

# American & Wyoming Government

Political Science 1000; Autumn 2017

**Instructor:** Erica Oman  
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(205) 914-8080 [If you have a highly time-sensitive question/concern]

**A note on availability to students:** Students will still very likely find the need to contact the instructor over the duration of the course. If the need arises, please feel free to contact me at the email address above or via the Canvas messenger inbox. I will do my best to respond within twenty-four (24) hours from the time I receive your email.

## Course Description

This is an introductory college-level course in the organization and structure of American national government and the government of the state of Wyoming. Undoubtedly, each of you has experienced classes in American government before. Thus I find it necessary to differentiate the goals of this course from those you might have experienced before. The goals of this class are two-fold.

First, to fulfill the mandate presented to the University of Wyoming by the state, we will discuss in relative depth both the Wyoming and U.S. constitutions and the governmental systems established by each.

To address our goal, your knowledge will be tested in 14 quizzes.

Second, we will critically discuss the impact which government, both state and national, has upon our lives. Participation in this discussion is mandatory and will take the form of questions and answers constituting a threaded discussion, accessed through each week's discussion link.

POLS 1000 fulfills the United States and Wyoming Constitutions (V) requirement of the University Studies Program. U.S. and Wyoming Constitution (V) courses provide students with an understanding of the historical development, cultural context and major principles of the constitutional documents and the political systems established by those documents. V courses also provide students with understandings of the relationships between the political institutions through which they are governed and their roles as responsible participating citizens.

Our governmental system is based upon the notion of an enlightened electorate. This course is a small step toward that end.

## Texts

The required texts for this course are:

1. Lowi, et al., *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Brief Fourteenth Edition. New York: W. W. Norton (2017). ISBN 978-0-393-28377-8 (pbk.)
  - a. I understand this is a new edition, I am not sure exactly how much has changed from the last edition.
2. King, et al., *The Equality State*. Course packet 8<sup>th</sup> edition(2016).
  - a. Buy the Wyoming book from the bookstore. You won't find it anywhere cheaper.

Students are expected to purchase these texts before the first quiz and to remain current with the assigned readings. Current events will be used as examples in course discussions. Students should keep abreast of what is happening in American politics through reading a daily newspaper, watching television news, etc. Class discussion is strongly encouraged. Please feel free to raise questions concerning the readings or current events. However, I reserve the right to restrict in-class discussions if necessary to meet course objectives.

## Office Hours

I will be immediately available via email during the following Office Hours:

Tuesday 1PM-3PM

Wednesday 10AM -11AM

Note: I will monitor my email fairly closely outside of these hours so feel free to contact me at any time.

## Grading

The University of Wyoming in Fall 2014 implemented a new grading system that allows instructors, at their discretion, to award plus and minus grades as well as the standard letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F. This policy is detailed in UW Regulation 6-722:<http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/files/docs/uw-reg-6-722.pdf>. Due to other University and College policies linked to students' grade point averages and to minimum performance required in particular classes, in this course, *I employ the A, B, C, D, F scale*.

Grades for this course will be based on three criteria:

1. Quizzes (based on readings from the Lowi and King books)
  - a. Dates
    - i. Quizzes will be available for 48 hours, on the Thursday and Friday of each week.
    - ii. Quizzes **must** be taken by the stroke of midnight on each Friday.
    - iii. Late work due to technology failure will not be accepted**
  - b. Value
    - i. Six quizzes, each covering one week's readings, are worth 60 points each.

- ii. The lowest of the six quiz scores will be dropped from the final grade calculation.
- c. Format
  - i. The quizzes are **not** comprehensive.
  - ii. **Each quiz is made up of multiple-choice and true/false questions.**
- d. Procedure
  - i. Quizzes will be given on the dates specified on the course schedule (below). Each quiz must be taken at the scheduled time unless other arrangements are approved by the instructor.
  - ii. Requests for make-up quizzes must be made **in writing (via email)** within seven calendar days of the scheduled quiz date. The written request must include the reason for missing the quiz and your student identification number. Requests for make-up quizzes will be denied *unless a valid reason is presented*. Examples of valid excuses for taking a quiz at an alternative time include illness, death in the family, and participation in a university-sponsored activity. Other excuses will be considered as well. *Documentation for the excuse may be required.*
    - 1. Please remember that you will drop quiz grades automatically

## 2. Discussion

- a. Dates
  - i. Each Monday, a discussion question will be posted to the course website.
  - ii. **By Wednesday at 6PM** of the same week, students will post responses to my challenge questions.
  - iii. **By Friday at 11:59PM** of the same week, students will post a response to at least one other student's response post.
  - iv. **Late work due to technology failure will not be accepted**
- b. Value
  - i. Each week of discussion participation is worth 10 points.
  - ii. To earn all 10 points, students must respond to both the question the instructor poses to the class and to at least one other student's post.
  - iii. **The lowest of the discussion grades automatically be counted as 10 points in the final grade calculation.**

## 3. Issue Paper (based on a topic of your choice)

- a. Due: Wednesday, December 13th
- b. Choose any current issue in American politics which is of interest to you.
  - i. By "current" I mean an issue that has gained national attention in the last 10 years. Issues such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, slavery, and independence from Britain are neither current nor sufficient for this paper.

- ii. By American politics I mean those issues which are largely of importance to America itself. Issues such as, refugee camps in France, or the water rights fights in Africa are not sufficient for this paper.
  - iii. Hint: When looking for a topic, try looking to a major newspaper, such as the Washington Post or the New York Times, or to a news service, such as www.RealClearPolitics.com or procon.org. These media will give you overviews of current issues and will thus help you in finding a topic of interest to you. If you would like to ask me about paper topics, feel free to email me at any time. Good writing often springs from collaboration!
- c. On the topic you have chosen, write two (2) to three (3) pages articulating at least two opposing points of view on the same subject and choosing the single point of view that is most appealing to you. (Formatting instructions will be posted on the course website).

Course Grading at a Glance		
Gradable Items	Point Value	Total Point Value for Item
10 Quizzes*	20 pts. Each *	200
13 Weeks of Discussion*	10 pts. Per week**	130
Final Issue Paper	50 pts.	50
Total Points Possible		380
* The lowest 4 quiz scores will be dropped		
** The lowest 3 discussion grades will be moved up to full points		

Final grades for the course will be based on the total number of points earned on the three quizzes, attendance, participation, and the issue paper relative to the following scale:

342 to 380 points = A  
 304 to 341.99 points = B  
 266 to 303.99 points = C  
 228 to 265.99 points = D  
 0 to 227.99 points = F  
 (There will not be rounding)

### Academic Dishonesty

1. University regulations concerning academic dishonesty (UW Regulation 6-802) will be strictly enforced.
2. Any and all suspicions of academic dishonesty shall be investigated in accordance with UW Regulation 6-802.
3. Evidence of academic dishonesty will result in the recommended sanction of a *failing grade for the course*, in accordance with UW Regulation 6-802 6.A.vi

## Reasonable Accommodation

It is University of Wyoming policy to accommodate students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities. If you have a physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in the Student Educational Opportunity offices, Room 330 Knight Hall, and provide UDSS with documentation of your disability.”

## Words of Advice

If you find yourself having difficulty identifying the important points from the readings or following lectures, please contact me as soon as possible. Do not wait until the day of a quiz or the end of the semester to tell me that you are having trouble. By then it is too late. The time to adjust your study habits is in early to mid-semester, not the last week of classes. I have helped a lot of students in the past and am highly reasonable and am happy to accommodate students who need help with retention.

There is a strong correlation between participating in class discussion regularly and receiving a high grade in the course. Students are therefore urged to actively participate in the online forum as much as possible. Quizzes are designed to draw from the readings very closely, and students are expected to be familiar with all class material.

I do not advise coming to me at the end of the semester asking for me to round up your final grade or asking for extra credit assignments. Low grades are dropped as a sort of extra credit. I cannot stress enough that **you should leave dropped quiz and discussion grades for the end of the semester.**

## Course Schedule

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings (by textbook)</u>
Week 1.	(August 30- September 1) Introduction to Course	None
Week 2.	(September 5- 8) Making Sense of Government and Politics Wyoming’s Firsts and Lasts	Lowi, King, Ch. 1 Ch. 1
	Quiz 1 (Available September 7- 8)	

Week 3.	(September 11- 15) The Founding and The Constitution The Wyoming Constitution Quiz 2 (Available September 14- 15)	Lowi, King,	Ch. 2 Ch. 2
Week 4.	(September 18- 22) Federalism and the Separation of Powers  Quiz 3 (September 21- 22)	Lowi,	Ch. 3
Week 5.	(September 25- 29) Civil Liberties, Civil Rights Political Participation etc.  Quiz 4 (Available September 28- 29)	Lowi, King,	Ch. 4 Ch. 3
Week 6.	(October 2- 6) Congress: The First Branch Wyo. Legislature  Quiz 5 (Available October 5- 6)	Lowi, King,	Ch. 5 Ch. 4
Week 7.	(October 9- 13) The Presidency  Quiz 6 (Available October 12- 13)	Lowi,	Ch. 6
Week 8.	(October 16- 20) The Executive Branch The Wyoming Executive	Lowi, King,	Ch. 7 Ch. 5

Quiz 7 (Available October 19- 20)

Week 9.	(October 23- 27) The Federal Courts Wyo. Courts	Lowi, King,	Ch. 8 Ch. 6
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Quiz 8 (Available October 26- 27)

Week 10.	(October 30- November 3) Public Opinion and the Media	Lowi,	Ch. 9
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Quiz 9 (Available November 2- 3)

Week 11.	(November 6- 10) Elections	Lowi,	Ch. 10
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Quiz 10 (Available November 9- 10)

Week 12.	(November 13- 17) Political Parties	Lowi,	Ch. 11
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Quiz 11 (Available November 16- 17)

Week 13.	(November 20- 21) Thanksgiving! Optional paper advising		
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Week 14.	(November 27- December 1) Groups and Interest	Lowi	Ch. 12
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Quiz 12 (Available November 30- December 1)

Week 15.	(December 4- 8)		
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Introduction to Public Policy	Lowi,	Ch. 13
Non-State Government in Wyoming	King,	Ch. 7
Quiz 13 (Available December 7- 8)		

Week 16. (December 11- 15)  
FINAL PAPER DUE December 13<sup>th</sup> at Midnight

Foreign Policy	Lowi,	Ch. 14
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Quiz 14 (Available December 14-15)