning what programs and services are available in case of an emergency. You are DISCOURAGED from staying in university buildings alone, including lab rooms, after hours and are ENCOURAGED to use the POLICE/STUDENT patrol escort if you are uncomfortable traveling anywhere on campus. You may request an escort to accompany you to your campus destination on foot by calling 312-996-2830, and between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am you can dial the Red Car service (312-996-6800) if you are alone and need to leave the building. Through Red Car, the university has established a safe evening transportation service for university employees, students, visitors, and other authorized individuals. The car travels between university facilities within the following general boundaries: Clinton Street on the east; Western Avenue on the west; Jackson Boulevard on the north; and, 16th on the south. This service is available only to individuals possessing a valid UIC i-card. The i-card is required to ensure the safety of the driver and other passengers. Consult the following for more information: <http://www.uic.edu/uic/studentlife/campus/safety.shtml>

Also you can subscribe your cell phone to receive text message alerts. An immediate SMS text alert will be sent in case of a serious crime in progress, a weather emergency, or other urgent situation. (https://accountportal.uic.edu/auth/manage?dispatch=set_sms_panel).

Finally, by dialing 5-5555 from a campus phone, you can summon Police or Fire for any on-campus emergency. You may also set up the complete number, 1-312-355-5555, on speed-dial on your cell phone. For more information contact:

<http://www.uic.edu/uic/studentlife/campus/emergency-information.shtml>

Emergency Response Recommendations

The emergency response guide can be found at the following website: <https://ready.uic.edu/>. Please review and acquaint yourself with the guide and recommendations for various emergency situations.