

POLS& 202: American Government

Bellevue College, Winter 2016 (Item 5358)

Course Details

Class Sessions: T/TH/Hybrid | 12:30 – 2:20pm | L221
Instructor: David Spataro, PhD
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Phone: (425) 564-3161
Office Location: D200E
Office Hours: MW 11:30am – 1:00pm
TTH 2:30pm – 3:30pm
By Appointment

Course Description

This course 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 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 Learning Outcomes

After completing this class, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate the basic nature of Constitutional government in America.
2. Understand concepts such as separation of power and checks and balances as outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
3. Recall and define problems of individual rights, popular representation and responsible leadership.
4. Identify roles of the Executive, the Congress, and the Judiciary.
5. Have an understanding of the public policy making process in the U.S.
6. Have the skills and knowledge necessary for analyzing American politics according to the ideals of American democracy.

Course Goals (broader, long-range intended objectives)

Cognitive objectives:

- Develop a basic understanding of the scientific study of politics as the study of social conflicts and resolutions;
- Understand the role, power, and functions of government. This includes developing an ability to identify the role of elite control of American Government;
- Understand the role and power of citizens (individually and in collective action) in the political environment.

Affective Objectives:

- Understand the social problem of political ignorance and care deeply about political knowledge;
- Think about and care deeply about power and various “social forces” in the political process;
- Care about systems of domination and understand the nature of resistance in the U.S. political system.

Behavioral Objectives:

- Be able to identify weak arguments and respond with informed knowledge and critical analysis;
- Be able to reflect upon political socialization in order to communicate and act based upon informed knowledge and critical analysis;
- Be able to efficiently find strong sources of information in an oversaturated information environment;
- Be able to act effectively in the world based upon political knowledge.

Grading

| Course Assessments | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Structure of U.S. Government Quizzes (4) | 20% |
| Documentary ‘live tweet’ Assignments (6) | 20% |
| Midterm (take home essay) | 20% |
| Final Exam (multiple choice/true-false) | 20% |
| Final Essay & Portfolio (outline, draft, peer reviews) | 20% |

| | |
|-------|------|
| Total | 100% |
|-------|------|

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|
| A | 92 - 100% |
| A- | 90 - <92% |
| B+ | 88 - <90% |
| B | 82 - <88% |
| B- | 80 - <82% |
| C+ | 78 - <80% |
| C | 72 - <78% |
| C- | 70 - <72% |
| D+ | 68 - <70% |
| D | 60 - <68% |
| F | <60% |

Structure of U.S. Government Quizzes (4): **20% of grade**

This course has four 'units,' each dealing with a different structure of the U.S. government (Constitution; Legislative; Executive; Judicial). Each unit includes a short in-class quiz that will assess your structural knowledge of the U.S. government. These quizzes will be based upon the readings and lecture material.

Documentary 'Live Tweets' (5 of 6 required): **20% of grade**

The hybrid portion of the class is designed to acclimate students with the role of social media as a form of mass political communication. Students will have the opportunity to watch 6 documentaries during the quarter and are required to 'live tweet' their political commentary while watching the documentary for credit. The lowest grade will be dropped, meaning students will only be graded on 5 documentaries.

Midterm Exam: **20% of grade**

During week 6 of the quarter there will be a take-home midterm. The test will cover the content from the first half of the class and will be an essay-based assessment. In contrast to the quizzes (which will assess your knowledge of governmental structures), the midterm will assess your conceptual understanding of the course material.

Final Exam: **20% of grade**

During finals week there will be a final exam in class. The exam will cover the content from the second half of the class and will be made up of multiple choice and true-false questions. Similar to the midterm, the final exam will assess your conceptual competency.

Final Paper and Portfolio:

20% of grade

The final assignment of the class is a 2000-word essay on a topic of your choosing. In this class you will continue to develop your skills of planning, outlining, and drafting a long-form piece of writing. You will create a portfolio that includes an outline, draft, peer reviews, and the final 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 or higher). 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 6 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. 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. 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

No shaming, no judging: This classroom is a no shaming, no judgment zone. It is important that everyone contributes and that everyone is accountable to class policies. But we will not be shaming or looking negatively upon others for mistakes, for their political beliefs, or for any other reason.

Late work: Assignments are due on the date listed in the course schedule and the quizzes/tests 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 85% of the grade. This means that if you turn in work during this two-week period, I will multiply your final score by 85/100. 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 and tests do not qualify for this policy.

If your work is more than two weeks late or you are falling behind due to emergency/unforeseen circumstances, you can work with me to create an individualized plan. Please do not make requests for extensions in person at the beginning or end of a class period because it is difficult for me to properly keep track of agreements made hastily. Instead, please schedule a time to meet with me or come to my office hours.

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 your phone and put it away. Unless I state otherwise, phones are not allowed in class. Laptops are allowed for note-taking only. Students who use their laptops for notes must submit their notes to me electronically following each and every class period. This is so that I know that you are using your laptop for note-taking only. If at any

point you feel that you need to use your device(s) 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 prohibit 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: Canvas provides many different places to communicate with me (replies to my feedback/grading, etc.), which 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 teaching this class (and two others) 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

- 1.05 -- NO READING
- 1.07 -- 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

- 1.12 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 2: THE ELITE CONSENSUS” (P. 21 – 47)
- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 3: ELITES IN AMERICA” (P. 49 – 77)
- 1.14 -- McCLAIN & TAUBER – “CH. 3: FEDERALISM: BALANCING POWER, BALANCING RIGHTS” (P. 55-93)

Week 3 – States Rights, Civil Rights, & Civil Liberties

- Hy -- **1ST DOCUMENTARY LIVE TWEET ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 1.19 -- Alridge – “THE LIMITS OF MASTER NARRATIVES IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS: AN ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIONS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.” (P. 662 – 680)

- McClain & Tauber – “Ch. 5: Civil Rights” (p. 125 – 160)
- 1.21 -- **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)
- **1ST QUIZ**

RECOMMENDED VIDEOS WITH AUTHOR HANEY LOPEZ (INCLUDES TRANSCRIPT AND CC)

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/

GENDER

Week 4 – Congress, Elections, and Political Parties

- Hy -- **2ND DOCUMENTARY LIVE TWEET ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 1.26 -- 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)
- 1.28 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 8: CONGRESS: THE LEGISLATIVE ELITE” (p. 183 – 213)

Week 5 – Lawmaking and Public Policy

- Hy -- **3RD DOCUMENTARY LIVE TWEET ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 2.02 -- SWERS – “REPRESENTING WOMEN’S INTERESTS IN A POLARIZED CONGRESS” (p. 162 – 180)
- KHAZAN – “HOW WELFARE REFORM LEFT SINGLE MOMS BEHIND”
- 2.04 -- 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)
- **2ND QUIZ**

MIDTERM REVIEW WEEK

Week 6 – Assessment and Intersections

- 2.09 -- GUILD – “TO MAKE SOMEDAY COME: SHIRLEY CHISHOLM’S RADICAL POLITICS OF POSSIBILITY” (p. 248 – 270)
- 2.11 -- **NO CLASS – COLLEGE ISSUES DAY**
- 2.12 -- **TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE – 5PM**

CLASS

Week 7 – The Presidency and Trade Policy

- 2.16 -- 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)
- 2.18 -- U.S. NEWS DEBATE – “SHOULD CONGRESS GIVE THE PRESIDENT ‘FAST TRACK’ TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY?”
- 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)

Week 8 – Policing, and the Criminalization of Poverty

- Hy -- **4TH DOCUMENTARY LIVE TWEET ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 2.23 -- BALKO – “CH. 3: A QUICK HISTORY OF COPS IN AMERICA” (p. 27 – 42)
- ALEXANDER – “CH. 2: THE LOCKDOWN” (SELECTIONS)
- 2.25 -- NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY – “NO SAFE PLACE: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS IN U.S. CITIES”
- **3RD QUIZ**

SEXUALITY

Week 9 – The Judiciary

- Hy -- **5TH DOCUMENTARY LIVE TWEET ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 2.29 -- **OUTLINE AND DRAFT DUE 9AM**
- 3.01 -- DYE, ZEIGLER, & SHUBERT – “CH. 10: COURTS – ELITES IN BLACK ROBES” (p. 245 – 264)
- 3.03 -- MEZEY – “INTRODUCTION” (p. 1 – 13)

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

- Hy -- **6TH DOCUMENTARY LIVE TWEET ASSIGNMENT (DUE BY MONDAY MORNING 9AM)**
- 3.08 -- **NO CLASS – FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY**
- 3.10 -- MEZEY – “CH. 2: LITIGATING EQUALITY AND PRIVACY RIGHTS” (P. 45 – 86)
- **4TH QUIZ**
- 3.11 -- **PEER REVIEW DUE**

Week 11 – The Supreme Court and Gay Marriage

- 3.15 -- BALL – “HOW GAY MARRIAGE BECAME A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT”
- 3.17 -- FINAL EXAM REVIEW
- 3.18 -- **FINAL ESSAY DUE**

Week 12

- 3.22 -- **FINAL EXAM AT 11:30AM | L221**