

Political Science 101  
Introduction to American Government and Politics  
CRN 13190  
Fall 2016  
MW 10:00-10:50

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Office Hours: MW 11:00-11:50, 2:00-3:30

Syllabus

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.

The required textbook for the course is *American Government: Roots and Reform, 2014 Elections and Updates Edition*, by O'Connor, Sabato and Yanus.

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

**Tentative Topic and Reading Assignment Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Text Reading Due</b>
8/22	Introduction; Themes of American Social, Economic, and Political Development	Chapters 1 and 2
8/24	Themes of American Social, Economic, and Political Development, continued	
8/26	DISCUSSION	
8/29	Themes of American Social, Economic, and Political Development, continued	
8/31	The Constitution	
9/2	DISCUSSION	
9/5	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	
9/7	The Constitution; Federalism	Chapter 3

9/9	DISCUSSION	
9/12	Citizenship	
9/14	Citizenship, continued	Chapters 4 and 5
9/16	DISCUSSION	
9/19	Congress	Chapter 6
9/21	Congress, continued	Chapter 6
9/23	DISCUSSION	
9/26	The Presidency and Executive Branch	Chapters 7 and 8
9/28	The Presidency and Executive Branch, continued	Chapters 7 and 8
9/30	DISCUSSION	
10/3	Congress and the Bureaucracy	Chapters 7 and 8
10/5	The Judicial Branch	Chapter 9
10/7	NATIONAL STUDENT ISSUES CONVENTION	
10/10	The Judicial Branch, continued	Chapter 9
10/12	Political Socialization	Chapter 10
10/14	DISCUSSION	
10/17	Parties, Elections, and Public Opinion	Chapters 11, 12, and 13
10/19	Parties, Elections, and Public Opinion, continued	
10/21	DISCUSSION	
10/24	Media and Interest Groups	Chapters 14 and 15
10/26	Economic Policy	Chapter 16
10/28	DISCUSSION	
10/31	Economic Policy, continued	

11/2	Social Welfare Policy	Chapter 17
11/4	DISCUSSION	
11/7	Foreign Affairs and Defense Policy	Chapter 18
11/9	Foreign Affairs and Defense Policy, continued	
11/11	DISCUSSION	
11/14	Special Topics	
11/16	Special Topics	
11/18	DISCUSSION	
11/21	Special Topics	
11/23	Special Topics	
11/25	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
11/28	Special Topics	
11/30	Special Topics	
12/2	DISCUSSION—END OF CLASSES	

### Assignments and Grading

1. Town Council Observation Report	100 points	11/11/16
2. Policy Analysis Report	100 points	10/28/16
3. Presidential Campaign Report	100 points	10/14/16
4. Colonial Development Report	100 points	9/23/16
5. Reading Reflections (total)	180 points	Throughout course
6. Constitution Day Participation	10 points	9/19/16
7. National Student Issues Convention	10 points	10/7/16
8. Discussion Session Attendance (total)	60 points (5 points * 12)	Throughout course
Total	660 points	

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

#### 1) Town Council Observational Study

You are to observe and report upon two successive sessions of a Village or City council of your own choosing. It must be a full council meeting with full legislative jurisdiction. That is, the council must have the power to make laws. 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 11, 2016.

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 9, 2016 you are to submit the following:*

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

For this project, please choose a town or city in which the council meetings are in the evening so you will not be required to miss any UIC classes.

## 2) Policy Analysis Project

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 23, 2016. The written report will be due October 28, 2016. 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 28 and November 4.

## 3) Presidential Campaign Report

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-seven 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 Party.
- C. The winner of the election, his Party and his profession.
- D. The “runner-up” and his 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 9, 2016. The written report will be due October 14, 2016. 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 14 and October 21.

#### **4) Colonial Development Report**

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 2, 2016. The written report will be due September 23, 2016. 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 September 23 and September 30.

#### **5) Reading Reflections**

Our textbook for this course is *American Government: Roots and Reform, 2014* Edition. For each chapter of this textbook, you are to briefly summarize the ten most important concepts or facts you learned from your reading:

1. These ten items are to be numbered.
2. Each item must include (a) the fact or concept and (b) why it was important or interesting to you.
3. Your assignments are to be typed.

Each of these Chapter Reflection Assignments is worth 10 points. You are expected to submit your own work.

### Schedule

Chapter 1	8/26/16	Chapter 10	10/14/16
Chapter 2	8/22/16	Chapter 11	10/21/16
Chapter 3	9/9/16	Chapter 12	10/21/16
Chapter 4	9/16/16	Chapter 13	10/21/16
Chapter 5	9/16/16	Chapter 14	10/28/16
Chapter 6	9/23/16	Chapter 15	10/28/16
Chapter 7	9/30/16	Chapter 16	11/4/16
Chapter 8	9/30/16	Chapter 17	11/4/16
Chapter 9	10/14/16	Chapter 18	11/11/16

#### **6) Constitution Day Participation**

The Political Science Department will be host a speaker in SCE 605 on September 19 at noon to 1:00 p.m. If this event is in conflict with another course on your schedule, you may submit an alternative research assignment to be discussed in class.

#### **7) National Student Issues Convention**

This event will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday, October 7 in the Illinois Rooms in the SCE. Our Pols 101 discussion sessions will be cancelled on this day so that you may attend the Convention. If this event is in conflict with another course in your schedule, you may submit an alternative research assignment to be discussed in class.

#### **8) Discussion Session Attendance**

With the exception of the discussion session cancelled on October 7, there will be 12 discussion sessions. Attendance is mandatory, and five points will be assigned for each of the twelve discussion sessions.

## **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 for the course. Please refer to the UIC policies governing citations and academic integrity for more information about citations and plagiarism.