

# POLS& 101: Intro to Political Science

Bellevue College, Spring 2018 (Item 5343)

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## COURSE DETAILS

<b>Class Sessions:</b>	Online
<b>Instructor:</b>	David Spataro, PhD
<b>E-mail:</b>	david.spataro@bellevuecollege.edu
<b>Phone:</b>	(425) 564-3161
<b>Office:</b>	D200E
<b>Office Hours:</b>	M 8:30 – 9:30AM T 12:30 – 1:20PM W 12:30 – 2:20PM (Outside R230) Th 12:30 – 1:20PM Additional office hours by appointment if needed

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course that is designed for students who are new to the study of politics. This course will provide you with a broad introduction to the field of political science and help you to develop informed knowledge about a variety of political topics. The course is divided into four sections under the following themes: (1) political knowledge, belief, and ideology; (2) states and liberal democracy; (3) policing and protest; and (4) political economy, inequality, and the environment.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this class, students should be able to:

1. Critically analyze current political issues;
2. Articulate the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship;
3. Constructively engage in the political process;
4. Apply core political science concepts to the real world;
5. Differentiate the major sub-fields of political science;
6. Explain the significance of the scientific method in political science.

## REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

The required readings and audio/visual materials will be available on our Canvas website. You may print the readings out or read them on your computer; I encourage all students to find the most appropriate reading method that works for you. BC students have a 150-page printing quota each quarter, but this quota is not likely to be sufficient for all the materials and assignments for every class. I suggest that residents of King County patronize the King County library system, [which provides patrons with 75 pages of black and white free printing per week](#).

## GRADED WORK

Leading Small Group Discussion	15%
Weekly Participation	15%
Reading Comprehension Discussions	15%
Political Essay	20%
Midterm	15%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:		<b>A</b>	92 - 100%	<b>A-</b>	90 - <92%
<b>B+</b>	88 - <90%	<b>B</b>	82 - <88%	<b>B-</b>	80 - <82%
<b>C+</b>	78 - <80%	<b>C</b>	72 - <78%	<b>C-</b>	70 - <72%
<b>D+</b>	68 - <70%	<b>D</b>	60 - <68%	<b>F</b>	<60%

**Leading Small Group Discussions:** Students will be assigned to small groups of approximately 6-8 students at the beginning of the quarter, and then rearranged into new small groups after the midterm. Small group discussions will alternate weekly between discussions of current events and discussions of a significant case study having to do with the course content. Each student (working in pairs) will be required to lead one current events discussion and one case study discussion during the quarter. Leading the discussion requires: (1) selecting the reading materials, (2) writing and posting the discussion's guiding questions, and (3) facilitating the discussion throughout the week. Think of this like a small reading group with your peers. The leader selects the readings, brings questions to start the discussion, and then helps to guide the discussion.

**Weekly Participation:** This is an online course and therefore student participation in online discussions is a significant part of the class. The weekly participation grade is an assessment of the student's participation on the small group discussion board and on the instructor activity discussion board during the week. At the end of each week, students compile their participation into a Microsoft Word document, which I will grade on a 10-point scale. I will drop the lowest grade.

**Reading Comprehension Discussions:** Twice each week students are required to submit a discussion post that focuses on the reading material. These discussions are designed to figure out the most significant questions that arise from the readings, which I will then answer. Students will have an opportunity to answer their peers' questions for extra credit. I will drop the two lowest grades.

**Political Essay:** In this class you will write an 1800-word essay on a political topic using a combination of personal reflection and political analysis. The grade for the political

essay includes two parts: (1) the final essay itself and (2) short scaffolding assignments designed to help students prepare for the essay.

**Midterm and Final Exam:** There will be two tests during the quarter, which are designed to assess your conceptual knowledge and reading comprehension. These tests will be on Canvas. The questions are short essay questions. The final exam will be cumulative.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

\*These policies may apply differently to students with DRC accommodations. I will be working with all students individually to meet their accommodations.

- **Canvas discussions:** This class requires a significant amount of student interaction on Canvas discussion boards. Additionally, the course content will require that students engage with one another on topics considered to be controversial or polarizing in mainstream society. **Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that all others are able to fully participate in the class. As such, I expect that everyone communicates their ideas with respect for their peers. I will not accept language and ideas that express hate or harm toward others.**
- **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.
- **Collective Structure:** This class is based upon the principles of cooperation and collaboration. Students who develop strong community bonds in college tend to succeed. Additionally, social scientists find that participation in cooperative groups builds “social capital”—a term for hard-to-measure human capacities involving trust and one’s ability to collaborate. All areas of life—including employment, family, community, and politics—involve working together. The development of human capital greatly influences the efficacy of social groups. Thus we will model this behavior in an authentic manner in our discussion boards. Everyone in class wishes to succeed, and everyone can participate in making that goal a reality.
- **Late work:** If you are having significant health or personal issues that prevent you from completing your work on time, please contact me directly about an individualized plan. I will work with you so that you can make up the content and assignments you missed. However, if you miss a deadline due to other reasons, I will use the following late policy automatically (you do not need permission from me for these policies). **Leading Small Group Discussion:** Because other students in the small group are relying on the leader, this assignment must be completed on time. There will be no late work accepted for this grade except as a result of documented

emergencies. **Weekly Participation:** You may turn in your weekly participation assignment late for 85% of the grade for up to one week. If your discussions are consistently posted late during the week, your weekly participation grade will be considered late. **Reading Comprehension Discussions:** You may submit your initial post to these discussions late for 85% of the grade for up to one week. **Political Essay:** You may turn in your political essay late for 85% of the grade for up to one week. Due to the political essay being late in the quarter, turning it in late may stall your final grade in the class. **Exams:** Students must provide genuine evidence of illness or other emergency in order to make up an exam. The exam must be made up within one week of the exam due date.

- **English Second (or more) Language Students:** 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.
- **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. Please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050/>. I will report all instances of cheating/plagiarism to the campus CARE team.
- **Communicating with me:** I encourage you to communicate with me a lot and in a way that works best for you. 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. Please do not worry about offending or annoying me.

## **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 will be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. Please provide me with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the term.

## **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.

## **IMPORTANT RESOURCES/SERVICES**

### **Disability Resource Center – B132**

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. Please visit the office or website for application information and other helpful links: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc/>.

### **Multicultural Services – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of B building (above the bookstore)**

Multicultural Services (MCS) is a student-centered service program on campus. 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/](http://bellevuecollege.edu/mcs/).

### **Counseling Center – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of B building (above the bookstore)**

The Counseling Center provides personal, career, and academic counseling for all registered BC students. Please familiarize yourself with the services offered by the counseling center by stopping by or visiting: [bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/](http://bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/).

### **Academic Success Center – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of D building**

The Academic Success Center provides high-quality educational resources for all students enrolled at Bellevue College. The center provides tutoring services and is home to reading, writing and math labs. The Academic Success Center also hosts workshops on a range of study skills. Please visit the ASC website for more information: [bellevuecollege.edu/asc/](http://bellevuecollege.edu/asc/).

## **SCHEDULE**

The course schedule of readings and activities is located on Canvas in the “Modules” tab.