

Political Science 101
Introduction to American Government and Politics
CRN 13190
Fall 2021
MW 1:00-1:50
ONLINE

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Syllabus

Due to the COVID situation, the format of this course will consist of on-line and in-person activities. Lectures will be presented on-line and “asynchronously,” which means that the lecture materials will be published weekly on Blackboard and students will have the responsibility for managing their schedules to read these materials in a timely fashion. Discussion sessions will be held in-person.

The objectives of this course are to introduce the student to the systematic study of the structure and function of the United States government and to provide a framework by which the student might come to develop an understanding of the historical, economic, political, and social culture this government represents.

To complete this course, the student will be responsible for completing

- four research projects, and
- weekly reflections covering the lecture materials and textbook chapters and for that week.

Each student’s grade will be based on these projects, the weekly reflections assignments, and discussion session participation.

The required textbook for the course is *American Government: Roots and Reform, 2020 Elections and Update Edition, (14th)*, by O’Connor and Sabato (ISBN 9780136900436). This text may be ordered from the UIC Bookstore in several formats.

Any student with special instructional needs is requested to discuss those needs with me at his or her earliest convenience.

This course will be administered through Blackboard: lectures will be made available through Blackboard and assignments will submitted and returned to the student through Blackboard. Students not having at-home access to Blackboard should contact the ACCC at consult.helpdesk@uic.edu.

Tentative Lecture Topic and Reading Assignment Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Text Reading	Reflections Due Date
Week 1	8/23/21	Lecture 1: Introduction	Chapter 1	9/3/21 20 Points
Weeks 2 and 3	8/30/21	Lecture 2: From Colonial Societies into a Nation Lecture 3: Becoming a Constitutional Republic	Chapters 2 and 3	9/17/21 40 Points
Week 4	9/13/21	Lecture 4: What Government Does— An Overview of Public Policy	Chapters 4 and 5	9/24/21 30 Points
Week 5	9/20/21	Lecture 5: Congress, Part I Lecture 6: Congress, Part II	Chapter 6	10/1/21 30 Points
Week 6	9/27/21	Lecture 7: The Presidency Lecture 8: The Presidency and the Executive Branch Lecture 9: The Executive Branch and Organizational Considerations	Chapters 7 and 8	10/8/21 50 Points
Week 7	10/4/21	Lecture 10: The Judiciary	Chapter 9	10/15/21 20 Points
Week 8	10/11/21	Lecture 11: Political Socialization Lecture 12: Political Parties in the US	Chapters 10 and 11	10/22/21 40 Points

Week	Date	Topic	Text Reading	Reflections Due Date
Week 9	10/18/21	Lecture 13: Voting and Elections Lecture 14: Presidential Elections and Campaigning “After the Voting Rights Act of 1965”	Chapter 12	10/29/21 40 Points
Week 10	10/25/21	Lecture 15: The Media Lecture 16: Public Policy and Interest Groups	Chapters 13 and 14	11/5/21 40 Points
Weeks 11 and 12	11/1/21	Lecture 17: Social Welfare Policy Lecture 18: Economic Policy	Chapter 15	11/12/21 50 Points
Week 13	11/15/21	Lecture 19: Foreign Affairs and Defense Policy	Chapter 16	11/19/21 30 Points
Week 14	11/22/21	Special Topics		TBD
Week 15	11/29/21	Special Topics		TBD

Assignments and Grading

1. Colonial Development Report	100 points	9/24/21
2. Presidential Campaign Report	100 points	10/15/21
3. Policy Analysis Report	100 points	10/22/21
4. Village Board/City Council Observation Report	100 points	11/12/21
5. Weekly Reflections	390 points	Throughout course
6. Discussion Session Participation	130 points (10 points * 13)	Throughout course
Total	920 points	

- A = 90+%;
- B = 80-89 %;
- C = 70-79 %;
- D = 60-69 %; and
- F = less than 60%.

1. Colonial Development Report (100 points)

In order to see how the U.S. was formed from a set of small settlements, you will be assigned a colony on which you will prepare a brief report. For the colony on which you are reporting, you will identify the following:

- A. The year it was founded, its purpose (if any), and its Sponsor.
- B. The social status of the original settlers (workers, peasants, Nobles?).
- C. The religions represented among the initial settlers.
- D. The initial organization of the settlement (allocation of jobs, allocation of land, governing council?).
- E. The final organization of the Colony (colonial government).
- F. The population at the time of Statehood.

Your report should include at least five academic or official government sources, all of which you will cite. Please refer to the UIC policies governing citations and academic integrity for more information about citations. Your report is to be typed and utilize Times New Roman font size 12 with one-inch margins. It is anticipated your report will be approximately eight to ten pages in length.

You will be assigned your colony by September 3, 2021. The written report will be due September 24, 2021. You will also be required to present a brief (5-7 minutes) summary of your report to the class. This will provide us all with a rich sample of the ways in which campaigns have been conducted and the issues different interests and ideas that were in operation prior to the formation of the US Constitution. These presentations will be made during the discussion sessions of September 24 and October 1.

2. Presidential Campaign Report (100 points)

In order to see how U.S. Presidential elections have changed and yet remain similar, you will prepare a report on one of the fifty-eight presidential elections that have transpired since 1788. The specific election for your report will be assigned to you. In this report, you are to provide the following:

- A. The Year.
- B. The preceding President and his or her Party.
- C. The winner of the election, his or her Party, and his or her profession.
- D. The “runner-up” and his or her Party.
- E. The manner in which the candidates were nominated.
- F. The manner in which the campaigns were conducted (by hometown speeches, or by campaign tours, or by issuing position papers?).
- G. The three most important campaign issues.
- H. The US population and number of States.

Your report should include at least five academic or official government sources, all of which you will cite. Please refer to the UIC policies governing citations and academic integrity for more information about citations. Your report is to be typed and utilize Times New Roman font size 12 with one-inch margins. It is anticipated your report will be approximately eight to ten pages in length.

You will be assigned your campaign by September 3, 2021. The written report will be due October 15, 2021. You will also be required to present a brief (5-7 minutes) summary of your report to the class. This will provide us all with a rich sample of the ways in which campaigns have been conducted and the issues on which these campaigns were based. These presentations will be made during the discussion sessions of October 15 and 22.

3. Policy Analysis Project (100 points)

The purpose of this project is to provide the student with first-hand knowledge of what laws look like. For this assignment, you will be assigned a law enacted by a recent Congress and prepare a report as follows:

- A. Introduction, which includes the name of the law and when it was enacted.
- B. The intent of the law, which includes the reason the law was introduced.

- C. The legislative history of the law, which includes its original sponsor and the Committees involved in its development.
- D. The final vote on the law, which includes the Senate Vote (Republicans “for,” Republicans “against,” Democrats “for,” and Democrats “against”) and the House Vote (Republicans “for,” Republicans “against,” Democrats “for,” and Democrats “against”).
- E. Any actual data as to the success or failure of the law to satisfy its intended purpose.

Your report should include at least five academic or official government sources, all of which you will cite. Please refer to the UIC policies governing citations and academic integrity for more information about citations. Your report is to be typed and utilize Times New Roman font size 12 with one-inch margins. It is anticipated your report will be approximately eight to ten pages in length.

You will be assigned your law by September 20, 2021. The written report will be due October 22, 2021. You will also be required to present a brief (5-7 minutes) summary of your report to the class. This will provide us all with a rich sample of the breadth of Federal governmental policies. These presentations will be made during the discussion sessions of October 22 and 29.

4. Village Board/City Council Observational Study (100 points)

In Illinois, municipalities are organized as Villages or Cities.

- a) The elected officials of a Village are called Trustees, and they comprise a Board of Trustees with the responsibility of making local laws, said to be ordinances. There is also an elected President of the Village whose responsibility is to preside over the regular Board Meetings. A Village will also have a hired Village Manager whose responsibilities are to manage the day-to-day affairs of the Village.
- b) The elected officials of a city are called Aldermen, and they comprise a City Council with the responsibility of making local laws, said to be ordinances. There is also an elected Mayor of the City, with the responsibilities of presiding over the regular Council Meetings and managing the day-to-day affairs of the Village.

You are to observe and report upon two successive meetings of a Village Board or City Council of your own choosing. Because of the COVID situation, you are expected to observe these meetings through local cable access television.

It must be a full council meeting with full legislative power—that is the council must be able to make law for the community. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with first-hand experience of the scope and nature of democratic legislative behavior. Your report on these observations will take the following form:

Session 1

1. Municipality
2. Meeting location
3. Time of the meeting
4. For **each** agenda item:
 - a. A brief description of the item (the issue involved);
 - b. The sides of the issue presented;
 - c. The resolution;
 - d. Your subjective evaluation of the nature of the discussion. That is, was it agreeable, passionate, hostile, or factual?

Session 2

1. Municipality
2. Meeting location
3. Time of the meeting
4. For **each** agenda item:
 - a. A brief description of the item (the issue involved);
 - b. The sides of the issue presented;
 - c. The resolution;
 - d. Your subjective evaluation of the nature of the discussion. That is, was it agreeable, passionate, hostile, or factual?

The report is to be completed in outline fashion following exactly the format shown above. *You will also be required to present your report to the class. This presentation will follow your outline.* This project is due November 12, 2021.

Because many town councils meet only one a month, you will need to plan your observations early in the course so that you observe two sessions of that council. Consequently, *by September 13, 2021, you are to submit the following:*

1. Your name;
2. The town council you intend to observe; and
3. The dates you intend to make your observations.

5. Weekly Reflections (320 points)

While the lecture presentations are intended to organize our discussions of the various aspects of the structure and function of the American Government, the textbook is intended to provide background reference materials. The textbook for this course is O'Connor and Sabato, *American Government: Roots and Reform, 2020 Elections and Update Edition*, (14th), ISBN 9780136900436.

Each week will include:

- a set of learning objectives on which the lectures are based;
- lecture materials; and
- a textbook reading assignment of one or more chapters.

Each Weekly Reflection Assignment will ask you to:

1. Using the lecture materials, briefly address each of the learning objectives addressed by those lecture materials:
 - Identify each learning outcome and limit your response to no more than three sentences for each learning objective. (10 points total).
2. Using each textbook chapter in the assignment, select five concepts or facts you found that were particularly interesting to you. Each item is to be numbered, and your reflection is to include:
 - A brief (one or two sentences) description of the fact or concept (1 point), and
 - an explanation (one or two sentences) of why you found that fact or concept to be important (1 point).

Your assignments are to be typed. The schedule of these assignments and their point values can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this Syllabus.

6. Discussion Session Participation (130 points)

Participation is the key to intellectual engagement. Discussion sessions will be conducted in-person and up to 10 points will be awarded for participation in each session.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

For all of the assignments in this course, you are expected to submit your own work. Plagiarism in any assignment will result in a score of zero points for that assignment. **A second case of plagiarism will result in a grade of F.** Please refer to the UIC policies governing citations and academic integrity for more information about citations and plagiarism.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT POLICY

Students are expected to adhere to the policies prescribed in the *UIC Student Handbook*.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

An automatic extension of one week will be granted for each assignment. **Assignments submitted after this extension will be assessed a 5% penalty for each day beyond the extended due date.** Requests for lengthier extensions must be approved by your instructor.

REVISION POLICY

Students receiving a grade below “C” on any assignment (**excluding instances of plagiarism**) may submit a revision of that assignment for re-grading. Revisions must be submitted no more than one week after the original graded work has been returned to the student.

TIMELINE

All revisions and late assignments **must be submitted before the final exam week**, which begins on December 6, 2021.