

POLS& 202: American Government

Bellevue College, Fall 2015 (Item 5360)

Course Details

Class Sessions: M/W/Hybrid | 12:30 – 2:20pm | D101
Instructor: David Spataro, PhD
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Phone: (425) 564-3161
Office Location: D200E
Office Hours: M-Th 8-9am, F 11am-12pm

Course Description

This is an introductory course that is designed to familiarize students with the study of American politics. Students will gain an understanding of the structure of American government. In addition, students will develop the ability to identify and analyze the debates around and political actors involved in the most significant problems confronting American politics. Specific topics include: race and the Constitution, civil rights, and civil liberties; gender and elections, political parties, and Congress; class and the Presidency and trade policy; and sexuality and the courts.

Course Objectives

- To develop a critical understanding of American government and politics. This requires developing (1) the conceptual understanding of the structure of American government AND (2) the analytical tools to interpret and criticize various political positions about American government.
- To become more informed and discriminating consumers of political information in order to constructively engage in the political process. This involves developing the skill to critically analyze current political issues facing the function and efficacy of governmental institutions.
- To develop the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion and to draw informed conclusions based on reliable and valid evidence. This objective involves developing the skill of understanding different forms of knowledge and the standards of explanation in the social sciences.

- To foster self-reflection about one's rights and responsibilities as a citizen or non-citizen resident by examining the political structures that distribute such rights and to whom. This objective involves developing an understanding: of civil rights (and struggles over such rights); and of the role that citizens and non-citizens play in political structures and institutions.

Grading

| Course Assessments | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Attendance and accountability | 10% |
| Unit discussion/survey (4) | 10% |
| Unit documentary 'live tweets' (4) | 10% |
| Unit reading quizzes (4) | 20% |
| Midterm exam | 20% |
| Outline and draft of final paper | 10% |
| Final paper | 20% |
| Total | 100% |

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|
| A | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-94% |
| B+ | 87-90% |
| B | 84-87% |
| B- | 80-84% |
| C+ | 77-80% |
| C | 74-77% |
| C- | 70-74% |
| D+ | 67-70% |
| D | 64-67% |
| D- | 60-64% |
| F | Below 60% |

Attendance and Accountability: 10% of grade

You are required to attend class. As such I will be holding students accountable for attending, participating (in the manner appropriate to your abilities and

learning modalities), reading the course material, and acting cooperatively with others. I will be taking attendance, and you are NOT required to check in with me about every absence. Twice during the quarter (at the middle of the quarter and at the end), you are required to submit a self-assessment survey in which you answer questions designed to assess if you have been accountable to the course. The final grade for this portion of the course will be based upon your answers to the two surveys.

Unit discussions/surveys (4): 10% of grade

This is a hybrid (HYA) course, which means that 1/5th (50 minutes per week) of the in-class time will be held online. The course has 4 units (race; gender; class; and sexuality) each lasting 2 weeks in the course schedule. For each unit, you will have to complete a timed discussion question based upon the unit material, and you will have a short survey that asks you to outline what is working for you in the class and what is not working for you in the class. Your answer to the discussion question will be graded using a 10-point scale. Your answers to the survey will be graded as complete/incomplete.

Unit documentary 'live tweets' (4): 10% of grade

The second portion of the hybrid material is designed to acclimate students with the role of social media as a form of political communication. Students will watch 4 documentaries during the quarter (1 documentary for each unit) and are required to 'live tweet' their political commentary while watching the documentary. Your live tweets will be graded using a 4-point scale.

Unit reading quizzes (4): 20% of grade

In order for you to be successful in college courses and in many different sectors of the workforce, it is important for you to become strong, independently-motivated readers. This is a key skill for becoming politically knowledgeable political actors as well. In this class, I will be assessing your reading four times during the quarter by quizzing you on the reading material. The quiz dates are predetermined, and they will cover the reading material assigned for the same week as the quiz. I will administer the quizzes in class, and you will work in small groups to complete the quiz.

Midterm exam: 20% of grade

During week 6 of the quarter you will have a midterm in-class. The exam will cover the content from the first half of the class and will be an essay-based exam.

Outline and draft of final paper: 10% of grade

The final assignment of the class is a 2000-word essay on a question that I assign from the topics covered in the second half of the quarter. In this class you will continue to develop your skills of planning, outlining, and drafting a long-form piece of writing. You will receive feedback on your outline and draft from both your peers and your instructor.

Final paper: 20% of grade

At the conclusion of the quarter you will turn in a 2000-word political essay.

Books and Required Materials

The textbook for the course is *The Irony of Democracy: An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics* by Dye, Zeigler, and Shubert (15th edition). The book is available in the campus bookstore and you can purchase it used online as well. I will make the first week's textbook readings available as a .PDF file on Canvas but you need a copy of the textbook by the second week of class. We will be reading extensive supplemental materials, which will be available on our Canvas website or in-class. **Each assigned reading is to be completed before the class session for which it is scheduled.**

There are also four documentaries that you are required to watch outside of class. You will be watching the documentaries on your own time. You may stream these documentaries online for a small price (1 is legally free and the other 3 can be streamed for \$2.99 each). However you will also have other options: you can organize small 'viewing parties' if you would like to share costs; the first documentary (Spies of Mississippi) is available at the Library Media Center and you (or a group) can watch it in the LMC's screening rooms; and (if needed) I will organize a viewing in a BC classroom outside of the class period.

A quick note about .PDFs: I encourage you to find the most appropriate reading method that works for you. You have a printing quota each quarter based upon technology fees. This quota is not likely to be sufficient for you to print all the materials and assignments for every course. I suggest that you patronize the King County library system, which provides library users with 75 'units' of free printing

per week. Additionally, be strategic about readings that you need to print, and readings that you can read and take notes using a computer.

Late work and Classroom Policies

- **Late work:** Your assignments are due on the date listed in the course schedule and the quizzes will be in-class on the date listed in the schedule. You will have a period of two weeks after the assignment due date to turn in late work for 80% of the full grade. This means that if you turn in work during this two-week period, I will dock you 20%. You do not need to ask me to turn in work during this period; all you need to do is turn it in. Late work may lead to delays in grading and delays in instructor feedback, as I will prioritize work that is turned in on time. In-class quizzes do not qualify for this policy.

If you miss class on a quiz day, you cannot retake the quiz. If you miss due to a documented emergency or an illness, your quiz grade will be calculated using three quizzes instead of four.

If your work is more than two weeks late or you are falling behind due to emergency/unforeseen circumstances, you can request an extension using the following webform: <http://goo.gl/forms/ePWywg4qVx>. The form is anonymous and I will assess requests on a case-by-case basis. Please do not make requests for extensions in person at the beginning or end of a class period. Fill out the webform and schedule a time to meet with me.

- **English Second (or more) Language Students:** If English is your second language, you can use a translation dictionary during in-class assessments (quizzes and exams). The dictionary must be a book not an electronic dictionary, and it must be the type of translation dictionary that only includes the translation, not the definition. If English is a second (or third or fourth) language, I encourage you to talk with me directly so that we can make sure the learning environment works for you.
- **Electronics Policy:** At the beginning of class please turn off or silence your phones. Laptops are allowed in the first row. Students who use their laptops for email or web-browsing in class will be required to switch to a different method of note-taking for the remainder of the quarter. If at any

point you feel that you need to use your device for communications, please quietly get up and do so outside. I do not allow recording of any audio or video in the classroom. If any of these policies prohibits you from being able to learn in the fullest possible way, please meet with me to work out an individualized solution.

- **Email and Canvas Inbox:** The built-in email function in Canvas, and the many different places to communicate with me (replies to my feedback/grading, etc.) can sometimes make communicating more challenging than it needs to be. The best ways to communicate with me are: in person during office hours (or by appointment); through my BC email; or the Canvas 'inbox'. I may check these locations at odd hours, such as at night or over the weekend. But please do not expect me to reply outside of regular business hours. Respect the dynamic that the classroom is my workplace. On my end I will be answering your messages swiftly. However, if I do not answer your inquiry in about a day, you should feel comfortable to follow up.

Classroom Learning Atmosphere

Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Religious Holidays

Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance should be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments should be offered an opportunity to make up the work without penalty (if they have previously arranged to be absent), unless it can be demonstrated that a makeup opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on a member of the faculty. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable

burden or any element of this policy, parties involved should consult the department chair, or Dean.

College Anti-Discrimination Statement (Title IX)

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; color; creed; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion; genetic information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; gender identity or veteran status in educational programs and activities which it operates.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Such behavior will result in a zero grade for the assignment/exam in question. Please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050p/>.

Important Resources/Services

Disability Resource Center – B132

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact [Autism Spectrum Navigators](#). Email and phone number is on the web page. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125.

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call the reception desk at (425) 564.2498. Deaf students can reach the DRC by Skype: the address is **DRCatBC** (NOTE: There is no @ sign...it is actually **DRCatBC**). Please visit the website at [Disability Resource Center](#) for application information and other helpful links.

Multicultural Services – 2nd Floor of B building (above the bookstore)

Multicultural Services (MCS) is a student-centered service program on campus that is designed to support all students in general, and diverse student

populations in particular. MCS is a broad program that can assist students with tutoring in Math and English as well as help students locate community resources such as food and housing assistance. Please familiarize yourself with MCS by stopping by or visiting: bellevuecollege.edu/mcs/

Counseling Center – 2nd Floor of B building (above the bookstore)

The Counseling Center provides personal, career, and academic counseling for all registered BC students. The Counseling Center can be a helpful place for locating community resources (referrals) as well as free counseling appointments with the center's staff of licensed mental health counselors. Please familiarize yourself with the services offered by the counseling center by stopping by or visiting: bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/

Course Calendar

INTRO

Week 1 – Introductions & The Meaning of Elitism

9.21 -- NO READING

9.23 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “TO THE STUDENT” (P. XIX – XX)

-- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 1: THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY” (P. 1 - 19)

RACE

Week 2 – Federalism & the Constitution

9.28 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 2: THE ELITE CONSENSUS” (P. 21 – 47)

-- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 12: FEDERALISM” (P. 299 – 319)

-- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – ARTICLE 1 OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION (P. 377 – 381)

9.30 -- McCLAIN & TAUBER – “CH. 3: FEDERALISM: BALANCING POWER, BALANCING RIGHTS” (P. 55-93)

-- **IN-CLASS READING QUIZ**

Week 3 – States Rights and Civil Rights

- HY -- **COMPLETE CANVAS DISCUSSION AND SURVEY (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 10.5 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 13: CIVIL RIGHTS” (P. 321 – 346)
-- MCCLAIN & TAUBER – “CH. 5: CIVIL RIGHTS” (P. 125 – 160)
- 10.7 -- COATES – “WHAT THIS CRUEL WAR WAS OVER “
-- **IF YOU LEAN REPUBLICAN, READ: HANEY LOPEZ – “CH. 1: THE GOP’S RISE AS ‘THE WHITE MAN’S PARTY’” (P. 13 – 34)**
-- **IF YOU LEAN DEMOCRATIC, READ: HANEY LOPEZ – “CH. 5: SHIFTING THE TUNE: CLINTON AND W.” (P. 105 – 125)**

RECOMMENDED VIDEOS WITH AUTHOR HANEY LOPEZ (INCLUDES TRANSCRIPT AND CC)
[BILLMOYERS.COM/EPISODE/IAN-HANEY-LOPEZ-ON-THE-DOG-WHISTLE-POLITICS-OF-RACE/](https://www.billmoyers.com/episode/ian-haney-lopez-on-the-dog-whistle-politics-of-race/)
[BILLMOYERS.COM/EPISODE/IAN-HANEY-LOPEZ-ON-THE-DOG-WHISTLE-POLITICS-OF-RACE-PART-TWO/](https://www.billmoyers.com/episode/ian-haney-lopez-on-the-dog-whistle-politics-of-race-part-two/)

GENDER

Week 4 – Congress, Elections, and Political Parties

- HY -- **WATCH “SPIES OF MISSISSIPPI” DOCUMENTARY AND COMPLETE ‘LIVE TWEET’ ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 10.12 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 6: ELECTIONS, PARTIES, AND DEMOCRACY” (P. 131 – 159)
-- LAWLESS, FOX, & BAITINGER – “WOMEN’S UNDERREPRESENTATION IN U.S. POLITICS: THE ENDURING GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL AMBITION” (P. 27 – 45)
- 10.14 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 8: CONGRESS: THE LEGISLATIVE ELITE” (P. 183 – 213)
-- **IN-CLASS READING QUIZ**

Week 5 – Lawmaking and Public Policy

- HY -- **COMPLETE CANVAS DISCUSSION AND SURVEY (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 10.19 -- SWERS – “REPRESENTING WOMEN’S INTERESTS IN A POLARIZED CONGRESS” (P. 162 – 180)

- KHAZAN – “HOW WELFARE REFORM LEFT SINGLE MOMS BEHIND”
- 10.21 -- ABRAMOVITZ – “CH. 5: HOW TODAY’S POLICIES HURT WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES” (P. 93 – 105)
- ABRAMOVITZ – “CH. 6: WHY WOMEN FEEL MORE STING FROM SERVICE CUTS” (P. 107 – 124)

MIDTERM WEEK

Week 6 – Assessment and Intersections

- HY -- **WATCH “MAKERS: WOMEN IN POLITICS” AND COMPLETE ‘LIVE TWEET’ ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 10.26 -- **MIDTERM IN CLASS (NO READING)**
- 10.28 -- GUILD – “TO MAKE SOMEDAY COME: SHIRLEY CHISHOLM’S RADICAL POLITICS OF POSSIBILITY” (P. 248 – 270)

CLASS

Week 7 – The Presidency and Trade Policy

- 11.2 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 9: THE PRESIDENCY” (P. 215 – 243)
- DALLEK – “POWER AND THE PRESIDENCY, FROM KENNEDY TO OBAMA”
- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – ARTICLE 2 OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION (P. 381 – 383)
- 11.4 -- U.S. NEWS DEBATE – “SHOULD CONGRESS GIVE THE PRESIDENT ‘FAST TRACK’ TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY?” ([HTTP://BIT.LY/1J0UAY7](http://bit.ly/1J0UAY7))
- INTERVIEW WITH LORI WALLACH – “TRADE EXPERT: WHY TPP MUST BE STOPPED”
- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – REREAD ARTICLE 1 OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION (P. 377 – 381)
- VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.READTHETPP.COM/](https://www.readthetpp.com/)
- **IN-CLASS READING QUIZ**

Week 8 – Policing, and the Criminalization of Poverty

- HY -- **COMPLETE CANVAS DISCUSSION AND SURVEY (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**

11.9 -- NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY – “NO SAFE PLACE: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS IN U.S. CITIES”

11.11 -- **NO CLASS, NO READINGS**

Week 9a – Global Cities, Local Inequalities

Hy -- **WATCH “CITIZEN KOCH” AND COMPLETE ‘LIVE TWEET’ ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**

11.16 -- READINGS TBD

SEXUALITY

Week 9b – The Judiciary

11.18 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 10: COURTS – ELITES IN BLACK ROBES” (P. 245 – 264)

Week 10 – Litigation and The Function of Civil and Criminal Courts

11.23 -- MEZEY – “INTRODUCTION” (P. 1 – 13)
-- MEZEY – “CH. 2: LITIGATING EQUALITY AND PRIVACY RIGHTS” (P. 45 – 86)
-- **IN-CLASS READING QUIZ (COVERING READINGS FROM 11.18 & 11.23)**

11.25 -- NO READING
-- **OUTLINE AND DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE**

Week 11a – The Supreme Court and Gay Marriage

Hy -- **COMPLETE CANVAS DISCUSSION AND SURVEY (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
11.30 -- BALL – “HOW GAY MARRIAGE BECAME A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT”

REVIEW AND FINAL

Week 11b

12.2 -- READINGS TBD – WE WILL BE PROOFREADING STUDENT ESSAYS

Week 12

**Hy -- WATCH “OUT IN THE NIGHT” OR “BRIDGEGROOM” AND COMPLETE ‘LIVE TWEET’
ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**

12.7 -- NO READING

12.9 -- **CLASS WILL MEET DURING EXAM TIME – 11:30AM – 1:20PM**
-- **FINAL PAPER DUE**