

# POLS& 202: American Government

Bellevue College, Fall 2018 (Item 5366)

---

## 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 Location:</b>	Off campus fall quarter
<b>Office Hours:</b>	M: 11am – 12pm T: 9am – 11am W: 11am – 12pm Th: 10am-11am

## Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize students with the study of American politics. Students will gain an understanding of the structure of U.S. government. In addition, students will develop the ability to identify and analyze the most significant problems confronting American politics. The class is divided into four major sections, and each section deals with a significant political issue (racism/colonialism, class, gender, and sexuality) as the issue relates to institutions and procedures of U.S. government. In this manner, the course is designed as an applied critical thinking approach to U.S. government.

## 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.

## Grading

Graded Assessments	Percentage
Weekly Participation	15%
Facilitating Current Events Discussion	15%
Reflection Papers	25%
Midterm	25%
Final Exam	25%
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%

**Weekly Participation:** This is an online course and therefore student participation in online discussions is a significant part of the class. This class is made up of weekly modules in Canvas. With the exception of the midterm week and holidays, the class follows a consistent pattern. This is designed to ensure clarity about what to do and when. The weekly pattern is available as a Canvas page at the beginning of each week's module. The weekly participation grade is an assessment of the student's participation on the small group discussion board, the discussions on the reading material, and the live tweet assignment. At the end of each week, students compile their participation into a Microsoft Word document, which I will grade on a 10-point scale. The grade is based upon meeting the requirements of the assignments, not on the content of the written work. The lowest grade will be dropped.

**Facilitating Current Events Discussion:** 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. The small group discussions will focus on current events related to the class material. Beginning in week two each student will be

required to lead one current events discussion during the quarter. Leading the discussion requires: (1) selecting strong reading materials for your peers in the group, (2) writing and posting the discussion's guiding questions, (3) communicating with your peers to encourage/invite participation and (4) 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, organizes the group and then helps to guide the discussion.

**Reflection Papers:** On Fridays, the course content will be a documentary or podcast related to the weekly material. Students are required to 1) watch the documentary (or listen to the podcast), 2) live tweet and 3) write a one-page reflection paper. The reflection papers are due on Sundays at midnight. I will grade five reflection papers, chosen randomly.

**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 will include multiple choice and short essay questions. The final exam will be cumulative. On the day of the test, students will have the choice of a morning or evening time. All morning test-takers will work on the test simultaneously, and all evening test-takers will work on the test simultaneously.

## **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 (17<sup>th</sup> edition). The book is available in the campus bookstore and you can purchase it online. 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. Supplemental readings will be available on our Canvas site.

**The "Friday" portion of class requires students to watch a documentary or listen to a podcast.** During most the quarter the documentary/podcast will be freely available, either through BC's Library Media Center databases or on the web. However, there may be weeks when students need to rent a streaming version of the film. The total cost for audiovisual materials will be less than \$15 but will require use of a credit or debit card. Students without or unable to access a credit/debit card should contact me so we can work out an individualized solution.

A quick note about .PDF files. I encourage you to find the most appropriate reading method that works for you. However, please keep in mind that new research suggests that reading comprehension is higher in print than on an electric device. BC students 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. You will have a period of one week 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 one-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. The midterm and final must be taken on the assigned day (morning and evening options). If you have a documented emergency that prevented you from taking a test, please contact me (with documentation) to discuss a retake day/time.

The late work policy (85%) does NOT apply to leading the small group discussion. Students who are leading the small group discussion must complete the work on time because other students are relying on the leader to be timely to complete their work. Being late by an hour or two is acceptable because the other students in the group will still be able to complete their work.

If you are falling behind due to emergency/unforeseen circumstances, you can work with me to create an individualized plan. Alternatively, if the pattern of class discussions/assignments does not work for your schedule, please contact me about an alternative schedule.

**English Second (or more) Language Students:** If English is your second language, please check in with me about the timed exams.

**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: phone call 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. Please respect the dynamic that teaching this class is my workplace and I do not work at all hours of the day every day. 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 “class”, 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 – 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/)

## **Course Calendar**

The detailed course schedule of readings and activities is located on Canvas in the "Modules" tab. Below is an abbreviated schedule (readings and documentaries only) for the first month of class.

## **Opening week: Introduction and The US Constitution**

### **September 17 – 21: Week 1**

Monday, September 17

- Current Events Readings

Tuesday, September 18

- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: To The Student (p. xvii – xviii)
- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: The Irony of Democracy (p. 1 – 19)

Wednesday, September 19

- No Readings

Thursday, September 20

- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: The Elite Consensus of the Founding Fathers (p. 21 – 48)
- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: Articles 1-3 of the U.S. Constitution (p. 373 – 380)

Friday, September 21

- WATCH & LIVE TWEET – Anita: Speaking Truth to Power

## **Section 1: Racism/Colonialism and U.S. Constitutional Government**

### **September 24 – 28: Week 2**

Monday, September 24

- Current Event Readings

Tuesday, September 25

- McClain & Tauber: Civil Rights (p. 126 – 159)
- Stiles: The Constitutional Amendment that Reinvented Freedom
- Text of U.S. Senate Resolution on Second Founding

Wednesday, September 26

- No Readings

Thursday, September 27

- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: Civil Rights (p. 315 – 338)

Friday, September 28

- WATCH & LIVE TWEET – Freedom Riders OR Spies of Mississippi

### **October 1 – 5: Week 3**

Monday, October 1

- Current Events Reading

Tuesday, October 2

- Footen: Pacific Northwest Salmon Habitat – The Culvert Case and the Power of Treaties (p. TBD)

Wednesday, October 3

- No Readings

Thursday, October 4

- Venator-Santiago: Are Puerto Ricans Really American Citizens?
- Webber: What Does Being a U.S. Territory Mean for Puerto Rico?
- Newkirk: Puerto Rico's Dream, Denied

Friday, October 5

- WATCH & LIVE TWEET: Young Lakota

## **Section 2: U.S. Federalism and the Working Class**

### **October 8 – 12: Week 4**

Monday, October 8

- Current Events Readings

Tuesday, October 9

- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: Elites in America (p. 49 – 76)

Wednesday, October 10

- No Readings

Thursday, October 11

- Shubert, Dye, & Zeigler: Masses in the United States (p. 77 - 102)

Friday, October 12

- WATCH & LIVE TWEET: Harlan County, USA