
Political Science 101 - American Politics (In Person)

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Fall 2021

Instructor:	Dr. Saemyi Park
Class Location & Time:	Chem Bio Building (CBB) 101 & T/TH 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM
Instructor's Office:	Science Building D335
Office Hours:	Online: Monday from 2 PM to 4 PM In-Person: 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM (T/TH) @ SCI D335
Email	spark@uwsp.edu
Important Note	Please keep in mind that this syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, is subject to change. Any changes will be clearly noted in a course announcement in Canvas and through email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to study American government and politics with an emphasis on three themes: Foundations, Institutions, and Politics. The first part of the class will cover “the foundations” of American politics – the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and civil rights. Next, we will examine “three branches of government” – Congress, the presidency, and the courts. The last part of class will discuss “politics.” Specifically, we will focus on public opinion, elections, and the media.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

Learning Outcomes (LO)	Aligned Topics	Assessment of LO
LO1: Explain the foundations and Significance of the US Constitution	“Understanding AP” “The Constitutions”	Midterm Exam In-Class Assignments
LO2: Examine the structure and function of each branch of government	“Federalism” “Presidency” “Congress” “Civil Rights”	Midterm Exam In-Class Assignments Congress Profile Paper Film Analysis Paper
LO3: Analyze conflicts and challenges in the civil liberties and civil rights debate	“Civil Liberties” “Civil Rights”	Midterm Exam Final Exam In-Class Assignments
LO4: Evaluate the influence of mass media in public opinion and elections as well as its consequences to the policymaking process	“Public Opinion” “The Media”	Final Exam In-Class Assignments Film Analysis Paper
LO5: Identify the components of the US elections	“Elections”	Final Exam In-Class Assignments Congress Profile Paper Film Analysis Paper

REQUIRED READINGS

The following book has been ordered at University Bookstore for textbook rental:

- Title: ***American Politics Today*** (7th Core Edition, 2021)
- Authors: William T. Bianco and David T. Canon
- Publisher: W.W. Norton

Please find **Textbook Rental Information** for in-person pick up or shipping options at <https://www.uwsp.edu/centers/store/Pages/default.aspx>. Please make sure to have it with you BEFORE the first main module begins. Additionally, other learning materials such as newspaper articles, the report, data, documentaries, and more will be used for each topic. Learning materials will be shared at the course site in Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Weight	Due Date
Midterm Exam	25%	October 21 (TH)
Final Exam	25%	December 16 (TH)
Film Analysis Paper	15%	Oct 31 (Sun) or Dec 12 (Sun)
Congressional Profile Paper	15%	Nov 14 (Sun)
Attendance & In-Class Activities	20%	Every class
Total:	100%	

Note: **Students MUST complete all required work** in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. **You do NOT have the option to “take a zero” on each assignment.** Not submitting all required work will result in either an F for the course or in a final grade of incomplete until the work is submitted (however, this option is rarely permitted to students). Late submission is not accepted unless you receive permission from the instructor in advance. Please read the attendance policy on page 4 for more information about the excusable absence.

GRADING SCALE

I will use the point system and follow the university’s standard grading scale for a letter grade. There is no curve, so you receive what you earn.

Outstanding	A	94-100	A-	90-93		
Above average	B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
Average	C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
Below average	D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
Unsatisfactory	F	Below 60				

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

A. Online Exam (25% per each exam)

There are TWO ONLINE exams, which will take place on the course site in Canvas. Each exam will be open at 9 AM and close at 11:59 PM on the scheduled exam day. You will be given two hours to take the test. Once you start the test, you are not allowed to take a break for return. If you are given the accommodation for the exam, please send me a DATC letter (Disability and Assistive Technology Center) as soon as possible.

The midterm exam covers the first part of subjects, and the final exam will cover the topics addressed in class after the first exam. That is, the second exam is **NOT cumulative**. The format of exams is a combination of multiple-choice questions, true-or-false questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short-answer questions. **A study guide** will be distributed one week before each exam, and I will provide a review session before each exam.

	Review Session	Exam Day
Midterm Exam Week	October 19 (T) – Synchronous	October 21 (TH)
Final Exam Week	December 9 (TH) – In Class	December 16 (TH)

Because it is an online exam that is open for a day, students would not have a make-up exam opportunity. Only extraordinary circumstances can excuse your absence on the exam day. You must have instructor approval BEFORE the exam. Please keep in mind that it is extremely rare for students to have a make-up exam opportunity. A make-up exam will be all essay questions, and you need to take it on the last day of class in my office. It will be much harder to complete the make-up test.

B. Film Analysis Paper (20%)

You will watch two films throughout the semester in light of the lecture materials and assigned readings for this course. You are free to write on any topic related to American politics addressed in the films, as long as they are able to incorporate and demonstrate your thorough understanding of the different assigned course readings. You are required to **submit ONE film analysis paper** although we will watch two films over the course of the semester.

	Showing Dates	Paper Deadlines
Film Presentation I	Oct 14 (TH) - in class	Oct 31 (Sun)
Film Presentation II	The week of Nov. 22 - via Canvas	Dec 12 (Sun)

We will watch the first film *in person* during class time on October 14 (TH). If you choose to write a paper on the first film, the deadline is October 31 (Sunday) by 11:59 PM. Due to time constraints, we will not watch the second film in class. Instead, it will be available for viewing on the course site in *Canvas* starting November 22 (M). If you want to analyze the second film, the

due date is December 12 (Sunday). Your paper should be submitted to the course site in Canvas. A separate worksheet will be distributed in class for more details, but an important tip for the paper is that you will earn extra 5 points if you get help from the UWSP Writing Center. More information will be provided in the paper guideline.

C. Congress Profile Paper (20%)

In this assignment, you are invited to study your representatives. You will report the profile of your representative with emphasis on party affiliation, policy platforms, bills, campaigns, districts, previous records, committee membership, and/or personal life. The deadline for this paper is **November 14** (Sunday), and you will submit it to the course site in Canvas. A detailed guideline will be distributed.

D. Attendance & In-Class Activities (20%)

You are required to attend all class sessions. It is your interest too. Students who regularly attend class generally enjoy the course more, learn more, and get the most out of their education with higher grades. In addition, you are expected to enrich the learning experience of fellow students and teachers through regular attendance and active participation in class. For most class times, you will be invited to complete a brief activity that help you better understand the topic of American Politics. These activities will promote in-depth class discussion and will be graded.

We will have about 30 class sessions throughout the semester. **7 OR MORE unexcused absences will result in the automatic F in the course.** Please make sure to be aware of this policy. Please keep in mind that only few cases are considered as the excusable absences:

1. UWSP-sponsored activities (sport game, organization events, etc.)
2. The university-recognized religious holidays
3. The serious and extraordinary circumstances of your medical issues or your immediate family members

In the above-mentioned cases, you are required to submit the proof of evidence to the instructor in advance. For the 1st and 2nd case, you are supposed to know the schedule already or by the beginning of the semester. Please check your schedule and the course calendar to see if any conflicts occur. Make sure to submit the official documents (letters, emails from the coach, etc.) by September 16 (TH).

For the 3rd case, you should inform your instructor immediately and provide the documentation within 48 hours of the event occurs. I reserve the right to review the document and determine if your absence is excusable. If you are simply sick or under the weather, you do not need to email me about it. I will give you TWO free tickets on your attendance record.

GENERAL RULES

Readings: Students are required to complete each week's required readings before that lecture. You need to bring your book, assigned readings, and lecture notes to each class.

Assignments: online submission through Canvas is required for writing assignments. Late submission or email submission is NOT accepted except for a very rare case as written in the previous section. You must faithfully follow the instruction regarding the format, style, and length of these assignments.

Late Submission: If you miss the deadline of any activities for unforeseen reasons, please contact me as soon as possible. I understand that students may encounter unplanned and unfortunate circumstances, especially during this unusual crisis due to COVID-19. If it is the case, please don't hesitate to contact me and explain your circumstance so that I can give you an extension. Extension decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Any unexcused late submission will be downgraded - 3 points for each day it is late within 7 days from the original deadline.

Canvas: This course will have a site on Canvas. The site will be used to share course materials including, but not limited to, lecture note, and additional readings. Make sure that you check this site before every class.

Lectures: Before we begin a topic in class, I will post an outline of the lecture material on the course website. The outlines give you the framework of the lecture but do not give you the entire script. If you wish, you can print these outlines and bring them with you to class to use as a base for note taking. You will learn and remember better when you write things down yourself. Regarding note taking, make sure you take notes that will be meaningful to you later when you are reviewing your notes, rather than focusing only on transcribing the slides verbatim.

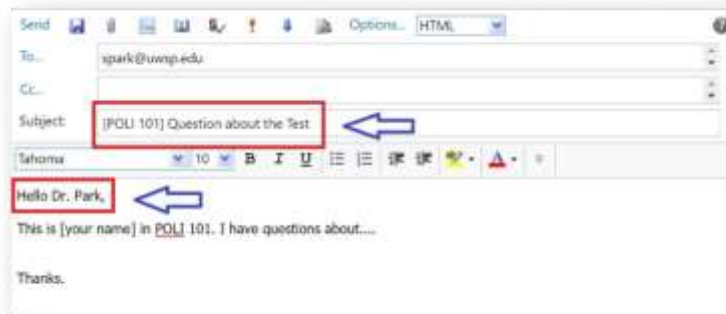
Office Hours: I will have regular office hours in two different ways. I will be in my office (Science Building D335) on every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM. And, you can reach out to me via Zoom on every Monday from 2 PM to 4 PM. Please utilize this opportunity to make yourself clear with course materials. If my regular online office hours do not work for you, you can certainly schedule an online meeting for the different time and date. Just email me to set up the appointment. The Zoom link will be post in the course site.

- **In-Person:** 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM (T/TH) @ SCI D335
- **Online:** 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (W) via Zoom

Technology Policy: Technology devices are NOT allowed to use in class. Out of respect for your fellow students, your professor, and the educational process, all technology devices (iPad,

Kindle, cell/smartphones, Laptop, etc.) must be powered down and put away, not on the desk or in your hoodie pocket, or on your lap, during class. If texting, using social media, and attending to tasks other than the class material are more important than paying attention for 75 minutes, please do not come to class. If you feel you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on vibrate, please clear this with the professor before class begins. Students who disregard the policy will be asked to leave class.

Email: Email is a convenient way to continue contact between professor and student outside of class. Email is best for 1-2 sentence responses, and conceptual questions do not lend themselves well to email. If you have any questions regarding your papers, please visit my office hours for an in-depth consultation. I will NOT consult on your written assignment via email. While students should take advantage of this email communication opportunity with me, you should also do so in a professional manner. I will NOT reply to emails that do not include a salutation (“Dear Prof. ...” or “Hello Dr. ...”).



I will also NOT respond to emails that ask for answers to questions that can easily be found on the syllabus or the lecture notes. If you have a question regarding lectures or assigned material that you just cannot seem to master, then ask a question in class, or come to me during office hours. I will only respond to questions about coursework or academic requirements, and I will not respond to questions of a personal nature. I will be able to respond to your email during weekdays (not weekends), but please email me again if you do not receive my response within 48 hours.

Respect: I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. I am intolerant of disruptive behavior in the classroom, including talking during lectures, reading newspapers, frequently going to use a restroom, and especially playing with digital devices. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom in order to preserve the learning environment for other students. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of others’ opinions. Please do not intimidate, patronize, or ridicule anyone else during the course of classroom activities. This course is open to a variety of ways of interpreting history, theories, and policies. Students are encouraged to share their questions and ideas in

lectures. Since there will be differences and disagreements, students are expected to show respect to the comments and positions of fellow students and me.

Honesty: Any instance of academic misconduct will be taken seriously and may result in failure of the course. Misconduct will result in notification to the Dean of Students. If you are having a problem, it is much better to talk to me about it. Do not struggle by yourself. I want you to learn and do well in this course, not punish you with a lower grade. Talk to me if you are having a problem so I can try to help you work out a solution. In addition, there is a great resource for your study in the campus. The Tutoring-Learning Center provides a variety of services to support your needs such as Writing Lab and One-On-One Assistance for Study Skills. Please contact Learning Resource Center (715-346-3568 & tlctutor@uwsp.edu & www.uwsp.edu/tlc) for more information.

Academic Coaching: if you feel you need help with any of the following skills - time management strategies, note-taking, study skills, communication on campus, or preparing for mid-terms, please consider scheduling an appointment with an Academic Coach on campus or virtually. They are here to help you be successful in your online courses when you feel you need extra support. Email **Kari Van Den Elzen** (kvandene@uwsp.edu) to schedule an appointment or use the Navigate student app by selecting Tutoring Learning Center. You can meet as many times as you need. Coaches are also available to review campus technology platforms with you. (Canvas, AccesSPoint, Office 365, Navigate, etc.)

Students with disabilities: Any student with a special documented disability (sight, hearing, language, mobility, etc.) which may affect class activities should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (715-346-3365). Please find more information from: <https://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

COURSE CALENDAR

(Topics, readings, and schedule subject to announced change by instructor.)

Topic	Tentative Dates	Readings
Introduction	Sep 2	None
Understanding American Politics	Sep 7	Ch. 1
The Constitution	Sep 9, Sep 14 & Sep 16	Ch. 2
Federalism	Sep 21 & Sep 23	Ch. 3
Civil Liberties	Sep 28 & Sep 30 & Oct 5	Ch. 4
Civil Rights	Oct 7 & Oct 12	Ch. 5
Film Presentation	Oct14	
Synchronous Review Session	Oct 19	
Online Midterm Exam	Oct 21	
Congress	Oct 26 & Oct 28	Ch. 11
The Presidency	Nov 2 & Nov 4	Ch. 12
The Courts	Nov 9 & Nov 11	Ch. 14
Public Opinion	Nov 16 & Nov 18	Ch. 6
Elections	Nov 23 & Nov 30	Ch. 9
The Media	Dec 2 & Dec 7	Ch. 7
In Class Review Session	Dec 9	
Online Final Exam	December 16	

- No class on November 25 (TH): Thanksgiving Break