

# 5362, 5363

## POLS&202 American Government

American Government

Political Science 202

Fall 2019

Credits 5

Instructor: Dr. Leena Shah

Tue and Thurs

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Office hours by appointment only

No Cell Phones Please

Laptops can only be used for typing notes

### Course Description

This is a course on American government and politics. The course is designed to familiarize you with the basic elements of the American system. We will look at how the three branches of government work. We will study their powers and role in American government. We will also discuss federalism, civil rights and civil liberties, the difference between the two and their impact. In addition, we will try and gain an understanding of the media and its role. We will also look at the bureaucracy, interest groups and political parties. We will briefly examine foreign policy especially in the current environment. Lastly, we will apply everything to current events. Thus, making it easier to understand how politics works in the daily context. These are the questions that shall occupy us over the course of the quarter.

### Course objectives

By the end of the quarter students should be able to

1. understand the concepts of democracy, the American presidential system and the role and influence of the interest groups
- 2.integrate this knowledge for a personal understanding of how the political process works
- 3.evaluate underlying assumptions presented by other authors
- 4.clearly define and identify the three branches of government
- 5.analyze authors and critically evaluate academic articles
- 6.discuss the role of the media
7. apply this concept to the contemporary world

### Requirements

American Government and Politics Today: Bardes, Shelly, Schmidt 2017-18 edition (Text book)

March Book Three by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, Nate Powell (For discussion) Buy from Amazon for \$11 or the BC Library has several copies that you can check out.

Students are required to do their readings and keep abreast of current events on a day-to-day basis. For this you will need to have access to a newspaper or journal. Bring in a relevant article every Thursday. If you are taking it off the net please make sure it is a well-known publication site. We are also going to be discussing our BC reads book March. Each week we will discuss the book and how and why it's related to social justice.

### Expectations

This is a discussion oriented class so please be kind to each other without making personal remarks. Please be respectful of each other. No disruptive behavior will be tolerated. The laptop/tablets should only be used for taking notes only. Please feel free to ask questions. Finally, I expect all of you to do well in this class.

### Class Presentation

You will do a presentation only once in the quarter. Students will work in a group of three or more. You can choose any topic of your choice related to American Government. You should research the topic and present the pros and cons. For example, you can look at death penalty and examine its pros and cons. The presentation will be done as a group with each student discussing what they found. Each student will spend at least seven minutes discussing what they came up with. The group together will spend about 15 to 20 minutes presenting this to the class. It will be open to questions by the rest of the class. The presentation will be worth 5 points. The students will be graded on

1. substance (power point)

2. creativity, ( YouTube video)

3. clarity (well organized) not jumping from one topic to another and clearly explained

4. Interactive with the class

and how well they answered the questions. We will discuss the sequence of the presentations in class. They will be presented every Tuesday starting on October 1st. The presentation is worth 5 points.

### Attendance

As college students, I expect you to attend classes on a regular basis. I will be taking roll call randomly and hope that you will make it a point to attend classes. Since this is a 2hr class, I expect you to attend the full class in order to get participation points. In case you need to leave early please be sure to inform me of your absence. You will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of participation. In case of an emergency please email me. At the end of the quarter if you have not missed any classes, I will give you an extra credit of 2 points.

### Class Discussions

On every Thursday, for the second half of the class we will discuss current events. Students are asked to bring a relevant political article either from a valid website or a hard copy from a newspaper with them to class. They are required to read and select an article before coming to class. It should be related to politics. NO SPORTS ARTICLES PLEASE. We will discuss these in class. Current events will be an integral part of our course. You will be divided into groups and each student will discuss their article with the group. Then each group will choose 1 to 2 articles to discuss with the rest of the class. Please choose articles that are worth discussing with the class. Failure to bring in a article will result in loss of

class participation points. This current event discussion will be worth 5 points. Extra credit will be given for the best article for the week.

Discussion of the book MARCH will be on Thursdays before our current event discussion. Every week we will read 20 pages from the book. Please make sure you read them before coming to class. This discussion will account for 5 points. I will email you every week, the questions that will be discussed regarding this book. Please come prepared to discuss the pages assigned.

#### Online discussions

We will be discussing topics online. They will be posted in the discussion folder. Sometimes I will post a topic and link for discussion and other times I will ask you to post. You will in about 10 lines or more respond to your thoughts on the article and then respond to 2 other student's post. This can be about 5 lines or more. This is worth 5 points.

#### Extra Credit

There are extra credit opportunities worth 10 points. We will have impromptu debates for which there will be extra credit. You will also get extra credit for doing a study guide for the first 2 exams. All study guides need to be typed in order to get full extra credit.

#### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (5 Points)

All written assignments will be submitted on the due date in class as hard copies.

#### Assignment : Citizenship Questions

First you will take the citizenship test (50 questions) yourself. This is the website for taking the test. (Copy and paste)

[http://www.800citizen.org/us\\_citizenship\\_test/citizenship\\_practice\\_test/](http://www.800citizen.org/us_citizenship_test/citizenship_practice_test/)

The 2nd part of the assignment will entail taking any 10 citizenship questions from these 50 questions and interviewing 5 students randomly at the college. Make sure you write the names of the students that you interviewed. You will discuss your findings with other students on the discussion board. You will post what your questions were and what responses you got from other students. You will conduct the interview on 7/8th Oct and after the interview you will do your discussion online and bring it to me on Oct 10th .

Remember you are being graded on completion, online discussion and the interview. So do not worry about getting the questions wrong. **What you will submit to me:** 1. 1st page of your completed results. 2. interviews of other students with their names on it . What you will submit online is only your analysis on how you did, what your expectations of yourself were before you took the test and then about your performance, why you performed the way you took the quiz. Also how the other students that you interviewed fared and your analysis of their performance. I will post a sample for you to see. Online discussion will be due by the end of the day at 11:59 pm.

Assignment: Geography quiz/interview. You will take the quiz yourself. I will list 15 countries and will mark them on this blank map. In addition you will ask 5 students randomly on campus to mark the same countries on a map. You will then post online how you and how the students you interviewed fared. This will be conducted on 11/12th Nov . After this you will complete the online discussion and bring in your work to me on 14th Nov. . Make sure you write the names of the students you interviewed on the map sheets.

Again this assignment is just for you to see where you stand on your knowledge. You will be graded for completion. Again **Submit to me, 1. your map with the countries marked and your the maps of the 5 students with their names on it. Online in the discussion folder you will analyse the students performance as well as your performance.**

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=blank+map+of+the+world&id=3D72BED7A49FF6DC2450C4664049C5A3F352D64E&FORM=IQFRBA> (Links to an external site.)

### Reflection

You will do a 1 page Reflection of the book MARCH and a 1 page Reflection of your takeaway from the class. This will be due together on Nov26th. This will be double space and 12pt font.

We will also work on a Policy projects namely Homelessness. This will be 5 points of extra credit. You will watch a documentary. Identify the problems and search for solutions to each of these issues. You will work in groups and present the problems and solutions to these issues. Look at how we as a community can help with this. More details to follow.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpAi70WWBlw> (Links to an external site.)

### Class Participation

I strongly recommend class participation and have valued it at 5 points. This will include discussion and class participation.

### Changes

If you are absent, please make sure you check with me or a classmate about any change. I may change certain dates and readings as we go along. Therefore it is important that you keep abreast of all the changes.

### Make-up exams

Make-up exams will be given only if there is an emergency or if the student has informed me in advance of their inability to take it.

### How to get in touch with me

The best way to contact me is through email. I will check it a couple of times a day. However, I will not be checking it on weekends.

### Exams

There will be 3 exams in the quarter. The first and second exam will be worth 20 points and the last and final exam will be worth 25 points. The exams will consist of multiple-choice and 1 essay question. Scantrons and blue books required. They are available in the bookstore. The last exam will be comprehensive. The first half of the questions will be taken from the old tests and the other half will be from the new section. Review for the exams will be posted on the Announcement Page.

## General Information

Students should always make and retain copies of their assignments and exams until the end of the semester as an insurance against loss by you or me.

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students failing to comport themselves will be asked to leave class. Please make sure you are respectful of everyone's opinion and do not make any personal attacks on the other students.

All papers even extra credit ones must be typed and meet the minimum criterion for college level work.

All papers (except blue books) must meet the basic style guidelines (MLA)

Your most important assignment is to keep up with the readings and come prepared to class to be involved in an active discussion. Make sure your papers are not plagiarized. Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided by citing the sources. Simply acknowledging that the material is borrowed and providing the source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. For more information see [http://www.plagiarism.org/plag\\_article\\_what\\_is\\_citation.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_what_is_citation.html) (Links to an external site.))

## Grades

The grades will be broken up as follows:

1st exam 20 points

2nd exam: 20 points

3rd exam: 25 points

Class Presentation 5 points

Reflection 5 points

Book summary and current event 10 points

Online discussion 5 points

Citizenship interview 5 points

Geography interview 5 points

Total 100 points

Grades will be assigned on a percentage basis

95 and above (4.0)

A- 90-94 (3.7)

B+ 87-89 (3.3)

B 84-86 (3.0)

B- 80-83 (2.7)

C+ 77-79 (2.3)

C 74-76 (2.0)

C- 71-73 (1.7)  
D+ 67-70 1.3)  
D 64-66 (1.0)  
F Below 64 (0.0)

## Readings and lectures

The dates and chapters for the reading can change at any time

### Chapter 1 The Democratic Republic

March: Pages 4-23

### Chapter 2 The Constitution

March: Pages 26-43

### Chapter 3 Federalism

March: Pages 44-63

### Chapter 4 Civil Liberties (part of chapter 4)

March 64-84

### **Exam 1 October 15th**

### Chapter 4 (rest of it)

March: pages 85-105

### Chapter 5 Civil Rights

[https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/24/us/affirmative-action.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/24/us/affirmative-action.html?_r=0)

(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

March: Pages 106-128

### Chapter 9 Campaigns and Elections

### **Exam 2 Nov 19th**

March: Pages 129-149

### Chapter 10

March: Pages 150-170

### Chapter 11 Media

March: 171-191

### Chapter 11 Congress

March : Pages 192-210

### Chapter 12 The President

March: Pages 211-230

Chapter 14 The Courts  
March: Pages 231-246

### **Exam 3 Dec 5th**

#### **Guidelines for Writing Papers**

The FIRST part of the assignment is to summarize the author's basic ideas. This should be about one page. Do not quote from the article, do not simply paraphrase the article, INSTEAD take the main arguments and ideas and explain what they are writing and attempting to communicate. Identify and summarize three or four main points and explain them in your own words.

The SECOND part of the assignment is to evaluate the arguments you identified in your first section and this too should be one page. Examine the article's logic and explain if you think the author is making a solid case. Is the article logical and easy to understand? Do you think the explanations support the main ideas. Can you identify arguments and conclusions you think are right? Wrong? In addition look at other authors and what are they saying about the topic. Make sure you cite them in your references. You are more likely to get full points if you follow these steps. Also use the MLA style of writing the papers. Minimum is 2 pages but you can go over that as sometimes it's hard to analyze in 2 pages.

#### **Â PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION Spring 2017**

##### **Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing\***

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services.

##### **Incomplete**

If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete. The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade.

##### **F Grade**

Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F."

### Final Examination Schedule

The Social Science Division will adhere to the final examination schedule as stated in the BC Schedule. Final examinations will be held at the end of each quarter at fixed times.Â Instructors will not give examinations in advance of the regular schedule. A student who is absent from any examination held at any time during the quarter may forfeit the right to make up the examination. If, for illness or some other circumstance beyond the student's control, the student is unable to be present at any scheduled examination and has contacted the instructor on a timely basis, the student may be permitted to take such examination at a time designated by the instructor.

### Withdrawal From Class

College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.

### Hardship Withdrawal

Instructors may assign the grade of (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.

### Students Who Require Disability Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are encouraged to meet with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) office located in B132 (telephone 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110), to establish their eligibility for accommodation. The DRC office will provide each eligible student with an accommodation letter. Students who require accommodation in class should review the DRC accommodation letter with each instructor during the first week of the quarter.

Students with mobility challenges who may need assistance in case of an emergency situation or evacuation should register with Disability Resource Centre, and review those needs with the instructor as well.

### Distribution of Grades

Grades will not be posted in the Social Science Division or in faculty offices, and secretaries will not give out grades. Students should access their grades through the BC Web site.

### Return of Papers and Tests

Paper and/or Scantron score sheet returns will be arranged in the following ways ONLY:Â by mail, if student supplies the instructor with stamped, self-addressed envelope (with appropriate postage); or by the instructor designating a time and place whereby the student may retrieve his/her papers. Unclaimed papers and/or Scantron score sheets must be kept by the instructor for a minimum of sixty (60) instructional days following the end of the quarter.

\*If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Dean of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process. Instructors may assign the grade of (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional

circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.

Reasonable Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience: Students who will be absent from course activities due to reasons of faith or conscience may seek reasonable accommodations so that grades are not impacted. Such requests must be made within the first two weeks of the course to the office of the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs (see Bellevue College Policy 2950). In the event you feel you are being discriminated against based on faith or conscience, you may refer to the procedures outlined in the college's Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Policy (1440P).