

American & Wyoming Government

Political Science 1000 (43)
University of Wyoming
Fall 2017

Instructor Zachary Taylor, MPA
School of Politics, Public Affairs, and International Studies
ztaylor1@uwo.edu

Office Hours Arts & Sciences Building 222C
Monday 2:30 – 3:30 pm
Tuesday 12:00 – 2:00 pm
And by appointment

A note on availability: Please feel free to contact me through WyoCourses or at the email address above if you cannot make it to office hours on campus. I will do my best to respond within two business days of receiving your email. I am also happy to talk via Skype or Zoom but will only do so if we have agreed on a time beforehand via email.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the constitutions and governmental structures and processes of the United States and Wyoming. In this course, we will

- Examine the political theories and historical circumstances that guided the development of the American and Wyoming political systems;
- Compare the ideals expressed in the American and Wyoming constitutions and the reality of political practice;
- Examine the structures and processes of the American and Wyoming political systems;
- Compare the ideals of the American political systems with those of other political systems; and
- Critically discuss the impact that government has on our daily lives.

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

POLS 1000 fulfills the United States and Wyoming Constitutions (V) requirement of the University Studies Program. U.S. and WY Constitution 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.

Texts

Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Brief 14th Edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2017. ISBN: 976-0-393-28377-8

King, Garner, McConnell, and Schuhmann, *The Equality State: Government and Politics in Wyoming*. 8th Edition. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeill, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-7380-8887-7

Additional Readings, if assigned, will be provided through WyoCourses.

Students are expected to obtain these texts and to remain current with the assigned readings. Current events will be used as examples in course discussions – students should keep up-to-date on what is happening politically in the United States and abroad. Discussion will be essential to the course (and an important part of your grade). Feel free to raise questions concerning any readings or current events pertinent to the course topics.

Grading

Course Grading		
<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
12 Quizzes	16 pts/quiz	192
14 Weeks of Discussion	16 pts/week	224
Current Issue Paper	84 pts	84
	Total Points Possible:	500

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, available at <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, standard letter grade delineations will be used as follows:

Final Grading Scale		
<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
90 – 100%	450 – 500	A
80 – 89%	400 – 449	B
70 – 79%	350 – 399	C
60 – 69%	300 – 349	D
0 – 59%	0 – 299	F

Quizzes (based on the readings from Lowi and King)

Dates: Quizzes are available each week, opening on Saturday at 6:00 am and closing on Tuesday at 11:59 pm.

Value: 12 quizzes, each covering one week's reading material, are worth 16 points each.

Discussion

Dates: Each *Monday* a discussion question(s) will be posted to WyoCourses. By *Wednesday* students should post responses to the initial discussion question. By *Friday* students should post at least one-two responses to other students' response posts. You are encouraged to reply to more than one other student, especially as conversations develop, and this will be taken into consideration when the discussion is graded.

Value: Each week of discussion is worth 16 points. To earn all 16 points, students must respond to both the question the instructor posts and to at least one other student's post.

1. The response to the instructor question is worth 10 points.
2. The response(s) to other students' posts are worth 6 points.

Details: Discussion posts should be substantive. That means a passing comment ("Hey, I liked your post!") isn't sufficient; explain why you liked their post and contribute to an ongoing discussion. Your response should show an active engagement with both the conversation and the course material.

In addition, when posting it is important to remember we are a classroom community expressed primarily through our threaded discussions. Accordingly, please **think** about *what* you have to say and *how* to say it before posting. I encourage critical and reflective responses, but posts that are uncivil or disrespectful to the material or one another will not be tolerated. Feel free to disagree, but respectfully disagree with the *point* and not the *person*.

Current Issue Paper

Date: Due **Friday 3 November** by 11:59 pm

Value: The current issue paper is worth 84 points.

Details: Choose any current issue in American politics that interests you.

By "current" I mean any issue that has gained national attention in the last five years. Issues like the Cuban Missile Crisis or the War of 1812 are interesting but will not be sufficient for this paper.

By "American" I mean issues which are of importance to the United States itself. Issues like Turkey's expansion of presidential power or Brexit are again interesting, but will not suffice for the paper.

When looking for a topic, consider your sources of information. Try looking to reliable and varied sources, including the Washington Post, the New York Times, Forbes, the Economist, www.RealClearPolitics.com, etc. These will give you an overview of current issues and will help you find a topic that interests you.

On the topic of your choice, write three to five pages (Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced) in which you:

- Articulate the support for at least two opposing viewpoints on the issue
- Identify one point of view that appeals most to you
- Explain why you have adopted that point of view

A full rubric will be posted to WyoCourses.

Academic Dishonesty

The University of Wyoming is built on a strong foundation of integrity, respect, and trust. All members of the university community have a responsibility to be honest and the right to expect honesty from others. Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable to our community and will not be tolerated. Teachers and students should report suspected academic dishonesty to the instructor, department head, or college dean. Additional information can be found at <http://www.uwyo.edu/as/student-appeals/academic-dishonesty.html>.

UW Regulation 6-802 defines academic dishonesty as “an action attempted or performed that misrepresents one’s involvement in an academic endeavor in any way, or assists another student in misrepresenting his or her involvement in an academic endeavor.” Among the possible acts that UW considers academically dishonest are:

1. Representing as one’s own work material copied or borrowed from any source, written or otherwise, public or private, without proper citation of the source.
2. Using a ghost writer, commercial or otherwise, for any type of assignment.
3. Doing a class assignment for someone else or allowing someone to copy your assignment.
4. Submitting substantially the same work as someone else unless authorized by the instructor.
5. Taking an examination for someone else or allowing someone to take an examination for you.
6. Copying from or assisting another student during an examination.
7. Stealing, or otherwise improperly obtaining, copies of an examination before or after its administration.
8. Submitting substantially the same work for more than one class without the explicit permission of all concerned instructors.

Regulations concerning plagiarism cover books, magazines, newspapers, movies, internet sources, and any other source of information. Proper citation of sources means identifying in the text of the paper the source of the information. Simply listing sources in a Bibliography or References section at the end of the paper is not adequate for citing sources. If you have any doubts or questions, I’m always happy to consult with you before you submit an assignment.

It is important to remember that you can be charged with academic dishonesty if you assist another student in cheating. For example, if you permit a classmate to copy from your exam, both you and the student who copied are guilty of academic dishonesty.

In this class, penalties for academic dishonesty may range from an F on the particular assignment to an F for the course. UW Regulation 6-802 authorizes several actions against a student found to be in violation of the policy:

1. A failing grade for the assignment.
2. A failing grade for the course in which the act of academic dishonesty was committed.
3. The student is suspended from the University for one year if they commit two acts of academic dishonesty at different times or for different courses.
4. Further sanctions, including loss of scholarships, may also be imposed.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism, how to properly cite sources, or what is appropriate behaviour on an examination is not an acceptable defense against a charge of academic dishonesty. Students who are uncertain as to whether a particular act violates the University's policy should consult with their instructor, the head of the department, their academic advisor, the Dean of Students Office, or another appropriate University official.

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 of Knight Hall on the Laramie campus, 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 lectures, please email me. Don't wait until the day of a quiz or the end of the course to tell me that you are having trouble. By then it is too late. The time to adjust your study habits is early on, not for the last quiz.

There is a strong correlation between participating in discussion and receiving a high grade in the course. Students are encouraged to take an active role in the online discussion as much and as often as possible. Quizzes are designed to draw from the readings and lectures, and students are expected to be familiar with all class materials.

Course Schedule

The course and syllabus are subject to change, including the calendar. Any change will be announced through WyoCourses and an updated syllabus will be available.

Week 1: 30 August – 1 September

Introduction

Discussion 1

Week 2: 5 – 8 September

Making Sense of Government and Politics

Wyoming's Firsts and Lasts

Quiz 1, Discussion 2

American Government Ch. 1

The Equality State Ch. 1

Week 3: 11 – 15 September

The Founding and the Constitution

The Wyoming Constitution

Quiz 2, Discussion 3

American Government Ch. 2

The Equality State Ch. 2

Week 4: 18 – 22 September

Federalism and the Separation of Powers

Quiz 3, Discussion 4

American Government Ch. 3

Week 5: 25 – 29 September

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Quiz 4, Discussion 5

American Government Ch. 4

Week 6: 2 – 6 October

Congress

Wyoming Legislature

Quiz 5, Discussion 6

American Government Ch. 5

The Equality State Ch. 4

Week 7: 9 – 13 October

The Presidency

Wyoming Executive Branch

Quiz 6, Discussion 7

American Government Ch. 6

The Equality State Ch. 5

Week 8: 16 – 20 October

The Executive Branch

Quiz 7, Discussion 8

American Government Ch. 7

Week 9: 23 – 27 October

The Federal Courts

Wyoming Judiciary

Quiz 8, Discussion 9

American Government Ch. 8

The Equality State Ch. 6

Week 10: 30 October – 3 November

Public Opinion and the Media

Quiz 9, Discussion 10

American Government Ch. 9

Current Issue Paper due Friday 3 November by midnight

Week 11: 6 – 10 November

Elections

Political Participation

Quiz 10, Discussion 11

American Government Ch. 10

The Equality State Ch. 3

Week 12: 13 – 17 November

Political Parties

Quiz 11, Discussion 12

American Government Ch. 11

Week 13: 20 – 24 November

Thanksgiving

Week 14: 27 November – 1 December

Groups and Interests

Quiz 12, Discussion 13

American Government Ch. 12

Week 15: 4 – 8 December

Conclusion

Discussion 14