

# POLS& 202: American Government

## Bellevue College, Fall 2018 (Section C, Item 5360)

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### Course Details

**Class Sessions:** Monday and Wednesday | | 11:30am- 2:20am | L221  
**Instructor:** Clifford Cawthon, MA  
**E-mail:** clifford.cawthon@bellevuecollege.edu  
**Phone:** 425.564.6159  
**Office Location:** A200F  
**Office Hours:** M/W/Th: 8:00am-9:00am  
I will also be available by appointment

### Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize students with the study, institutions, norms and practices 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, civil liberties 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 and property rights, 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.
7. Have the ability to understand how race, class, gender and other identities effect contemporary political culture and their historical relationship to American government and politics.
8. Gain a basic level of understanding of how to engage in civic and political affairs.

# Books and Required Materials

The textbook for the course is [American Government In Black and White \(Ed. McClain, Tauber, 2016\)](#). The book is available in the campus bookstore and you can purchase it used online as well. **I will make the first two weeks 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. Moreover, you will be required to print out each of these readings and make a binder for yourself.**

I can understand that printing can be expensive and that 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 visit any of the libraries within the [King County library system](#), which provides library users with 75 'units' of free printing per week. Also, strategically time when you print certain passages.

## Suggested materials

In addition to the required materials, I have also listed suggested reading materials that are not mandatory to read but, will may add context and/ or content to your experience during the lesson. All of the suggested materials are admissible for any exam or project.

## Other materials

These materials are easily obtainable and usually free by going to your local Board of Elections office or printing them out [here](#). Also, for information on who represents you in the State Legislature and Congress are located [here](#). For county and local representatives, please speak with me and I'll refer you to the proper resources.

Other materials will be provided in class.

# 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 effects of political ignorance and understand and care deeply about political knowledge;
- Understand how power and various "social forces" work 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
U.S. Government and Politics Quizzes (4)	20%
Voting and Participation Assignments	15%
Political Journal	15%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	20%
“Be a Policy/ Change-Maker” project	10%
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%

Keep reading....

## Course Assignment Descriptions

During the quarter all assignments must be submitted through canvas. Any assignments not submitted through canvas will receive a grade of 0, unless a specific and explicit exemption is given by your instructor ahead of the assignment's due date.

**U.S. Government and Politics Quizzes (3):****20% of grade**

During this three month course, you will receive one quiz each month worth no more than 15 points. Each quiz will deal with a different aspect of U.S. government and politics. These

quizzes will be based upon the readings and lecture material and you will receive the material ahead of time.

**Voting and Political Participation Activities:**

**15% of grade**

This portion of the class will allow students not to just learn about politics but to do politics. One assignment from each section must be done by the end of the quarter to receive full credit for this portion of the class:

*Task 1- Register Two People to Vote.*

- This can also include yourself. NOTE: If you are already registered to vote and you turn in a registration form for yourself, it will result in a 0 grade for this portion of the grade.

*Task 2- Do any **ONE** of the following:*

- Write an op-ed/ letter to the editor about an issue.
- Visit your local/ county councilmember or state representative and make a post on facebook (or another social media platform) about what you discussed and why it is important and bring it in for my review.
- Attend a protest
- Volunteer for a local electoral campaign. Provide a signed acknowledgement that you completed at least 2 volunteer hours from campaign staff.
- Attend a Political Conference

**Political Journal**

**15% of grade**

Every two weeks during the course, you will be asked to submit a 300 word 'commentary' on a current event or policy decision made on a local (incl. county), state or national level.

This homework is intended to reflect your understanding of the material and demonstrate that you can apply your own analysis to the topics discussed. Students will be required to choose events or policy decisions that are current. ***They will all be due by 11:59pm on Friday unless noted otherwise by the instructor.***

**Midterm Exam:**

**20% of grade**

During week 6 of the quarter there will be a 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, true-false questions, and there will be a small written essay. This final examination will test your grasp of both the structural and conceptual features of American government.

**Be a "Policy/ Change-Maker" project:**

**10% of grade**

This final assignment will require you to use your knowledge of political advocacy/ activism, current events and issues and the innerworkings of government.

You will be tasked with writing a short 700 paper that **identifies a local issue in your city or state, identify the stakeholders and government and private sector decision-makers, and propose a solution and a campaign around this solution.**

This will be a group assignment. The instructor will randomly select your groups in week seven and you will present your findings in week eleven, before finals. You may contact outside organizations to consult you on this project.

Furthermore, your instructor will be available, and your written report must feature citations (APA style).

## Community Expectations

This is a college course so we're all adults here, or emerging adults. Therefore, in order to be able to deliver the desired outcomes that we all are here to see, both you, the student, and I, your professor, have a role in your learning process. As a member of our learning community, you have a responsibility to your own education here and I have a responsibility to support your education as fairly and thoroughly as I can, as your professor. I expect you to complete assignments in a timely manner, read each assigned supplemental work to prepare for the day's course, and log onto the course website to confirm that you're ready for the work day.

Taking responsibility for your education also requires you to reach out when you need assistance. My *office hours* are specified above, however, I will do my best to accommodate your schedule and make myself available for questions. *There are no "dumb" questions in this course.* If you are confused about something, please ask, or take the time to find the answer by either: a) flexing your research muscles; b) forming a study group for long-term support; c) email me or post a question to the "Ask the Professor" discussion board.

## Course Calendar

### Week 1

1. Monday, Sept. 17 – Introduction and Syllabus Review  
No readings
2. Wednesday, Sept. 19 – What is Government, Politics and what's Race got to do with it?  
Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 1; Elite Theory and Pluralism- In-class materials provided

### Week 2

3. Monday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>- The Spark of Revolution & Tumultuous steps toward Federation  
Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 2. The Constitution: Rights and Race intertwined, A Revolution for Independence, The Road to Revolution, and Declaring Independence.  
Reading: [Available on Canvas] Thomas Paine, On the Rights of Man (Chapt. 1)  
Reading: [Available on Canvas] Thomas Jefferson et al, The Declaration of Independence

Reading: Textbook, Chapt 2. First (and Second) Attempt at National Government: Articles of Confederation/ The Constitution

4. Wednesday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> - National Government's early days.

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 2. National Government Under the Constitution.

-Anti-federalists vs. Federalists

Reading: [Available on Canvas] Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Federalist No. 1,9,10,15

Reading: J. [Available on canvas] Dewitt, Centinel, Anti-Federalist No. 1-2; (Centinel) 2

- Structural Checks Against Failure

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 2. Planning for Potential Pitfalls

### Week 3

5. Monday, Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> – Federalism!

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 3. Federalism and State and Local Governments

6. Tuesday, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> – NO CLASS- Professional Development Day

7. Wednesday, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> – The American Constitution & Federalism

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 3.

Reading: [Available on Canvas] Dye, Thomas et al. The Irony of Democracy, Ch. 3 *The Constitution as an Elitist Document*

Reading: [Available on Canvas] The Constitution

*An activity will be featured in class on Constitutional Design.*

### Week 4

8. Monday, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> – Civil Rights & Liberties

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 4- 5.

9. Wednesday, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> – Quiz #1 (week 1-3)

### Week 5

10. Monday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> – The Media

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 11

Reading: [Available in Canvas] The Herman-Chomsky Propaganda Model.

Reading: [Available in Canvas] The Political Contest Model

11. Wednesday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> – Two Different America's

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 10

### Week 6

12. Monday, Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> - Congress and YOU!

Reading: Textbook, Chapt 6.

13. Wednesday, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> – Congress...for real.

Reading: [Available on Canvas] Dye, Thomas et al *The Irony of Democracy* Chapt. 8, S1, 3, 7

Reading: [Available on Canvas] Gordon, Noah *How Did Members of Congress Get So Wealthy?* The Atlantic Magazine. 2014

Reading: [Available on Canvas] Redden, Molly *Democrats Are Pushing More Diverse Candidates. Behind the Scenes, Not So Much.* Huffington Post. 2018

14. Thursday, Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>- **Online Midterm**. Only Week 1-5 will be on the midterm. This will be due by 6:00am on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### Week 7

15. Monday, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>- The Bureaucracy

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 8

Reading: [Available on Canvas] A primer on the Iron Triangle

16. Wednesday, Oct 31<sup>st</sup> - Interest Groups and YOU!

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 13

#### Week 8

17. Monday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> – The Judiciary & How much power does the court have?

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 9

18. Wednesday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>- Judicial Selection

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 9

#### Week 9

19. Monday, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> - Veterans Day, No Class!

20. Wednesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> – The Presidency

Reading: Textbook, Chapt. 7

Reading: Frontline PBS. The Trump White House (2018)

Reading: Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *My President Was Black.* In *We Were Eight Years in Power* (2017)

#### Week 10

21. Monday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> – Let's get Partisan!

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 14, The Development of the Two-Party System; Party Organization

22. Wednesday, Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> - Elections

Reading: Textbook Chapt. 15 The Electoral Process; Gen. Elections, Voting, and Why Americans Don't Vote

23. Thursday, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> - HOLIDAY!!!!

#### Week 11

24. Monday, Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> – Finally, the Movement!

Readings: Textbook Chapt. 12

Readings: Gee, Tim. *CounterPower* (2011) Chapt. 1,8, and 9.

Readings: King, Martin. *Letter From A Birmingham Jail* (1963)

25. Wednesday, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> - BIG REVIEW DAY! COME WITH QUESTIONS, NOTECARDS AND NOTES!!!!

#### Week 12

26. **Final Exam.** ,Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am-1:20pm- Final Exam

## Community Agreements

This is never a pleasant section to discuss but, as a public institution, Bellevue College has a [Code of Conduct and Regulations](#) that, as a student, you are bound to follow.

In this particular class, there are a few community agreements (a.k.a. rules) that will be central to all of us making sure you are successful, so we can all be successful:

1. Respect: This is fundamental to our success. Everyone comes into this classroom with a valid viewpoint. Each of us deserves to be seen as worthwhile and each of us must give that respect to the other. This means that this classroom is a ***no shame zone. You will not be judged by myself or anyone else in class for the way you look, the way you ask a question, for asking a question, for having trouble with the coursework, for who you are and for being yourself. In fact, on the last point, you'll be applauded for being yourself!***

2. Disagree but, don't be disagreeable: If someone makes a point that you disagree with or find downright distasteful, don't make it personal. Just disagree and move on- or come up with a good argument.

3. Integrity: Take responsibility for what you have done.

4. Don't Plagiarize! Don't copy others work and submit it as your own. We will find out. I'm extremely serious about this. Your work will be given an automatic grade of 0 and you may face higher penalties if the behavior continues.

5. Step up, step back: If you like to contribute to classroom conversations, contribute to the learning of your fellow students who may be a bit more shy and create space for them to



speak up. It's not a bad thing to contribute but, sometimes one can take up more space and marginalize others without intending to.

6. Everyone is everyone: this is a space for all races, classes, genders, sexualities, nationalities, and persons. Racism or any other oppressive slurs or behavior **will not be tolerated and result in your immediate exit from the course.** That goes for harassment as well (see point #1).

## Late work and Classroom Policies

**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 from two weeks after the assignment's original 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, email me at [clifford.cawthon@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:clifford.cawthon@bellevuecollege.edu) or please schedule a time to meet with me or come to my office hours.

\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*

**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 your phone on silent and put it away. Unless I state otherwise, phones are not allowed in class and I will reserve the right to call you out on it. Laptops are allowed 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.

In order to respect the wishes of other, by default there is no recording of any audio or video allowed in the classroom. Nevertheless, 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.

During final exams and exams, electronic devices will not be allowed. If you attempt to exit the classroom during a final with an electronic device or use one during an examination, it will be assumed that you are attempting to cheat and you will receive an automatic grade of "0".

### \*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*

**Attendance:** It is critical to your learning experience that you attend class. In a case of a serious illness, injury, traffic accident, family illness, or an emergency which for legal, physical or for emotional well-being of your family requires your presence during class time; please contact me via email or my office phone to inform me that you will not be able to attend class.

Those who contact me after they were absent from class within 48 hours of that absence will be excused. Though, if this isn't an isolated incident then I reserve the right to not excuse the absence or make an inquiry in order to come up with an attendance plan that will work for you. Please work with me, I am here for you.

The Consequences and Opportunities of missing class, and coming to class are the following: ***During the course, I will be keeping attendance. For those who miss more than 30% of classes, they will have 3 points deducted from their final exam. For those who attend 60% of classes during the quarter then they will receive 5 additional points on their final exam.***

**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 that 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 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.

## Institutional Commitments and Policies

### 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.

**NOTE: For those who celebrate and/ or observe holidays which may affect their academic performance during an exam or assessment, please notify your instructor straightaway so we can work together to create a plan that works for you.**

### **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 \*\*\*Important\*\*\***

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/>.

Plagiarism in my class will be dealt with in the following way:

1<sup>st</sup> offence: Warning, no formal report or citation will be made. Counseling on proper citation will be given.

2<sup>nd</sup> offence: Warning and recording of the offence. This information may be used in a formal report if needed.

3<sup>rd</sup> offence: A formal report will be made to College authorities.

## **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 – 2<sup>nd</sup> 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/](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. 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/](http://bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/)