

POLS& 202: American Government

Bellevue College, Fall 2019

Course Item#:5346

Jan 2nd-March 19th

2020

Course Details

Class Sessions: M-Th | 7:30AM-8:20AM | L214

Instructor: Jabril Hassen, MACJ

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Phone: 425-564-3225

Office Location: B100-A

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesday at 8:30PM-12:00 PM/ Appointment

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.

Community Agreements

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. 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, sexualities, 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.
7. Participate in discussion.
8. No phones (except in emergencies, or to quickly fact check).

Grading

Course Assessments

Percentage

U.S. Government and Politics Quizzes (5)	60%
Class Participation (Attendance and Activities)	20%
Final Group Project Presentation	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 (5) (60%):

Quizzes will be given throughout the course which will come from assigned readings found in the text, outside articles (TBA) and lecture slides. Each quiz will have between 5-12 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.

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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. Once groups have been assigned, students are to present one current event (news) to the class for the first 10-15 minutes. All group members must participate and have something to speak on for the class during the current events section. Each presentation must have:

- Overview of the topic
- 3 key takeaways from the current event
- at least 1 questions for the class to answer/consider.

Final Project Group Presentation (20%)

Once groups are assigned, students are to select any topic discussed in class, a film, or song and utilize themes based in federalism or other topics of the class to analyze the selected media. In presenting your work, you must also allocate time to highlight a solution to the issue explored in your group's topic. You must then present your ideas on the topic to the class for 3-5 minutes. A grading rubric will be provided to assist students in preparing for the assessment.

Class Policies

1) Attendance: If you miss 10 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 Race in Society

1/6-1/9: This week we will be exploring race and inequality in America. Weekly reflection is due.

Module 2 – Nature of Government and Key Vocabulary (Quiz Week)

1/13-1/16: Read chapter 1 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 – Race & the Constitution

1/21-1/23: Read chapter 2 and be on the lookout for possible outside articles/readings.

NO CLASS (1/20)

Module 4 – Exploring Federalism (Quiz Week Chapter 1-2)

1/27-1/30: Review chapter 3 and focus on key terms (i.e. Constitutional Amendments).

Module 5— Legislative Branch: Criminal Justice

2/3-2/6: Read chapter 4 and focus on Criminal Justice and racial disparities in incarceration. An outside reading will be given. When submitting this weekly reflection, choose to talk about the criminal justice system segment in the text or the external article ONLY.

Module 6 – Civil Rights, Immigration Rights & Privilege (Quiz Week Chapter 3-4)

2/10-2/13: Read chapter 5 and focus on immigration and civil rights. There will be outside readings that will cover various forms of institutional discrimination. Weekly reflection is due.

Module 7 – Congress: Voting Representation by Race and Gender

2/16-2/20: NO CLASS ON 2/17, Read chapter 6 and submit Weekly reflection.

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

(Quiz Week Chapters 5-6)

2/24-2/27: We will be reviewing chapter 7 in addition to outside readings regarding the presidential process, and populism in contemporary politics.

Module 9 – Understanding Bureaucracy

3/2-3/5: This week we will explore how various actors within the *bureaucratic system* operate and influence governance as seen in chapter 8. Outside readings will be provided. Review Chapters 7-9 for the final quiz.

Module 10 – The Judiciary and the Federal Court System

3/9-3/12: Read chapter 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 11 –7-9 and Group Presentation Prep

3/16: This will be the portion of the class before the final group presentation. We will complete the last quiz online which will be available March 16-20 at 11:59 PM. Students will use the remainder of the class prepare for presentations.

NO CLASS ON 3/17-This is student success day. I will be available by email, and for office hours through appointment.

Presentation Final—March 18th, 2020 @ 7:30AM-9:20AM| L221.

FINAL QUIZ DUE ONLINE MARCH 21st at 11:59 PM

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Community Agreements

Please 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.

There will also be an opportunity for everyone to develop classroom norms of engagement to set precedence for the rest of the quarter.

<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.

Grade Dispute

If you would like to contend your final grade in the class please visit the website below.

<https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/3000p-grade-dispute-procedures/>

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/