

**Political Science 101 American Politics**  
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Fall 2019

Instructor:	Dr. Saemyi Park
Class Location & Time:	<b>CCC 227 &amp; T/R 11:00AM-12:15PM</b>
Instructor's Office:	CCC 468
Office Hours:	T/TH 8:50AM-10:50AM & by appointment
E-mail:	spark@uwsp.edu
Phone:	715-3346-4107

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to study of American government and politics with emphasis on three themes: Foundations, Institutions, and Politics. The first part of class will cover the foundations of American politics – the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and civil rights. Next, we will examine three branches of government – Congress, the presidency, and the courts. The last part of class will discuss about politics. Specifically, we will focus on public opinion, elections, and the media.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT**

Student Learning Outcomes at the end of this course,  Students should be able to:	Course Topics  The following topic(s) will address this outcome:	Evaluation of Outcome  This outcome will be evaluated primarily by:
Explain the foundations and significance of the US Constitution	"Understanding American Politics" "The Constitutions"	Midterm Exam In-Class Assignments
Examine the structure and function of each branch of government	"Federalism" "Presidency" "Congress" "The Courts"	Midterm Exam In-Class Assignments Congress Profile Paper Film Analysis Paper
Analyze conflicts and challenges in the civil liberties and civil rights debate	"Civil Liberties" "Civil Rights"	Midterm Exam Final Exam In-Class Assignments
Evaluate the influence of mass media in public opinion and elections as well as its consequences to the policy-making process	"Public Opinion" "The Media"	Final Exam In-Class Assignments Film Analysis Paper
Identify the components of the US electoral process	"Elections"	Final Exam In-Class Assignments Congress Profile Paper Film Analysis Paper

## REQUIRED READINGS

The following book has been ordered at University Bookstore for textbook rental:

- William T. Bianco and David T. Canon, *American Politics Today*. Sixth Core Edition. W.W. Norton, 2019.

W.W. Norton has a “study space” Web site for the textbook that you may find useful for the course. The address is: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/american-politicstoday3/full/welcome.aspx>. It includes chapter reviews, study questions, on-line quizzes, links to other political sites, political blogs, vocabulary flash cards, plus other readings and resources.

## READING IN THE DISCIPLINES

This semester, a unique opportunity will be offered to students enrolled in this course. “Reading In the Disciplines” discussion groups attached to this course will be available. The groups are **one-credit, pass/fail courses** that meet once a week for 50 minutes. The groups will start meeting around Week 3 of the semester and will allow students opportunities to:

- Meet once a week with fellow classmates and a trained peer discussion leader
- Work to improve understanding of the course material
- Ask questions in a comfortable and exploratory environment

The peer facilitator for these groups will be coming in to our class at the beginning of the semester to share more about this voluntary opportunity. While there are no guarantees, research has shown that students who participate in discussion sections tend to do better in the parent-course. More information about the program can be found here <http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/Reading-In-the-Disciplines-Groups.aspx>

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Weight	Due Date
In- Class Exam I	15%	October 1
In-Class Exam II	15%	November 12
Final Online Exam	20%	December 19
Film Analysis Paper	20%	3 weeks from its viewing
Congress Profile Paper	20%	November 21
Attendance & Participation	10%	Throughout the semester
Total:	100%	

Note: **Students MUST complete all required work** in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. **You do NOT have the option to “take a zero” on each assignment.** Not submitting all required work will result either in a final grade of incomplete until the work is submitted or a F for the course. Late-submission is not permissible unless you receive the permission from the instructor in advance. Please read the attendance policy in page 4 for more information about the excusable absence.

## GRADING SCALE

Grades will be determined according to the university’s standard scale. I have incredibly high standards for my grades. If you meet the basic requirements for assignments, you will get a C. If you want an A or B, you need to go above and beyond the exact requirements for an assignment. For individual assignments, I will define the A-F grade base in the following way:

Criteria						
<b>Outstanding</b>	A	93-100	A-	90-92		
<b>Above average</b>	B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
<b>Average</b>	C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
<b>Below average</b>	D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	F	Below 60				

## ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

### ***A. In-Class Exam (15% per each exam)***

There are two in-class exams, which will take place during the class time. The first one covers the first part of subjects, and the second exam will cover the topics addressed in class after the first exam. That is, the second exam is NOT cumulative. A study guide will be distributed one week before each exam. You are allowed to bring one-page note of your own for the exam. The format of exam is a combination of multiple-choice questions, true-or-false questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short-answer-questions. Please keep in mind that it is extremely rare for students to have a make-up exam opportunity.

Only extraordinary circumstances can excuse your absence on the exam day. You must have instructor approval BEFORE the exam. A make-up exam will be all essay questions, and you need to take it on the last day of class in my office. It will be much harder to complete the make-up test, therefore.

### ***B. Online Final Exam (20%)***

We will use a course site in Canvas. The exam will be open for a day so that you can take it anytime during the day. It will cover materials you've learned after the second exam. That is, the final exam is NOT cumulative. The format of exams is a combination of multiple-choice questions, true-or-false questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and short-answer-questions. I will also distribute a study guide a week prior to the exam day. It is very important to remember that there is **NO MAKE-UP EXAM** since exams are online. If you are required to attend the university-sponsored activities (athletic games etc.) or if you are seriously ill and incapable of taking the exam, I may consider you to take a make-up test. However, you must provide an official document to prove your excuse and I reserve the right to determine if you will be given the make-up exam opportunity or not. Make-up exam is all short identification essays, which is a lot harder for students to do well on it. And, you will take it on the final day of class in my office.

### ***B. Film Analysis Paper (20%)***

You will watch two films throughout the semester in light of the lecture materials and assigned readings for this course. You are required to submit one film analysis paper, but you can write two papers. I will grade them both and consider the one with the highest score for your final grade. You are free to write on any topic related to American politics addressed in the films, as long as they are able to incorporate and demonstrate your thorough understanding of the different assigned course readings. A separate worksheet will be distributed in class for more details. Late papers accepted without a penalty ONLY in the extraordinary cases of medical and family emergency with proof of evidence. Of course, you must have my permission in advance to submit assignment late.

### ***C. Congress Profile Paper (20%)***

In this assignment, you are invited to study about your representatives. You will report the profile of your representative with emphasis on party affiliation, policy platforms, bills, campaigns, districts, previous records, committee membership, and/or personal life. A detailed guideline will be distributed.

### ***D. Attendance & Participation (10%)***

You are required to attend all class sessions. It is your interest too. Students who regularly attend class generally enjoy the course more, learn more, and get the most out of their education with higher grades. In addition, you are expected to enrich the learning experience of fellow students and teachers through regular attendance and active participation in class. We will have about 30 class sessions throughout the semester. **7 OR MORE unexcused absences will result in the automatic F in the course.** Please make sure to be aware of this policy.

Please keep in mind that only few cases are considered as the excusable absences:

1. UWSP-sponsored activities (sport game, organization events, etc.)
2. The university-recognized religious holidays
3. The serious and extraordinary circumstances of your medical issues or your immediate family members

In the above-mentioned cases, you are required to submit the proof of evidence to the instructor in advance. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> case, you should inform your instructor immediately and provide the documentation within 48 hours of the event occurs. I reserve the right to review the document and determine if your absence is excusable.

**If you are simply sick or under the weather, you do not need to email me about it.** I will give you **TWO free tickets** on your attendance record.

## GENERAL RULES

**Readings:** Students are required to complete each week's required readings before that lecture. You need to bring your book, assigned readings, and lecture notes to each class.

**Assignments:** online submission through Canvas is required for writing assignment. Late submission or email submission is NOT accepted except for a very rare case as written in the previous section. You must faithfully follow the instruction regarding the format, style, and length of these assignments.

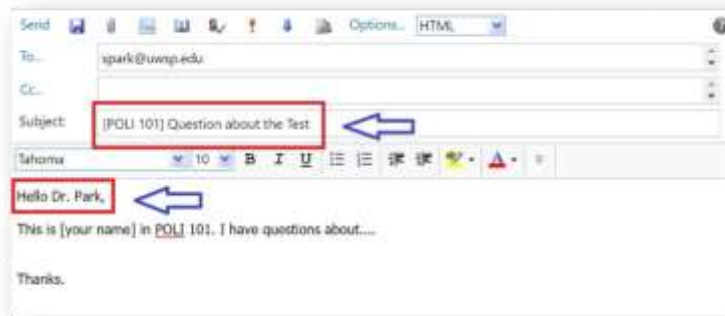
**Canvas:** This course will have a site on Canvas. The site will be used to share course materials including, but not limited to, lecture note, and additional readings. Make sure that you check this site before every class.

**Lectures:** Before we begin a topic in class, I will post an outline of the lecture material on the course website. The outlines give you the framework of the lecture but do not give you the entire script. If you wish, you can print these outlines and bring them with you to class to use as a base for note taking. You will learn and remember better when you write things down yourself. Regarding note taking, make sure you take notes that will be meaningful to you later when you are reviewing your notes, rather than focusing only on transcribing the slides verbatim.

**Office Hours:** Feel free to drop by during my office hours or make an appointment to see me. I always WELCOME students.

**Email:** Email is a convenient way to continue contact between professor and student outside of class. Email is best for 1-2 sentence responses, and conceptual questions do not lend themselves well to email. If you have any questions regarding your papers, please visit my office

hours for in-depth consultation. I will NOT consult on your written assignment via email. While students should take advantage of this email communication opportunity with me, you should also do so in a professional manner. I will NOT reply to emails that do not include a salutation (“Dear Prof. ...” or “Hello Dr. ...”).



I will also NOT respond to emails that ask for answers to questions that can easily be found on the syllabus or the lecture notes. If you have a question regarding lectures or assigned material that you just cannot seem to master, then ask a question in class, or come to me during office hours. I will only respond to questions about coursework or academic requirements, and I will not respond to questions of a personal nature. I will be able to respond your email during weekdays (not weekend), but please email me again if you do not receive my response within 48 hours.

**Respect:** I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. I am intolerant of disruptive behavior in the classroom, including talking during lectures, reading newspapers, frequently going to use a restroom, and especially playing with digital devices. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom in order to preserve the learning environment for other students. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of others’ opinions. Please do not intimidate, patronize, or ridicule anyone else during the course of classroom activities. This course is open to a variety of ways of interpreting history, theories, and policies. Students are encouraged to share their questions and ideas in lecture. Since there will be differences and disagreements, students are expected to show respect to the comments and positions of fellow students and me.

**Technology Policy:** Technology devices are NOT allowed to use in class. Out of respect for your fellow students, your professor, and the educational process, all technology devices (cell/smart phones, iPad, Kindle, Laptop, etc.) must be powered down and put away, not on the desk or in your hoodie pocket, or on your lap, during class. If texting, using social media, and attending to tasks other than the class material is more important than paying attention for 75 minutes, please do not come to class. If you feel you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on vibrate, please clear this with the professor before class begins. Students who disregard the policy will be asked to leave class.

**Honesty:** Any instance of academic misconduct will be taken seriously and may result in failure of the course. Misconduct will result in notification to the Dean of Students. If you are having a problem, it is much better to talk to me about it. Do not struggle by yourself. I want you to learn and do well in this course, not punish you with a lower grade. Talk to me if you are having a problem so I can try to help you work out a solution. In addition, there is a great resource for your study in the campus. The Tutoring-Learning Center provides a variety of services to support your needs such as Writing Lab and One-On-One Assistance for Study Skills. Please contact Learning Resource Center (715-346-3568 & [tlctutor@uwsp.edu](mailto:tlctutor@uwsp.edu) & [www.uwsp.edu/tlc](http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc)) for more information.

**Students with disabilities:** Any student with a special documented disability (sight, hearing, language, mobility, etc.) which may affect class activities should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (715-346-3365). Please find more information from: <https://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

## COURSE CALENDAR

(Topics, readings, and schedule subject to announced change by instructor.)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Tentative Dates</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Introduction	September 3	
Understanding American Politics	September 5	Ch. 1
The Constitution	Sep 10, Sep 12 & Sep 17	Ch. 2
Federalism	September 19 & September 24	Ch. 3
<b>Film Presentation I</b>	<b>September 26</b>	
<b>In-Class Exam I</b>	<b>October 1</b>	
Civil Liberties	Oct 3, Oct 8 & Oct 10	Ch. 4
Civil Rights	October 15 & October 17	Ch. 5
Congress	October 22 & October 24	Ch. 11
<b>Film Presentation II</b>	<b>October 29</b>	
The Presidency	November 5 & November 7	Ch. 12
<b>In-Class Exam II</b>	<b>November 12</b>	
The Courts	November 14 & November 19	Ch. 14
Public Opinion	November 21 & November 26	Ch. 6
The Media	December 3 & December 5	Ch. 7
Elections	December 10 & December 12	Ch. 9
<b>Final Online Exam</b>	<b>December 19</b>	

- No Class on October 31 (TH): Professor Park will attend the conference.
- No class on November 28 (TH): Thanksgiving Break