

Eastern Oregon University
Course Syllabus

Number of Course: POLS 101

Name of Course: American National Government

Catalog Description: An overview of the historical foundations of our democratic system of government, appraisal of key political institutions and actors, with the intent of promoting informed and active citizenry by students.

Credit Hours: 5

Required Texts or Suggested Materials:

<http://eou.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/TBWizardView?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=87851>

Prerequisites: None

Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of the course, the student should:

- 1) Comprehend the political, economic, and legal forces that influence American government.
- 2) Identify the central theories and concepts of American national government, and construct written argument that highlights their strengths and weaknesses.
- 3) Analyze and critically discuss historical and contemporary issues that shape the current nature of the American political system.
- 4) Critically evaluate a wide range of political information sources via the application of improved information literacy, analysis of primary and secondary sources, and synthesis of diverse sources.
- 5) Apply student civic engagement skills as a contributing citizen in an informed democracy.
- 6) Demonstrate improved writing skills that draw on reading and oral comprehension abilities, critical thinking, personal reflection and the ability to construct a coherent, succinct argument.

Course Requirements:

Four lecture and reading comprehension quizzes @ 7.5%.....	30%
Two essay examinations @ 30%	60%
Civic Engagement Exercise.....	5%
Map Quiz.....	5%
	TOTAL 100%

Attendance Expectations:

The class centers on the lecture format, with a number of small group and class exercises to foster interactive learning. Given these factors, your regular attendance is essential to your successfully completing the course. Attendance at Friday's (and other class sessions designated by the instructor as) discussion group is required. Students with one or more unexcused absence during the Friday (or designated) discussion group will receive a grade no higher than "C" for the course.

The instructor, in consultation with the Teaching Assistant, is the sole determinant of what constitutes an (un)excused absence.

Grading Policies:

The following grade scale is applicable to all of my classes. In order to ensure fairness, equity and no surprises, I want to make sure we are on the same page in terms of how your accumulated score will be translated into your final grade. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to see me.

overall percentage	final grade	overall percentage	final grade
100.00-98.00 %	A+	79.99-78.00 %	C+
97.99-92.00 %	A	77.99-72.00 %	C
91.99-90.00 %	A-	71.99-70.00 %	C-
89.99-88.00 %	B+	69.99-68.00 %	D+
87.99-82.00 %	B	67.99-62.00 %	D
81.99-80.00 %	B-	61.99-60.00 %	D-
		59.99-0.00 %	F

Means of Assessment:

The four quizzes are intended to test your reading comprehension and your knowledge of events occurring daily in American Politics. These quizzes are not cumulative. Reading comprehension questions will encompass the material covered since the last quiz. Current events questions will be drawn solely from lectures from the same period. The quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice/matching formats, with questions drawn equally from the reading and lecture materials. In order to be fair to all your classmates, unless you make prior arrangements with me, there will be no makeup quizzes.

In order to minimize 'exam anxiety' and facilitate critical thinking skills, I have dispensed with the normal midterm/final drudgery. In an effort to enhance student-writing skills, the examinations will be of the take-home essay variety. You will be asked to write a short (750 typewritten words) critical essay that draws upon relevant readings, supplementary materials and class lecture and discussion. You are required to attach an additional page for references or any other materials you deem important in supporting your argument. The exams will be distributed during class, and are due at the beginning of class approximately one week from the day they are distributed. Unless you make prior arrangements with me, late essays will not be accepted. Drafts of essay examinations will be assessed via peer evaluation, the teaching assistant and the instructor. Students must complete all UWR writing-intensive courses with a C- or better. Unless you make prior arrangements with me, late essays will not be accepted.

One of the keys to understanding American public policy is that you develop a keen awareness of the role of the citizenry within the policy process. As part of this assignment you will be required to (a) research a public policy area of your choice; (b) collaborate with your classmates via the Blackboard Discussion Board function and class meeting to hone your proposal (b) write a short essay in which you (1) give background information on your chosen problem area, including why you chose this particular problem, (2) a proposed solution to this policy problem and (3) a 250-word reflection on what you learned from the assignment. You will then write a letter to a government official detailing your policy proposal. Detailed instructions will facilitate completion of this learning exercise with a minimal amount of time and effort. This assignment will not be graded. However, failure to successfully complete all facets of this important civic engagement learning

opportunity in a timely fashion will result in the student receiving a grade no higher than "C" for the course. Unless prior arrangements are made, civic engagement assignments will not be accepted.

As the self-proclaimed leading nation in the post-Cold War "New World Order", the foreign policy of the United States has extensive repercussions on both the domestic and foreign fronts. Given the dynamic changes in the international system in recent years (demise of the former Soviet bloc, e.g.), in order to fully understand the dynamics of U.S. foreign policy, the student needs to acquire a basic grasp of the location and geographic forces (landlocked states, strategic location) of the numerous nation-states around the globe. You will be provided with a series of blank maps and asked to identify twenty-five states. The map quiz will be worth five (5) per cent of your final grade. The date of the quiz will be approximately the 5th week of the course. Unless you make prior arrangements with me, there will be no make-up map quizzes.

Brief Outline of Course:

WEEKS 1-2:

- A. Introduction; What is Democracy?
 - B. The Elitist Roots of American Public Policy
 - C. The Constitution: Bulwark of Democracy?
 - D. Elitist America: Shaky Foundations of Democracy_
 - E. Elites in America: Power, Influence and Control_
- Quiz #1 (7.5%)
Exam # 1 (30%)

WEEKS 3-5:

- A. The Mass Media: Messenger or Manipulator?
 - B. A Critique of American Mass Media
 - C. Symbolic Reassurance: The American Electoral System
 - D. Democracy and Electoral Reform
- Map Quiz (5%)
Political Participation Exercise Quiz # 2 (7.5%)

WEEKS 6-8:

- A. The President: Father Figure or Figurehead for Democracy?
- B. The Presidency: Discrete Influences on Leadership
- C. Congress: the Legislative Elite
- D. The Courts: Elites in Black Robes

Quiz # 3 (7.5%)

Exam # 2 (30%)

WEEKS 9-10:

- A. Interest Groups: Defenders of the Status Quo
 - B. The Bureaucracy: Implementation without Accountability
 - C. Democracy in America: A Future Appraisal
- Quiz # 4 (7.5%)

General Education Category and Outcomes: SSC

- The course surveys a major discipline in the social sciences.
- The course provides instruction in methods for and evaluation of identification, evaluation and synthesis of primary and secondary information sources appropriate for research topic in subject discipline.
- The course requires assessment and critical evaluation of social, economic and/or political institutions.
- The course requires students to make compelling and reasoned arguments based upon appropriate evidence in written and/or oral format specific to the discipline.
- (FURTHER LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT) A general education course encourages students to see opportunities for further reflection, lifelong learning, and service to society in ways that allow them to apply the skills and knowledge of the course in settings outside the university classroom.

University Writing Requirement Outcomes: See Below

Writing Center Statements:

For on-campus courses

The Writing Center provides a place — physical or virtual — where every EOU writer can find an interested, responsive reader. Writing tutorials are free of charge for EOU's undergraduate and graduate students who are writing for any course at any level, or who are writing resumes, job letters, graduate applications, and more. Go to eou.mywconline.com to schedule an appointment in the Writing Center (Loso Hall 234).

For online or on-site courses

The Writing Center provides a place — physical or virtual — where every EOU writer can find an interested, responsive reader. Writing tutorials are free of charge for EOU students writing for any undergraduate course. Go to [EOU's eTutoring page](#) to submit a paper to a writing tutor.

For graduate courses

The Writing Center provides a place — physical or virtual — where every EOU writer can find an interested, responsive reader. Writing tutorials are free of charge for EOU students writing for any graduate course. Go to [EOU's eTutoring page](#) to submit a paper to a writing tutor. Click on [Graduate Students How To](#) for information about tagging your submission.

Classroom Decorum: <https://www.eou.edu/policy/files/2014/06/Classroom-Decorum-Policy-2016-Publishable-version-4-15-16-2.pdf>

Academic Misconduct Policy:

Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found responsible for an act of academic misconduct (including but not limited to cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, facilitation, plagiarism or tampering) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the University, or a combination of these. (Please see the Student Handbook online at <http://www.eou.edu/sse/student-handbook/>).

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities policy:

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation for any type of disability, must contact the Disability Services Office in Loso Hall, Room 234. Phone: 541-962-3081.

Disclaimer:

This standard syllabus provides only general information on the course. For those enrolled in the course a detailed syllabus will be provided by the Instructor at the beginning of the term. Please keep in mind that not all courses are offered every year. Consult Webster for scheduling information.

Date: 2/26/2018

UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT

Eastern Oregon University is strongly committed to the view that writing aids in learning and that writing skills are key to professional success. The University Writing Requirement (UWR) requires that students receive attention to writing throughout their studies and that students demonstrate their mastery of discipline-specific writing. To this end, all students must complete the following:

- First-year writing courses required by placement,
- One lower-division UWR writing-intensive course identified by each major, and
- Two upper-division UWR writing-intensive courses as identified by each major.

The means for satisfying this requirement are described in each major. Outcomes for lower-division UWR writing-intensive courses:

- Students will produce at least 3,000 words (including drafts, in-class writing, informal papers, and polished papers); 1,000 words of this total should be in polished papers which students have revised after receiving feedback and criticism.
- Students will be introduced to the discourse forms appropriate to the discipline the course represents.
- Students will write at least one paper integrating information from at least one source, employing the appropriate documentation style for the discipline represented by the course.
- Students will draft, revise, and edit their formal written work.
- Students will seek assistance from a Writing Tutor in the Writing Lab when needed and when referred by the instructor.

Outcomes for upper-division UWR writing-intensive courses:

- Students will produce at least 5,000 words (including drafts, in-class writing, informal papers, and polished papers); 2,000 words of this total should be in polished papers which

students have revised after receiving feedback and criticism.

- Students will practice the forms of writing and reflect upon the nature of the writing used by graduates and professionals in the discipline the course represents.
- Students will write at least one paper integrating information from more than one source, employing the appropriate documentation style for the discipline represented by the course.
- Students will draft, revise, and edit their formal written work.
- Students will seek assistance from a Writing Tutor in the Writing Lab when needed and when referred by the instructor.

This class has been designated as writing-intensive. Students must complete all UWR writing-intensive courses with a C- or better, and UWR writing-intensive courses must allocate at least 30% of the overall grade to formal writing assignments, with at least 25% of the overall grade based on evaluation of individually written papers that have been revised after feedback.

UWR writing-intensive courses will address punctuation, grammar, and disciplinary documentation style, but they are primarily intended to be discipline courses, which use writing tasks to help students learn the material and learn how to write effectively in the discipline.

Note that the rubric on the following page denotes the criteria utilized to assess writing in this course.

	Exemplary (4)	Proficient (3)	Marginal (2)	Unacceptable (1)
1) Independent Thought	Presents an insightful position on the issue.	Presents a well-considered position on this issue.	Presents a clear position on this issue.	Vague or limited in presenting a position on the issue.
2) Critical Thought	Identifies and discusses implications and consequences, while questioning the validity of the assumptions and the accuracy, precision, relevance, and completeness of evidence.	Identifies and discusses implications and consequences, while questioning the validity of some assumptions and evidence.	Identifies implications and consequences, While questioning the completeness of evidence.	Fails to identify implications and consequences, and does not question the completeness of the evidence.
3) Examples	Develops the position with compelling reasons and/or	Develops the position with logically sound reasons	Develops the position on the issue with some relevant reasons	Provides weak, if any, examples.

	persuasive examples	and well-chosen examples	and/or examples	
4) Readings	All assigned materials are synthesized logically into a cogent argument.	The majority of assigned materials are integrated into the argument.	Most materials are included, but are not logically integrated.	Materials are missing or included in a haphazard fashion.
5) Lecture and Discussion Materials	A unique synthesis of relevant materials strengthens the final product.	Appropriate materials are integrated into the argument.	Some appropriate materials are integrated, though obvious materials are omitted.	Inadequate incorporation of relevant materials.
6) Thesis and Introduction	Introduction and thesis are clearly written and logically developed	Introduction and thesis are generally well written and somewhat logically developed.	The introduction is generally well written, but the thesis statement is not logically developed.	Introduction is not adequately developed. Thesis is nonexistent or unclear.
7) Conclusion	Identifies, appropriately, one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources. Self-reflection demonstrates significant personal and academic growth.	Identifies, appropriately, one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources. Self-reflection demonstrates a degree of personal and academic growth	Identifies, inappropriately, one's own position on the issue. drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources. Self-reflection demonstrates a minimal degree of personal and academic growth.	Identifies, inappropriately, one's own position on the issue. Fails to draw support from experience Information not available from assigned sources is omitted. Self-reflection is omitted.
8) Writing: Quality	Using effective vocabulary and sentence variety. Demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but	Using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety. Demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written	Generally demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors in vocabulary choice and sentence structure.	Has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity.

	may have minor errors	English but may have minor errors		
9) Writing: Expression of Ideas	Expresses ideas fluently and precisely	Expresses ideas clearly and well	Expresses ideas with reasonable clarity	Ideas are presented in an unclear fashion.
10) Organizational Issues	Sustains a well-focused, well-organized analysis, connecting ideas logically.	Is focused and generally well organized, connecting ideas appropriately.	Is adequately focused and organized	Is poorly focused and/or poorly organized