

POL250 Political Science

Syllabus Overview

This syllabus contains all relevant information about the course: its objectives and outcomes, the grading criteria, the texts and other materials of instruction, and weekly topics, outcomes, assignments, and due dates. Consider this your roadmap for the course. Please read through the syllabus carefully and ask questions if you would like anything clarified. Please print a copy of this syllabus for reference.

Course Description

3 Credits

Prerequisite: ENG201

This course is designed to give students a basic introduction to the academic discipline known as political science. This course presents students with a broad overview of key components of political science. Many subfields of political science exist, and this course will not go into them but instead focus on how political science shapes political, economic and social relationships in the United States. As you are well aware, a variety of political perspectives inform how we participate in the United States. You are encouraged to critically examine how these relationships develop. The weekly discussions allow for students to engage with people from a variety of viewpoints and help each other identify the principles that underpin different political viewpoints in the United States.

Course Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the rationale for democratic participation in American society;
- Identify the ways in which economic and social systems are related to political decision making;
- Describe the ways in which the media and interest groups are integral to a healthy political system;
- Realize the importance of individual agency in a changing global political structure.

Communication with Your Instructor

You will receive a welcome email from your instructor prior to the start of class. This email will contain your instructor's contact information. Your instructor will also be communicating with you via several methods in the course, including:

- **Announcements** – This communication tool, located on the navigation menu within your course in Canvas, contains important updates. Be sure to check for new announcements from your instructor each time you access your course.

- **Q&A** – Use this discussion board, located on the Home screen in your course, to communicate with your instructor and classmates regarding general course questions (i.e. missing links, assignment clarification, etc.).
- **Inbox** – Use the Inbox, located in the top right corner of Canvas, to send a message to your instructor or classmates.

Materials and Resources

Required or Supplemental Text or Resources:

There is no required textbook. All readings are provided within the course.

Bookstore Information

The bookstore can be located in the left-hand navigation of any Canvas course.

Library Services

Detailed information about the eLibrary can be found in the LIB100: eLibrary Overview course and the Student Resource Center. This is a course that all students have access to during their academic career.

Canvas Help Desk and Technical Questions

If you experience technical issues in your course, please contact the Canvas Help Desk by clicking the Help link (top right corner within Canvas). There are 3 ways to contact them:

- Phone (888-628-2749)
- Live chat
- Report a problem (submit a ticket)

Be sure to notify your instructor of any technical difficulties you are experiencing.

Additional resources are available in the Student Resource Center and the Canvas Guides website:

<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-4121>

Weekly Schedule

Week 1		The Social Contract: Political and Civil Rights	
Outcomes	You will be able to explain the ways in which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government places limits on the state of nature. • The social contract is the foundation of government. • The Constitution of the United States was formed. • There is an inherent tension between majority rule and minority rights. 		
Readings	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Government • Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote Suggested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Treatises of Government: <i>Chapter II "Of the State of Nature"</i> 		
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is an American? • The Constitutional Convention 		
Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobbes social contract • King Civil Rights Tactics Newsreel 		
Discussion	Majority rule and individual rights		
Assignments	MLK Jr. Interview		

Week 2		Beyond Political Parties: The Social Sector and Social Capital	
Outcomes	You will be able to explain the ways in which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two party system functions in the United States. • The social or non-profit sector is changing political participation. • Social capital facilitates the transfer of economic and political power. 		
Readings	Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age of social transformation • Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital Suggested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropy, the Welfare State, and the Transformation of American Public and Private Institutions, 1945-2000 		
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Two-Party System 		
Discussion	Social capital		

Assignments	Viable Alternatives
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Week 3	
Beyond Government and Economic Systems	
Outcomes	You will be able to explain the ways in which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialism differs from capitalism. • Classical economics differs from Keynesian economics. • Government intervenes in the U.S. economy. • Income inequality influences the size of the middle class.
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of Restraints Upon Importation From Foreign Countries Of Such Goods As Can Be Produced At Home • Keynesian Economic Theory • Keynesian Economics
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Systems
Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialism vs Capitalism: Milton Friedman • Paul Krugman - Income Inequality and the Middle Class
Discussion	Government's role
Assignments	Final Paper Proposal

Week 4	
The Intricate Nature of Policy Development: The Federal Bureaucracy and Government Agencies	
Outcomes	You will be able to explain the ways in which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The federal bureaucracy functions in the United States. • Political systems respond to the needs of some but not all of the population. • Specialized knowledge helps drive policy development. • Salience and complexity influence how policy strategies are addressed.
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Quality Under Imperfect Oversight • The Politics Of Health Reform: Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good Plans?
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federal Bureaucracy • Policy Makers and Implementers
Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schoolhouse Rock- How a Bill Becomes a Law
Discussion	Federal regulatory bodies
Assignments	Healthcare

Week 5		The Misunderstood Role of Interest Groups and Lobbying in the United States	
Outcomes	You will be able to explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How our structure of government promotes interest group formation. • How a trusting relationship is more important than money in the political process. • The five sources of interest group power. • How lobbying may play more of a role in the development of laws and policies than in votes on specific bills in Congress. 	
Readings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest Group Influence in the U. S. Congress 	
Lectures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest Groups and Their Impact On Politics • The Art of Lobbying 	
Multimedia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political science 	
Discussion		Special interest groups	
Assignments		Interest Groups and Public Opinion (Group)	
Quiz		Refer to your course	

Week 6		The Media and Public Opinion: How the Playing Field Is Changing	
Outcomes	You will be able to explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the media, a non-neutral business that slants coverage, is bedrock to democracy. • How values, attitudes, and opinions shape public opinion. • How social media is changing the transfer of information. • How the media ignores complex issues in favor of issues that can be portrayed with simple images. 	
Readings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview. <i>State of the Media</i> • Major trends • Key Findings • Year in the News • Teens and Social 	
Lectures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Public Opinion? • Media Influence 	
Multimedia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlie Rose - Mark Pincus 12/28/09 	

Discussion	Information
Assignments	Political Perspectives in the Media (Group)

Week 7	The Federal Budget and Its Short-Term and Long-Term Consequences
Outcomes	<p>You will be able to explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key components of this year’s Federal budget. • How the federal budget process develops in the United States. • Major factors that influence the federal deficit in the United States. • How political beliefs influence the federal budget.
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget of the US Government: <i>Fiscal Year 2011</i>
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Making
Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krugman: Fixing Long-Term Deficits Not Hard Economically, But Politically Impossible • The Economy and the Federal Budget
Discussion	Short-term and long-term budget problems
Assignments	Final Paper

Week 8	Individuals, Corporations, and Nations in an Era of Globalization
Outcomes	<p>You will be able to explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major criticisms of the World Trade Organization. • How individuals, countries, and corporations function in a flat world. • How technology is changing how people interact politically and economically.
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO – Corporate Power Run Rampant?
Multimedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIT Milestone Celebration Keynote Address
Discussion	Changing political force

Grading and Evaluation

Your grades will reflect the way in which you present and support your topics and positions in the various learning activities used in this course. The grades will be based on the quality and quantity of your comments and responses in the various activities.

Be sure to review the discussion and assignment rubrics in the course for specific grading criteria.

The various graded activities are weighted as follows:

Course Element	% of Final Grade
Assignments	40%
Discussions	40%
Final Paper (Week 7)	20%
Total	100%

Students will be expected to meet all the deadlines of the class as indicated throughout the course and in the syllabus. This is primarily so we don't get behind in the course. In addition, discussions cannot overlap from one week to the next. This is to ensure that all discussions and submissions take place within the week they are scheduled in order to be of value to the entire class as well as to help you not get behind. If there are extenuating circumstances, you will need to communicate that to the instructor and make arrangements accordingly, if appropriate.

Late Assignments: Exceptions are to be determined by the instructor on a case-by-case basis. There will be no opportunities for extra credit.

Learner Success Guidelines

These guidelines are provided to help you succeed in your coursework:

- Participate in the class introduction activity on the first day of class.
- Submit ALL assignments by the posted due dates and times.
- Check your emails daily.
- Contact Portal Help for logon problems or Canvas Help for technical issues with Canvas.
- Participate fully in all threaded discussions.
- Contact your instructor if you have questions about an assignment or need additional help completing your work successfully. Academic dishonesty is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Academic Policies

The following Academic Policies can be found in the [Student Resource Center](#).

- Grading Criteria
- Reasonable Accommodations Policy

- Student Attendance Policy
- Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy
- Student Engagement and the Granting of Academic Credit
- Copyright Policy

Caveat

The above schedule, content, and procedures in this course are subject to change. All policies are superseded by the latest College Catalog available on our website:

<https://www.cambridgecollege.edu/student-rights-complaints-grievances/student-code-conduct>