

POLS 1100 – Wyoming Government Fall 2017



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Wyoming Government is an introduction to the Constitution and governmental system of Wyoming, focusing on the various political institutions, processes, and actors. Topics of discussion include the development of the Wyoming Constitution, Wyoming's place in the federal system, the processes by which citizens influence government, and the structure and operation of state government in Wyoming. Because many students in the class are not residents of Wyoming (the miracle of on-line education), many of the topics we study are placed into the broader context of state politics so the lessons of this class can be applied to the state in which a student lives.

This course fulfills the Wyoming Constitution portion of the (V) requirement of the University Studies Program. It is for students who have earned credit for American Government at an out-of-state college or by Advance Placement exam but have not fulfilled the Wyoming Constitution requirement of University Studies. ***POLS 1100 alone does not satisfy the V requirement of the University Studies Program.*** 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.

Because POLS 1100 is a one-credit course, the schedule and pace are different from those of a typical class. The weekly time commitment is slightly greater than might be expected of a one-credit hour class, but our pace is designed to complete the class well before the “official” end of the semester in December.

The course is designed to provide a more nuanced understanding of Wyoming government and politics than you would get simply reading the text. To this end, “participation” is a component of the grading. We will explore different aspects of Wyoming politics through discussion. On Sunday of each week, a question for discussion is posted. Students are expected

to respond to questions and/or their classmates comments by noon on Friday. Since the questions highlight certain aspects of the Wyoming government beyond what is found in the text, few discussion questions (if any) will have a “correct” answer. Instead, the responses are perspectives that will help everyone understand the topic. I will add comments and follow-up questions during the discussion, and on Friday afternoon of each week I will post my “lecture” on the topic of the week, incorporating students’ comments and presenting additional class material.

The readings for the class are from *The Equality State: Government and Politics in Wyoming*. To assist students in identifying the important information from the text, a study guide is posted under the “Files” tab on the WyoCourses.

Students are expected to purchase the text and to remain current with the assigned readings. Current events in Wyoming government will be used as examples in lectures. Students without regular access to Wyoming media can use the following for information about contemporary Wyoming politics:

Casper <i>Star-Tribune</i>	www.trib.com
Cheyenne <i>Tribune-Eagle</i>	www.wyomingnews.com
KTWO-TV (Casper)	www.k2tv.com
KGWN-TV (Cheyenne)	www.kgwn.tv

An announcement will be posted if at any time during the semester I expect to be unavailable (other than weekends). Please contact me—either by email or by telephone—if you have any questions or concerns. I encourage students to include the course number (POLS 1100) in the subject line of emails. This alerts me that the message is class-related and needs my immediate attention.

Finally, all students are expected to do their own coursework. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of “F” for the course! Among the actions covered by “academic dishonesty” that is particularly relevant to an online class is sharing information regarding the content of an examination with a student who has not yet taken the exam. Anyone uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty or the accompanying penalties should consult UW Regulation 6-802.

Text

James D. King, Andrew Garner, Jason B. McConnell, and Robert A. Schuhmann, *The Equality State: Government and Politics in Wyoming* 8th edition. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil Publishing, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-7380-8887-7

Grading Criteria

1. Examinations (80%) — There will be two examinations of equal weight (40% each). The first exam covers Topics 1-6, the second covers Topics 7-10. Exams will be posted on Sunday of the exam week (October 15 and November 19). Students will have eight days (excluding holidays) to complete the exam. (There are no other class activities during an

exam period.) A time limit is set for each exam. The format of each exam is multiple-choice. Test questions are drawn from the textbook and from the end-of-week comments (“lectures”) that I post each week. To assist students in identifying the important information from the textbook, a study guide is posted under the “Files” tab on the WyoCourses.

Students who have completed an exam *may not* share information about exam content with any student who has not completed the exam. Violation of this directive is a violation of the university’s academic dishonesty policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

2. Class participation (20%) — Students are expected to respond to questions posted for discussion. The discussion component constitutes 20% of each student’s course grade. The points for “participation” are not intended to be punitive but to encourage involvement in the class (remember, interaction among class members is what differentiates an online course from a correspondence course or credit by exam).

Each week a discussion question is posted for students’ consideration and replies. You may respond directly to the question or respond to another student’s posting. Regular, thoughtful engagement is expected. Simply saying “I agree” or something equally superficial is not acceptable. Students who do multiple engagements in a week’s discussion or who post more lengthy, thoughtful comments are scored higher than students who make a single entry in the discussion. Responses to the discussion question must be posted no later than **noon** (Mountain Time) each Friday. While regular participation in discussion is expected, occasionally missing a week’s discussion will not be detrimental to a student’s grade for the “participation” segment of the course.

3. Extra credit – An opportunity for extra credit will be made available after the first exam. The assignment is to identify one problem with the Wyoming governmental system and propose a solution to this problem. The solution must be reasonable and realistic (you cannot scrap the entire system and build a new system from scratch), and be linked to the problem identified. This is not intended as a research project but as a “think piece” that reflects upon what you have learned in the class. Essays should be approximately three pages in length (double-spaced with normal margins and fonts) and will be evaluated on the basis of the link between the problem and proposed solution, organization of thought, and grammar. Papers should be sent by email to jkking@uwyo.edu no later than December 11. Satisfactory essays will earn 10 points, which will be added to the student’s point total before computing course grades.

Final course grades are determined by the following percentages (number of points earned in the assignments relative to total points available):

93-100% = A	73-76% = C
90-92% = A-	70-72% = C-
87-89% = B+	67-69% = D+
83-86% = B	60-66% = D
80-82% = B-	0-59% = F
77-79% = C+	

Schedule

1. Aug. 30-Sept. 8: Introduction (no reading assignment; discussion period is extended because of the midweek starting date of classes)
2. Sept. 10-15: Wyoming Political Culture (Chapter 1)
3. Sept. 17-22: Wyoming & the Federal System (no reading assignment)
4. Sept. 24-29: Wyoming Constitution (Chapter 2)
5. October 1-6: Popular influences on government: Citizen Participation (pp. 23-34)
6. October 8-13: Popular influences on government: Interest Groups (pp. 34-36)

October 15-22: First Exam – no other class activities

7. October 22-27: Wyoming Legislature (Chapter 4)
8. Oct. 29-Nov. 3: Governor & the Executive Branch (Chapter 5)
9. November 5-10: Wyoming Judiciary (Chapter 6)
10. November 12-17: Non-State Government in Wyoming (Chapter 7)

November 19-28: Second exam (dates extended because of Thanksgiving holiday)

Class concluded