

POLITICAL SCIENCE 202—AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Winter Quarter 2017

Hours and Location:

Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 - 5:10 pm

L 220

Office hours by appointment

Instructor:

Maria Leininger (Call me Maria!)

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B.A., University of Washington, Seattle

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Office: A200F

Course Materials*:

The primary texts for the course is *Gateways to Democracy: The Essentials* by John Geer, first edition (ISBN-13: 978-0495906193). Supplemental texts will be made available on our course website. To access the supplemental materials click on the "Modules" button and you will find them uploaded in the order in which they have been assigned. Please note that you are responsible for downloading (and reading and/or watching) all supplemental materials as they are assigned.

For those of you who do not have a printer at home you can print in the student computer lab in the N-Building or if you prefer you can just read the materials on-line. Please also note that all assigned materials should be completed before the class session for which they are scheduled, so that you can participate in discussions and other activities that I have planned.

Any material covered by an assigned reading/video may be included in examination questions, regardless of whether it is specifically discussed in lecture. If adjustments are made to the reading/viewing schedule, you will be informed via the announcement board on our class website. The assigned reading/viewing is the core of this class—if you don't keep up you are going to find it hard to succeed. Please review the modules section carefully and let me know if you have any questions or concerns so that we can address potential issues before they become problems.

Course Description:

This is an introductory course that is designed for students new to the study of American politics. By the end of the quarter, I hope you will have a basic understanding of the structure of American government and have an increased ability to critically reflect on American politics. Specific topics of study include: the Revolution, the

Constitution, Congress, the Presidency, the Supreme Court, civil rights, civil disobedience, patriotism, the role of money in politics, informed and active citizenship, and much more.

Course Objectives:

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

Course Policies:

This is a college-level course, which means you are responsible for your own learning. I will do my best to facilitate our interactions and to assess your learning fairly. I expect you to do your best to complete assignments in a timely and appropriate fashion and to attend class each day. If you do not understand something you need to take the initiative to find out the answer. I cannot read minds, so it is up to you to try to seek clarity when it is lacking.

Course Absences:

Because this course will be an opportunity for us to explore the materials together as a group, attending class is essential for both your ability to learn the material and your grade. *Five absences or more will result in a failing grade for this class.*

Rules of Engagement for Class Discussions:

This course involves the discussion of controversial political issues. Remember that reasonable people often disagree. Your challenge and responsibility is to maintain civil discourse. We will achieve this by being respectful of each other and avoiding inflammatory, derogatory and insulting words, phrases and labels. Please use your common sense to avoid any other conduct that might distract or offend me or your classmates. Thank you!

A Note About Ideology:

I have no intention of trying to convert you to my belief system. The issues we will be exploring are often contentious and sometimes there will be no right or wrong answers. That said, there are good and bad arguments. Good arguments will be entertained (i.e. those that are logically sound and supported by the available evidence); bad arguments will be discouraged.

Keeping Up With the News:

Please keep up with current events related to American government and politics. Please find a few news sources that work for you (representing different mediums and viewpoints) and make a habit of reading, listening, and/or watching them throughout

the quarter. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a particular news source for this class, please ask me sooner rather than later. I suggest that at least one of your sources be a national newspaper such as: the New York Times (www.nytimes.com), the Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com), or the Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com). I also encourage international sources such as the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk) and Al Jazeera <http://english.aljazeera.net>. If you speak another language I encourage you to follow the news in that language and bring that perspective to class.

E-Mail Etiquette:

Please *only message me on Canvas*—I set aside time specifically to respond to Canvas messages. I will *only* respond to messages on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. Moreover, I will not answer any questions about an assignment 72 hours before the due date.

You should strive to use professional-grade, typo-free writing when drafting electronic messages. Your attention to detail reflects your professionalism; I don't take typos personally, I just want to prepare you for the real world. You should also employ the below conventions.

Please include in Canvas message subject lines: 1) an identification of both the class; and 2) the matter (example: "POLS 202—Week 3 Quiz; NOT "question"). Most professionals receive dozens—if not *hundreds*—of e-mails every day. The subject line provides an opportunity to summarize your request and allows the reader to appropriately triage your question.

Because I will be responding to emails on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons, you should expect to receive a response from me within 48 hours. However, if you do not receive a reply from me within 48 hours (longer on weekends/holidays), it could mean that, for whatever reason, I did not receive your message. If I do not respond, please feel free to send me another message to ensure that I've received your message.

You are responsible for confirming receipt of any message. Consequences for any glitches resulting from not following these or any other instructions are your responsibility—you are training for a college-educated career and should act as if every responsibility is your own.

Grades will be awarded as follows:

GRADE	POINTS	PERCENTAGE
A	4.0	92-100
A-	3.7	90-91
B+	3.3	88-89

B	3.0	82-87
B-	2.7	80-81
C+	2.3	78-79
C	2.0	72-77
C-	1.7	70-71
D+	1.3	68-69
D	1.0	62-67
F	0.0	BELOW 62

All assignment due dates are posted under the "modules" section on Canvas. All assignment descriptions are posted under the "assignment" section on Canvas. Assignments will be unlocked during the few weeks before their due dates.

Assignments:

All due dates are posted in the "modules" section of the course. Assignment descriptions are posted under the "assignments" tab and are unlocked during the few weeks prior to the assignment due date. We'll also be discussing assignment details during class--it is therefore your responsibility to attend class and/or seek clarification from me about the assignments.

Writing conventions

I expect all writing assignments turned in to follow these conventions. NOTE: If you do not follow these conventions you will receive an additional 50% off of any submission (this is a deduction on top of the grade you receive):

- Times New Roman font
- 12 point size
- Single-spaced throughout
- Normal margins (1" on all sides)
- Indentation no more than 0.5" for the beginning of paragraphs
- Page numbers are optional, but if you use them, please put them in the footer on the right side (Times New Roman font, 10 point size)
- Cover pages, tables of contents, works cited pages, or any other additional non-assignment pages do not count toward your total number of pages; however, you are welcome to use them to provide additional clarity

Reading responses--35% of your overall course grade

You'll submit a 1-page, single-spaced response to your choice of topics from the prior 2 weeks' reading for each response. You'll submit a total of 2 reading responses throughout the quarter. Your first reading response will be worth 15% of your overall course grade, and your second reading response will be worth 20% of your overall course grade; I weight the later assignment more heavily so you have a chance to 'warm up' to my expectations and the course. More details about the assignment will be unlocked on Canvas during the second week of class under the "assignments" section.

Political Action Memo--25% of your overall course grade

For this assignment, you'll draft a 4-6 page single-spaced memo that identifies a political issue that you'd like lawmakers to handle differently. After describing the background of the issue, you'll summarize the different mechanisms available for political action, describing the pros and cons of each approach. Finally, you'll choose a mechanism and take political action; examples might include writing a letter to a lawmaker, attending a protest, or even creating a grassroots organization. Specific details for the memo will be discussed during class and posted on Canvas.

Class participation quizzes--20% of your overall course grade

Each class, I'll conduct a brief quiz to test your understanding of the assigned class materials for that day; this is essentially a way to incentivize you to do each day's assigned reading. In-class participation quizzes *cannot be made up; you must be in class to receive credit*.

Final examination--20% of your overall course grade

The final examination will be a take-home essay examination, you will be given the questions in advance. We will discuss the examination in detail in-class week eight of the quarter.

Academic Integrity:

If you choose to cheat, steal, or plagiarize, then you will receive a zero for the assignment. You might also receive a failing grade for the course.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying answers on exams, glancing at nearby exams, turning in assignments or papers that have been used in other classes, and giving or receiving help during an exam. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, purchasing or selling notes, assignments, or examination materials.

Stealing includes, but is not limited to, using the text, notes, exams, library books or other personal property of others without their permission.

Plagiarism is presenting the words, ideas, and/or work of others as your own. It includes, but is not limited to, using other's papers as one's own and including parts of published works without giving credit where credit is due.

Late Policy:

All assignments are due on the dates specified below unless you are notified otherwise. ***Late assignments receive zero points without pre-approval.***

If you are experiencing difficulties comprehending or completing the material, are experiencing personal hardship, or otherwise need to make any other arrangements, please contact me as soon as possible. *In order for me to grant an exception to the standard grading policies, you must e-mail me BEFORE the due date of the particular assignment with documentation of an excuse (e.g., a doctor's note, etc.).*

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 BC, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Code of Honor:

By being a student in this course you acknowledge that you are a part of a learning community at Bellevue College that is committed to the highest academic standards. As a part of this community, you pledge to uphold the fundamental standards of honesty, respect, and integrity, and accept the responsibility to encourage others to adhere to these standards.

Accommodations:

The Disability Resource Center 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 DRC as soon as possible.

If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc., please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

The DRC office is located in B 132 or you can call at 425-564-2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Application information and other helpful links are available at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc.

Public Safety:

The Bellevue College Public Safety services provide personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425-564-2400. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/> for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements, and critical information in the event of an emergency.

*The instructor is a lawyer licensed to practice in Washington State, but neither the course, nor lectures, nor anything else related to the course constitutes legal advice.

Syllabus subject to change. Syllabus updated 1/2/2017.

* The syllabus and classroom policies are borrowed in part from Dr. Michael S. Brown and Dr. Timothy Jones.