

POL 101

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

MWF 12:00-12:50

Instructor Information:

Dr. Gregory Gunderson

Room 313 North Hall (Wausau)

Phone: 534-626-0914

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If you have an emergency, questions, etc, the best way to contact me is through email.

Office Hours:

By appointment via Zoom or we can arrange to meet face-to-face.

Course Content: This course explores the structure and dynamics of American national government, providing a broad-based introduction to the ideas and institutions that shape politics in the contemporary United States. We will focus on the Constitution and the debates of the founding era, the institutions of modern American government, and the political behavior of the American public. We will study the strategies, roles, and limitations of both governmental elites and ordinary citizens, with particular emphasis on how they communicate and interact within the constitutional “rules of the game” to promote the achievement of public goods.

Please read the remainder of this syllabus carefully; it can be viewed as a contract of sorts (although I retain the right to make changes if necessary – they will be kept to a minimum and will be discussed in class), laying out what you can expect of me as well as what I will expect of you. I look forward to working with you this semester. Welcome.

Required Textbook:

Barbour and Wright. *Keeping the Republic*. 10th Edition.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the semester each student should be able to...

- Describe and discuss the foundations and bases of American government and democracy including the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Federalism.
- Describe the various aspects of political behavior of individuals and groups including political parties, public opinion, interest groups, media, nominations, campaigns, and elections.

- Describe the operations of the various governmental institutions including executive, legislative, judicial, and administrative functions.
- Evaluate recent global developments and their impact on public policy in the areas of domestic and foreign affairs.
- Analyze American politics and government in a global context.

Attendance: I believe, in general, that attendance policies should not be necessary at the university-level. Unfortunately, experience has shown that many students will only attend class regularly if it directly affects their grade. I will take attendance. During the course, your discussion and attendance will be worth 100 points. Obviously, you cannot discuss if you do not attend. I will take attendance every day.

Academic Honesty

Please do not cheat – cheating does nothing but rob you of the chance for an education. As a college student, you are part of an academic community and are expected to behave in a manner that is respectful of that community, in part by being academically honest. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to “cheating on an examination,” “submitting a paper or assignment as one’s own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another,” and “submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas.”

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance is required. See the section above on attendance for a discussion of my policy.
2. Discussion is important. Don’t be afraid to speak up, ask questions, or challenge the information I give you. Education is not strictly a spectator sport -- you will find the class more interesting and informative if you participate.
3. Be nice, be patient, be tolerant.
4. **Exams and stuff like that** –
 - There will be three exams and one qu8z given in this class. Point distribution will be as follows:
 - Quiz 50 points
 - Exam 1 150 points
 - Exam 2 100 points
 - Exam 3 100 points
 - Regular class attendance and participation will be worth 100 points.
 - Each student will be expected to write a short “position” paper addressing the rights of the first amendment to the Constitution. The paper will be 4-5 pages in length and will be worth 100 points. The assignment will be discussed in more detail (and you will be given a handout via Canvas) during the first two weeks of the course.
 - To review, the distribution of points will be as follows:

Attendance and participation - 100 points

Exams - 400 points

Position Paper - 100 points

Total - 600 points

There will be no make-up exams or assignments except in the case of a bona fide (and verified) emergency! All make-up exams will consist of essay questions only.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A = 93-100%

- = 90-92 %

B+=87-89%

B = 83-86%

B-= 80-83%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 73-76%

C-= 70-72%

D+= 67-69%

D = 60-66%

F = 59% or below

Extra Credit: NO! Sorry, I simply do not believe in extra credit. However, there will be several bonus quizzes during the semester.

ZOOM Fridays: As some of you know I have had some health concerns this past year and the bottom line is that I cannot drive, meaning I have had to arrange for rides to get to campus. I have been able to secure rides for Mon and Wed classes, But not Friday. So to begin the semester I will be teaching in the classroom on Mon and Wed and from home via Zoom on Fridays. This should not affect you -- you can still come to the classroom on Fridays and see my smiling face on the big screen. I will explain more in class.

Sep 6 Course Introduction Chapter 1

Sep 8 Introduction to Discipline

Week of Sep 11 Foundations and Federalism Chapter 3 and 4

Week of Sep 18 Civil Liberties Chapter 5

Sep 22 QUIZ

Week of Sep 25 Civil Rights Chapter 6

Week of Oct 2 Public Opinion and Socialization Chapter 11

Week of October 9 Political Participation Chapter 14

Week of October 16 Parties Chapter 12

Oct 23 Writing a good paper

Oct 25 and 27 EXAM 1

Week of October 30 Interest Groups Chapter 13

Nov 6 Media Chapter 15

Nov 8 and 10 and Week of Nov 13 Congress Chapter 7

Week of Nov 20 and Week of Nov 27 The President and his Bureaucracy Chapter 8-9

NO CLASS ON NOV 24 -- THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec 1 EXAM 2

Week of Dec 4 Courts Chapter 10

Week of Dec 11 Foreign Policy Chapter 18

FINAL EXAM DUE BY 3PM ON DEC 22