
POLI 101 American Politics

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Fall 2018

Instructor	Dr. Saemyi Park
Contact information	spark@uwsp.edu
Office hours	I will be checking my e-mail periodically throughout the day each weekday of the course. If you need clarification for any instructions, the time to ask is BEFORE the assignment is due. You need to follow the specific email format for online communication with me. Please see the email communication guideline in page 4.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to study of American government and politics with an emphasis on the Constitution, three branches of government, public opinion, the media and campaigns & elections. My goal is to help you be informed about the basis of American political system. Online Learning is NOT self-paced learning. You will have tests, discussion posts and papers which have specific requirements and due dates.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will:

- 1) Explain the foundations and significance of the US Constitution particularly with regard to separation of powers, checks and balance, as well as civil liberties,
- 2) Examine the structure and functions of each branch of government,
- 3) Identify the impact of public opinion on the political process, and
- 4) Explain the components of the US electoral process.

REQUIRED READINGS

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

- Authors: William T. Bianco and David T. Canon
- Title: **“American Politics Today”**
- Publisher: W.W. Norton, 2015 [Fourth Core Edition]

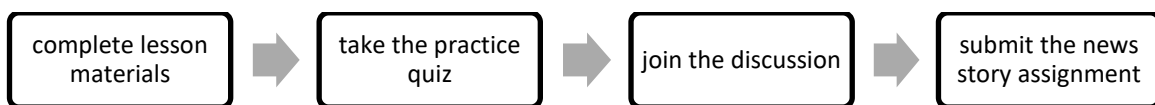
If you are taking this course while you are not in Stevens Point, the University Bookstore is able to send this textbook to wherever you are. Call at 715-346-3431 to arrange the delivery with a flat rate of \$10.95. Please make sure to have this textbook in hand before the class touches on the Constitution.

STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITIES & REQUIREMENTS

Since this is an online class, there is much more responsibility placed on the student in terms of active involvement and participation. You are expected to log in to the course website at D2L **daily** so that you can complete the required work in a timely manner.

COURSE FORMAT

Each module will repeat the same format so that you can easily follow the course. The following activities are required for you to complete for every module:



First, **you have learning materials to complete**. For a maximum outcome, please read the chapter before you begin the lesson. After reading the chapter, please log in to D2L and click the “Content” tap. A variety forms of learning materials will be presented to you: a) PowerPoint slides with my brief lecture, 2) video or audio segments, 3) an external website or data repository, 4) news articles featuring the subject, 5) scholarly readings and more. In addition, lecture outline will be posted as well to help your self-study. Please keep in mind that **whether or not you complete all learning materials are recorded and is a part of grade**.

Second, **you will participate in the discussion forum**. After reviewing class materials, you will be given a discussion topic. Reading a chapter in the textbook and studying the lesson materials are sufficient to participate in the discussion (or debate). Please log in to D2L and click the “Discussion” tap to see the discussion forums organized by Module. You need to **post to the forum first** and **read/respond to other classmates’ posts by next day**. Please see the due dates specified in each discussion forum.

Third, **you will take a practice quiz in each module**. This quiz is designed to help you to understand the chapter materials covered within the week and for helping me to see that you understand the topic. You will have 10 practice tests total, and they are NOT cumulative. Each test will be available to take under the “Quizzes” tap.

Next, **you will submit a brief written assignment in each module** (News Story Assignment). You are invited to find the news story that feature the topic of the module, and you will offer a brief summary and analysis of it to your classmates. You are also required to do peer reviews on others. For more details, please read the guideline in the course website.

Other components of the course are papers and unit-tests, which are not repeated for every module:

First, **you will write two short papers** (about 2 pages in single-spaced & 600-700 words). For **Election Analysis Paper**, you will analyze the American midterm election that will be held in November 6, 2018. For **Film Analysis Paper**, you will watch the film and analyze the film’s theme by incorporating class materials. The paper guideline will be provided in advance, and you need to submit them to “Dropbox” by midnight on the designated dates.

Lastly, **you will take four unit-tests throughout the semester**. Unit tests provide you an opportunity to express your opinions and thoughts on the essay questions. Please read the table below for the due dates.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Weight	Due Date
Practice Quiz (10 times)	20	At the end of each module
Unit Test (4 times)	20	#1 by 11:59PM, Sep 30 (Sunday) #2 by 11:59PM, Oct 28 (Sunday) #3 by 11:59PM, Nov 30 (Friday) #4 by 11:59PM, Dec 16 (Sunday)
Election Analysis Paper	10	by 11:59PM, Nov 17 (Saturday)
Film Analysis Paper	10	by 11:59PM, Dec 15 (Saturday)
Discussion (10 times)	20	Check out each module for due dates
Assignment (10 times)	20	Check out each module for due dates
Total:	100%	

Note: the syllabus quiz and the practice quiz on Chapter 1 “Understanding American Politics” will be considered as a **bonus point**, which will be proportionally added to the final grade later.

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 an assignments, you will get a C. If you want a 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						
Outstanding	A	93-100	A-	90-92		
Above average	B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
Average	C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
Below average	D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
Unsatisfactory	F	Below 60				

Students MUST complete all the 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 an assignment. Not submitting all the required work will result either in a final grade of incomplete until the work is submitted or an F for the course. In calculating the final grade, number grades rather than letter grades will be averaged.

Late paper submission is 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.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Because we do meet in person, we may encounter the situation when our thoughts may not deliver in a way we intended. To prevent this problem in online communication, it is extremely important for all of us to follow the common netiquette rules below:

1. Be respectful of your classmates.
2. Use appropriate language and grammar; we aren't texting here, we are engaging in an academic conversation.
3. Always be constructive and encouraging when responding to fellow class members.
4. Do not use the discussion forum to criticize another student in a personal way.
5. Keep in mind that everything you write is recorded. There are no take backs on the Internet.

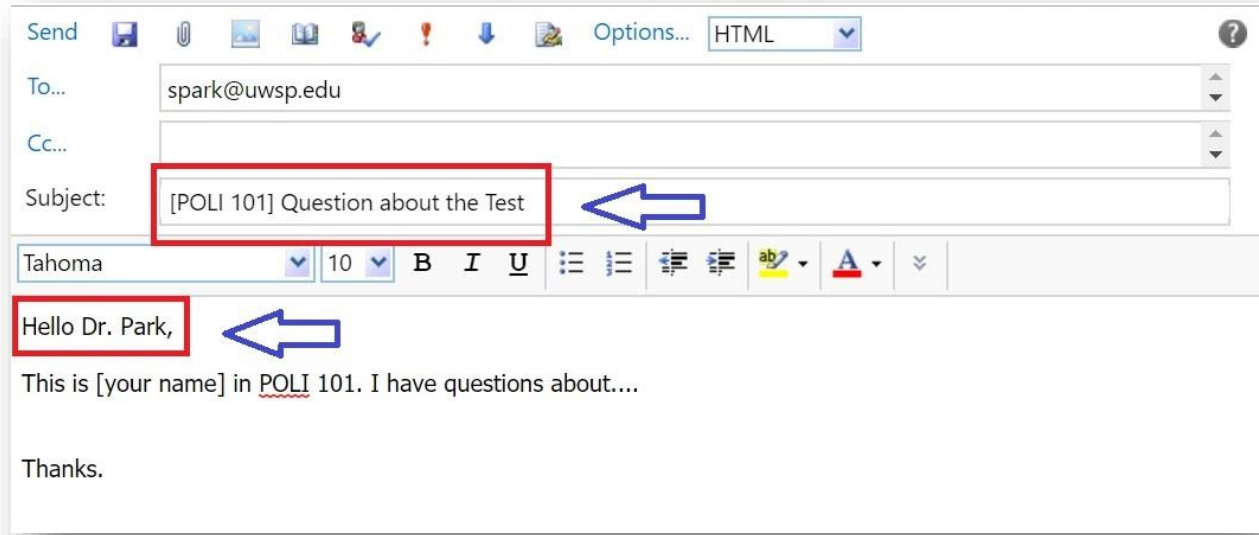
EMAIL COMMUNICATION FORMAT

When you have the general questions regarding the course, please use **the Muddiest Point Forum** (click “Discussion” tab in the course website). I will post answers to all general questions here so that all students can view them. I will attempt to respond to your questions within 24 hours. You are encouraged to answer each other's questions too. But, please keep in mind that **this is a public forum, not a private forum**. Everyone can read your questions. If your question is personal or contain any personal information, please do not use this forum. You can contact me via email, but you should follow the email communication rule as follow:

When you communicate with me via email, please follow the rule as explained here. Your email inquiries or communication should have **a certain format**:

- a subject line starting with [POLI 101] followed by the subject
- a proper salutation or greeting (“Hello, Dr. Park” or “Hello Professor”)
- clear questions including any pertinent details.

For example:



Your online communication should be formatted appropriately, written in complete sentences, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and include the required subject line. Please note that abbreviations such as BTW, GR8, UR are only acceptable at Tweeter that have a character limit.

OTHER RESOURCES

The textbook publisher, *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-politics-today3/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. You can find a lot of helpful information there.

COURSE CALENDAR

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

Topic	Tentative Dates	Readings
I. Introduction		
1. Introduction	Sep 4 – Sep 7	
2. Understanding American Politics	Sep 4 – Sep 7	Chapter 1
II. The Foundations		
1. The Constitution	Sep 10 (M) – Sep 21 (F)	Chapter 2
2. Federalism	Sep 24 (M) – Sep 28 (F)	Chapter 3
3. Civil Liberties	Oct 1 (M) – Oct 12 (F)	Chapter 4
4. Civil Rights	Oct 15 (M) – Oct 19 (F)	Chapter 5
III. The Institutions		
1. Congress	Oct 22 (M) – Oct 26 (F)	Chapter 11
2. The Presidency	Oct 29 (M) – Nov 2 (F)	Chapter 12
3. The Courts	Nov 5 (M) – Nov 9 (F)	Chapter 14
III. Politics		
1. Elections	Nov 12 (M) – Nov 16 (F)	Chapter 9
No Class; Thanksgiving Week	Nov 19 (M) – Nov 23 (F)	
2. Public Opinion	Nov 26 (M) – Nov 30 (F)	Chapter 6
3. The Media	Dec 3 (M) – Dec 7 (F)	Chapter 7
Film Presentation Week	Dec 10 (M) – Dec 14 (F)	