

POLS& 202: American Government

Course Item #:5362 & 5364

Bellevue College, Winter 2019

January 2nd-March 22nd

2019

Course Details

Class Sessions: MW | 12:30 PM-2:20 PM | L221 (**5362** Section A)

MW| 3:00 PM-5:10 PM | L221 (**5364** Section B)

Instructor: Jabril Hassen, MACJ

E-mail: jabril.hassen@bellevuecollege.edu

Phone: 425.564.3225

Office Location: A200F

Office Hours: I will be available by appointment only

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to expose and familiarize students with the construction, components, and institutional behaviors of American political systems.

As such, students will utilize key frameworks rooted in race, class, and gender to contextualize governmental functions and legislation. The primary goal of this course is to introduce key concepts of our political system through a “critical” lenses.

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 constitution.
3. Recall and define problems of individual rights, popular representation and responsible leadership.
4. Identify roles of the Executive department, the Congress, and the Judicial branch.
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.

Books and Required Materials

The textbook for the course is *American Government in Black and White* 3rd edition (2017). The book is available in the campus bookstore and you can purchase it used online as well. I will accept use of earlier editions as primary text, and will also allow the use of E-Books during class (see details below). There will also be supplemental reading throughout the quarter to help emphasize or flush out key concepts. Be sure to read all listed materials as some readings outside of the text will be on quizzes and exams.

Trigger Words—During the class we will explore some difficult subjects that explore race, gender, and sexuality. Some ideas you may support; others you may vehemently denounce. Civil discourse is the goal, and different points of view are welcomed and celebrated.

Student Check-Ins—Throughout the quarter I will be meeting with students to check in regarding progress and to offer support. Sign-up sheets will be given during the second week of the quarter.

Additional Course Learning Objectives

1. Understand how race, gender, socioeconomic and other forms of social variance affect individual civil liberties.
2. Understand the development and implementation of key legislation.
3. Understand how personal bias and constructed history influence discussions on American government.
4. Identify ways to influence politics by becoming involved in social justice and civic engagement.

Grading

Course Assessments	Percentage
U.S. Government and Politics Quizzes (5)	60%
Class Participation (Attendance and Activities)	20%
Final Group Project Presentation & Paper	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%

Course Assignment Descriptions

Please submit all assignments through canvas unless advised otherwise. 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 (6) (60%):

Quizzes will be given throughout the three-month course which will come from assigned readings found in the text, outside articles (TBA) and lecture slides. Each quiz will have between 7-18 questions and will be multiple choice, short answer, and fill in the blank. These quizzes will take up a large portion of your grade, and will be "pop quizzes". The schedule below will specify which week the quizzes will take place.

Class Participation Activities (20%):

There will be in-class opportunities to participate in activities to help students conceptualize class materials. I will also provide students chances to participate in out of class activities (TBA). Out of class activities will usually be online discussion posts/or brief writing assignments. Every class session groups must present to the class for roughly 5-10 minutes regarding topics in the news and how it relates to the readings or class topics of the week (see course schedule below).

Final Project Group Presentation & Paper (20%)

This project will require your group to do one of the following tasks of your choosing:

- a) submit a 700-1000 word 'white paper' proposing a policy solution to a problem in your area;
- b) go to your city council, state representative or your member of Congress and lobby them on an issue of your choosing. In the latter choice, you will have to include the following: 1) photographic evidence; 2) a follow up email to their staffer; 3) a letter or document that you've prepared, which outlines your position. Identify what level of government you would like to challenge and develop a plan.
- c) select a film or song and utilize themes based in federalism or other topics of the class to analyze the selected media, or develop a solution to the issue highlighted in the film/song. This assignment has a word requirement of 700-1000 words.

To receive full credit You must then present your ideas on the topic to the class for 10-15 minutes. A grading rubric will be provided to assist students in preparing for the presentation and essay assessment.

Class Policies

1) Attendance: If you miss 3 classes or less, you will receive four extra points on your final exam (if you receive an "A" on the final I will work with you to distribute the scores elsewhere). To receive participation points you need to come to your selected class section. 2) Be on time. 3) If you are asleep, you are absent. 4) Turn off electronic devices. Do not talk on the telephone or text in class. 5) Exception will be made on an individual basis for turning in late assignments; if you are having issues, contact me ASAP.

All contents of the syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. In the event of any changes, students will be promoted at least a week in advance. Lastly, regarding group assignments, all students will be graded equally. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Course Calendar

Module 1. Introductions & Review of Syllabus

1/2: The first day will be extremely light, as we will be getting to know each other through activities and discussions in class. We will also be discussing personal bias and socialization. I will be providing lecture materials, and outside readings.

Module 1.2 Exploring Political Bias & Race in Society

1/7 & 1/9: This week we will be exploring, political perceptions, race and inequality in America. Start reading chapter 1 & 2

Module 2 & 3 – Nature of Government and Key Vocabulary (Quiz Week Lecture Slides)

1/14 & 1/16: Complete chapter 1 & 2 and seek to understand critical concepts of government and vocabulary as found in the book: *Rule of Law, Natural Law, and Natural Rights*.

Module 3 – Federalism, Race and the Constitution (Quiz Week Chapter 1-2)

1/23: Read chapter 3 and be on the lookout for possible outside articles/readings.

Module 4 – Bill of Rights, and Civil Liberties

1/28 & 1/30: Read chapter 4-5 and focus on Criminal Justice and racial disparities in incarceration. Also read the immigration section. An outside reading will be given.

Module 5— Legislative & Executive Branch: Criminal Justice (Quiz Week Chapter 3-5)

2/4 & 2/6: Read chapters 6 & 7

v I will be out of town from 2/2-2/7, but can be reached by email. Quiz will be on 2/6/2019

NO CLASS 2/7/2019

Module 6 – Civil Rights, Immigration Rights & Privilege

2/11 & 2/13: Read chapter 8 & 9 and focus on the various powers and limitations of the Judicial System. We will also investigate how the supreme court operates and passes legislation.

Module 7 – Congress: Voting Representation by Race and Gender (Quiz Week Chapter 6-9)

2/18 & 2/20: Read Chapter 10 & 11. Focus on the media and its influence on social perceptions.

NO CLASS 2/18/2019

Module 8 – Role of Executive Power (The President) and Populist Politics

2/25 & 2/27: We will be reviewing chapters 12 in addition to outside media.

Module 9 – Understanding Bureaucracy

3/4 & 3/6: This week will focus more on the role of interest groups and elements of lobbying. Read chapter 13 & 14.

All groups need to have submitted a final group proposal highlighting: (a) what the top is, and (b) why it is important before 3/9 @ Midnight.

Module 10 – The Judiciary and the Federal Court System (Quiz Week Chapter 10-12)

3/11 & 3/13: Read chapter 15 & 16 and be able to explain how foreign policy is developed and proliferated.

Module 11 – Last Quiz Chapters 13-16 and Group Presentation Week

3/18: This will be the last day before the final group presentation.

NO CLASS ON 3/19-This is student success day. I will be available by email, and for office hours through appointment.

Section A- Presentation Final—TBA

Section B- Presentation Final—TBA

Community Agreements

The below bullet points are from our group community agreements made in class. Every student should follow the agreements listed below:

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. Do not interrupt or ostracize other students. 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. Listen to understand, NOT to respond.

3. Don't Plagiarize! Don't copy others work and submit it as your own. We will find out.
4. 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.
5. Help Create a Safe Environment: this is a space for all races, classes, genders, sexuality, nationalities, and persons. Any form of discrimination or 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).
6. Come to class prepared after doing the required readings. Even if you are not presenting that week, list 5 key concepts outlined in the readings and come prepared to discuss those concepts. Lastly, for that extra icing on the cake, ask at least one critical question to the professor when possible.
7. Participate in discussion.
8. No phones (except in emergencies, or to quickly fact check). This helps to reduce possible distraction preventing others from learning.

Please also refer to Bellevue College's [Code of Conduct and Regulations](#) (see below). As such, our class environment will center around the guidelines outlined in the code, and the Community Agreements.

<https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050/>

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, email me at jabril.hassen@bellevuecollege.edu or 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.

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/