

POLI 150 - American Government

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Name: American Government
Course Number: Poli150
Room: Duke 116
Meeting Times: Section 01: MWF 10:40-11:35a.;
Section 02: MWF 11:50a-12:45p
Instructor: Jonathon N. Pyles
Office Hours: Available before and after class and by appointment.
Phone: (562) 659-5319
Email: pylesmail@gmail.com (preferred) or jpyles@apu.edu
Class website: <http://politwixs.ning.com>

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the institutions and processes of American government on the local, state, and national levels.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate mastery of the following learning outcomes:

Objective I.

You should know and understand the basic concepts of government, citizenship, and rights. **Type of learning:** Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas, arguments and points of view. **Assessment:** Quizzes, Exams, and Reading Questions

Objective II.

You should have a basic understanding of the Constitution of the United States. **Type of learning:** Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas, arguments and points of view. **Assessment:** Quizzes, Exams, and Reading Questions

Objective III.

A basic understanding of the major political issues in the United States. **Type of learning:** Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas, arguments and points of view. **Assessment:** Online and in-class Participation

Objective IV.

A basic understanding of executive, legislative, and judicial branches. **Type of learning:** Factual Knowledge and Critical Analysis. **Assessment:** Quizzes and Exams.

Objective V.

A basic understanding of the U.S. political process. **Type of learning:** Factual Knowledge. **Assessment:** Quizzes, Exams, and Participation

Objective VI.

A basic understanding of the major political issues in the United States. **Type of learning:** Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas, arguments and points of view. **Assessment:** Online and in-class Participation

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**SECTION 1 - FOUNDATIONS****Week 1 - Introduction**

Wednesday, Sep 3

Introduction

Week 2 - The Constitution and Elections

Monday, Sep 8

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 1-2; Conrad, ch. 1

Week 3 - Federalism and the Economy

Monday, Sep 15

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 3; Conrad, ch. 2

Week 4 - Civil Liberties

Monday, Sep 22

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 4; Conrad, ch. 8

Week 5 - Civil Rights and Culture Wars

Monday, Sep 29

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 5; Conrad, ch. 9

Friday, Oct 3

Exam 1**SECTION 2 - THE POLITICAL PROCESS****Week 6 - Public Opinion, Political Participation, and Foreign Policy**

Monday, Oct 6

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 6 & 7; Conrad, ch. 3

Week 7 - Public Policy and The Military

Monday, Oct 13

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 15; Conrad, ch. 4

Friday, Oct 17

No class!

Week 8 - Interest Groups and Health Care

Monday, Oct 20

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 8; Conrad, ch. 5

Week 9 - Parties and Energy

Monday, Oct 27

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 9; Conrad, ch. 6

Friday, Oct 31

Exam 2**SECTION 3 - INSTITUTIONS****Week 10 - Congress and The Environment**

Monday, Nov 3

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 11; Conrad, ch. 7

Week 11 - The Presidency and Socioeconomic Policy

Monday, Nov 10

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 12; Conrad, ch. 10

Week 12 - Bureaucracy and Homeland Security

Monday, Nov 17

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 13; Conrad, ch. 11

Week 13 - The Courts and Education

Monday, Nov 24

Read: Losco & Baker, ch. 14; Conrad, ch. 12

Friday, Nov 28

No class!

Week 14 - Trade

Monday, Dec 1

Conrad, ch. 13

Wednesday, Dec 3

Exam 3**Week 15- Finals****Dec 8-12 Finals**

REQUIRED TEXTS

Ralph Baker and Joseph Losco, *Am. Gov. 2008 Edition* (McGraw-Hill, 2008). ISBN: 9780072965476

Jessamyn Conrad, *What You Should Know About Politics...But Don't: A Nonpartisan Guide to the Issues* (Arcade Publishing, 2008). ISBN: 1559708832

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

Section Exams

There will be three multiple-choice exams during the semester, each worth 10% of your course grade. Exams will cover readings and lectures. A scantron and no. 2 pencil will be required for each exam. All together, these three exams account for 30% of your course grade.

Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative, multiple-choice, and worth 20% of your course grade.

Homework

Each week, a set of reading questions must be answered and emailed to the professor before the scheduled day for discussing those readings. Each set of questions is worth 1% of your grade. All together, these will count for 15% of your total grade. Email the questions to pylesmail@gmail.com, and use the following format for the subject heading: "Poli150 Homework # Lastname". For example, your subject heading for week 2 might look like this:

poli150 homework 2 Pyles

Do not send attachments; simply copy and paste the text into the email. Answers should be as long as necessary to answer the question, and no longer. Sometimes a few words will be enough, sometimes several sentences. I'm looking for sincere effort in this, not "right" answers all the time. Late homework will not be accepted. No exceptions. So, don't wait until the last minute.

Quizzes - On the day that the homework is due there will also be a short true-false quiz on the reading material. This quiz will be given at the beginning of the class and will cover that week's readings. Each quiz is worth 1% of your total grade. Over the course of the semester, there will be 14 quizzes. Once you complete ten quizzes, you will not be able to take any more. This means that you can miss up to four quizzes without affecting your grade. It also means that you can choose not to take a quiz if you feel that you are not ready for it. You cannot, however, drop a quiz after you take it, and I will not drop any quiz grades. Once you take a quiz, your score for that quiz is permanent.

Online Participation - Online participation will account for 15% of your total grade. Online participation can take place in two ways on the class website (<http://politwixs.ning.com>): posting and commenting. You can post to the class "blog" or the discussion forum. You can also comment on blog posts or discussion posts. Discussion posts are meant for sustained discussion of issues, while blog posts are for sharing interesting findings from the web, sharing observations, etc. The purpose of online participation is to help you keep up on current political events and news and to allow you to discuss and debate politics with your fellow students. Of course, you are expected to show the same level of respect to your fellow students online as you would in the classroom. Please understand that not everyone enjoys debating issues, and some may take strongly-worded disagreements personally. Therefore, be sensitive and polite. Also, don't beat a dead horse. Each new week of participation will begin on Monday and is worth 1% of your total grade. The following scale gives you an idea of how online participation will be graded, though the professor will assign grades at his discretion:

10 points - eight substantial posts; nine or more of shorter length

9 - seven substantial posts; eight or more posts of shorter length

8 - six substantial posts consisting of a paragraph; or seven posts of shorter length

7 - five substantial posts consisting of a paragraph each; or six posts of shorter length

6 - four substantial posts consisting of a paragraph; or five posts of shorter length

- 5 - four posts with a sentence or two; or three short paragraphs
- 4 - three posts with a sentence or two; or two short paragraphs; or one longer paragraph
- 3 - two posts with a sentence or two; or one post that is a short paragraph
- 2 - one post or comment with a sentence or two; or a couple posts with a word or three
- 1 - one post or comment containing a word or three
- 0 - no participation

Overall, you should expect to spend about 1-2 hours / week on online participation; though you can spread this out as you like.

Class Participation

Throughout the semester, there will be opportunities for you to participate directly in class, either individually or in groups. Your class participation grade will be based mainly on these opportunities. Class participation counts for 10% of your grade

Grade Breakdown

Exam 1	10%	100 points
Exam 2	10%	100 points
Exam 3	10%	100 points
Final Exam	20%	200 points
Quizzes	1% x 10	100 points
Homework	1% x 15	150 points
Online	1% x 15	150 points
<u>Class part.</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total	100%	1000 points

Final Grades

93-100=A 90-92=A- 87-89=B+ 83-86=B 80-82=B- 77-79=C+ 73-76=C
 70-72=C- 67-69=D+ 63-66=D 60-62=D- 0-59=F

Grading Standards

When assigning grades that require judgement, such as written assignments or participation, I will generally use the following definitions to guide my grading:

“A” work - Outstanding

Above and beyond the requirements of the assignment; outstanding effort, significant achievement, and personal improvement are clearly evident. Some measure of remarkable skill, creativity, or energy is also evident.

“B” work – Above Average

Fulfills all aspects of the assignment and goes a bit beyond minimum competence to demonstrate extra effort, extra achievement, or extra improvement.

“C” work - Average

Fulfills all aspects of the assignment with obvious competence and grace. Assignments are completed exactly as assigned.

“D” work – Below Average

Below average either because some aspect of the assignment has not been fulfilled or because a preponderance of errors (more than one or two per page) interferes with clear communication. A “D” may also indicate failure to follow directions, failure to follow specific recommendations, or failure to demonstrate personal effort and improvement.

“F” work – Not Acceptable

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: You may miss three classes without penalty. After that, your participation grade will be reduced by 10 points per missed class. Exceptions to this rule will only be made in special circumstances. If you have such circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible.

Late Homework: Late homework will not be accepted.

Missing a Quiz or Exam: If you miss a quiz you cannot make it up. If you miss an exam, you may be able to make it up if you have a valid excuse. It is your responsibility to schedule a makeup exam with the professor within one week of the original exam date. You are not entitled to a makeup exam.

Laptops / Notebook Computers: You may not use laptops and notebook computers in class unless you have a disability that requires you use one.

Rescheduling the Final Exam: If you want to reschedule the final exam, you will need written approval from the professor, the head of the History and Political Science Department, and the dean of liberal arts.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor, but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

DISABILITIES

Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center (Ext. 3849) as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.