

American & Wyoming Government

Political Science 1000-44; Fall 2017

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A note on availability to students: Since this is an online class, there are not set “office hours” per se. However, 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. 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 of 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 this goal, your knowledge will be tested in three 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 & Purpose*. 14th Brief Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-393-28377-8
2. King, et al., *The Equality State: Government and Politics in Wyoming*. Eighth Edition. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil, 2017. ISBN: 978-073808887-7

Students are expected to purchase these texts 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.

Grading

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 24 hours at the end of each week.
 - b. Value
 - i. Thirteen quizzes, each covering one week's material, are worth 30 points each.
 - ii. The lowest three quiz grades will be dropped
 - c. Format
 - i. The quizzes are not comprehensive.
 - ii. Each quiz is made up of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
 - iii. Each quiz will have a time limit of 15 minutes.
 - 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 an 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.

2. Discussion

- a. Each Monday, I will post to the course website a series of challenge questions regarding the week's readings.
- b. By Wednesday of the same week, students will post responses to my challenge questions.
- c. By Friday of the same week, students will post a response to at least one other student's response post.
- d. The lowest three of the thirteen discussion grades will be dropped

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

- a. Due: **12/15/17 (Finals Week)**
- 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 genocide in Darfur, piracy in the South Pacific, or the amendment of the Japanese constitution 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. These media will give you overviews of current issues and will thus help you in finding a topic of interest to you
- c. On the topic you have chosen, write three (3) to five (5) pages articulating at least two opposing points of view 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*	30 pts. Each	300
10 Weeks of Discussion**	10 pts. Per week**	100
Extra Credit Issue Paper	30 pts.	(30)
Total Points Possible		400
* The lowest three of thirteen quiz scores will be dropped.		
** The lowest three of thirteen discussion scores will be dropped.		

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

360 to 400 points = A
320 to 359 points = B
280 to 319 points = C
240 to 279 points = D
0 to 239 points = F

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

Words of Advice

If you find yourself having difficulty identifying the important points from the readings or following lectures, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class. Do not wait until the day of a quiz or the end of the semester to tell us that you are having trouble. By then it is too late. The time to adjust your study habits is in mid-semester, not the last week of classes.

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 and discussions, and students are expected to be familiar with all class material.

Quiz Procedures

1. 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.
2. 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 an 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.
3. University regulations concerning academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.