
Political Science 101 - American Politics (In Person)

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Spring 2024

Instructor	Dr. Saemyi Park
Class Location & Time	SCI A208 & T/TH 11:00 AM–12:15 PM
Instructor's Office	Science Building D335
Office Hours	Online: 2 PM to 4 PM (M) via Zoom & by appointment In-Person: 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM (T/TH) & by appointment
Email	spark@uwsp.edu
Important Note	Please keep in mind that this syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, is subject to change. Any changes will be clearly noted in a course announcement in Canvas and through email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

After the completion of this class, students will be able to:

- LO1: Explain the foundations and significance of the US Constitution
- LO2: Example the structure and function of each branch of government
- LO3: Analyze conflicts and challenges in the civil liberties and civil rights debate
- LO4: Evaluate the influence of mass media in public opinion and elections as well as its consequences on the policy-making process
- LO5: Identify the components of the US electoral process

Students will meet the outcomes listed above through a combination of the following activities in this course:

- In-Class Activities (all LOs)
- Exams (for all LOs)
- Research Project (LO2 & LO5)

REQUIRED READINGS

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

- Title: ***American Politics Today*** (7th Core Edition, 2021)
- Authors: William T. Bianco and David T. Canon
- Publisher: W.W. Norton

Please find **Textbook Rental Information** for in-person pickup or shipping options at <https://www.uwsp.edu/centers/store/Pages/default.aspx>. Please make sure to have it with you BEFORE the first main module begins. Additionally, other learning materials such as newspaper articles, reports, data, documentaries, and more will be used for each topic. Learning materials will be shared at the course site in Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Points	Due Date
Exam I	20%	Feb. 15 (TH)
Exam II	20%	March 28 (TH)
Exam III	20%	May 13 (M)
Research Project	20%	April 18 (TH)
In-Class/Online Activities	15%	Throughout the semester (see pp. 3-4)
Attendance	5%	Every class
Total:	100%	

Note: Students MUST complete all required work in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. **You cannot have the option to “take a zero” on exam and research project**, and you need to submit at least 30% of in-class/online activities. Not submitting all required work will result in either an F for the course or a final grade of incomplete until the work is submitted (however, this option is rarely permitted to students). Late submission is not accepted unless you receive permission from the instructor in advance. Please read the attendance policy on pages 4-5 for more information about the excusable absence.

GRADING SCALE

Outstanding	A	94-100	A-	90-93		
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		
Unsatisfactory	F	Below 62				

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

A. Three Exams (20% each)

There are three exams, which will take place on the course site in Canvas. That is, it will be an online exam. Each exam will be open at 9 AM and close at 11:59 PM on the scheduled exam day. You will be given two hours to take the test. Once you start the test, you are not allowed to take a break to return. If you are given the accommodation for the exam, please talk to me with your DRC letter (Disability Resource Center) as soon as possible. Exams will NOT be 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. A study guide will be distributed one week before each exam.

Because it is an online exam that is open for a day, students would NOT 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. Please keep in mind that it is extremely rare for students to have a make-up exam opportunity. 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.

B. Research Project (20%)

In this assignment, you are invited to study your representatives. Do you think that you are adequately represented by your elected official? This research project will allow you to find the answer to this question. 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. You will apply the theoretical concepts explored in the course to the evaluation of your representative.

Your research project will be presented as a Narrated PowerPoint presentation or any other form of video recording. You can use the voice/video recording function in PowerPoint or the screen recorder program "ScreenPal," which is free and easy to use. Your oral presentation should be less than 7 minutes long, and you must use PowerPoint slides to show your research. More detailed information will be posted on the course site at Canvas in advance, so you will have sufficient time to conduct the research. A detailed guideline will be distributed.

C. In-Class and/or Online Activities (15%)

Your participation is critical to enhancing the quality of education you will have in the classroom. Everyone is expected to attend the class regularly and contribute to the class discussion. Throughout the semester, you will be invited to complete a variety of learning activities for the following subjects and dates.

Subjects	Tentative Date
The Constitution	Feb. 6
Federalism	Feb. 13
Civil Liberties	Feb. 27
Special Activity	Feb. 29
Civil Rights	March 5
The Courts	April 11
Film Analysis	April 18
Campaigns & Elections	April 30

Examples of learning activities are debate, data analysis, film review, news briefing, and/or a small group discussion, and these activities will be graded. Reviewing in-class learning resources will be enough to complete these tasks. You don't need to do extra research for these activities.

Please understand that the subjects and/or dates for in-class/online activities are subject to change. You will receive a verbal and email announcement before each activity is distributed. Any schedule change will be clearly communicated to you via email and in person. If you miss one of these activities for excusable reasons, you will be allowed to complete it early or have an extension. Please read the next section to know what excusable absences will be.

D. Attendance & Participation (5%)

You are expected 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. For most class times, you will be invited to complete a brief activity that helps you better understand the topic of American Politics. These activities will promote in-depth class discussion and will be graded.

We will have about 27 class sessions throughout the semester (excluding exam days). 7 OR MORE unexcused absences will result in an automatic F in the course. Please make sure to be aware of this policy. Please keep in mind that only a few cases are considered as excusable absences:

1. UWSP-sponsored activities (sports games, organization events, etc.)
2. The university-recognized religious holidays
3. The serious and extraordinary circumstances of your medical issues

In the above-mentioned cases, you are required to submit the proof of evidence to the instructor in advance. For the 1st and 2nd cases, you are supposed to know the schedule already or by the beginning of the semester. Please check your schedule and the course calendar to see if any

conflicts occur. Make sure to submit the official documents (letters, emails from the coach, etc.) by February 15 (TH).

For the 3rd case, you should inform your instructor immediately and provide the documentation within 48 hours of the event occurring. 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 passes 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 assignments. 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 instructions regarding the format, style, and length of these assignments.

Unexcused Late Work: I understand that you may encounter unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from completing the module activities on time. To ease your burden with the dues, I will accept your late submission **within 4 days from its original deadline**. Unexcused late submission of coursework will incur a **10% deduction** per day. Nonmajor sicknesses that do not require your surgery and/or hospital admission will be an example of unexcused late submission. In this case, I will NOT require proof of document so that you can simply complete the module activity when it is possible within 5 days from its original due.

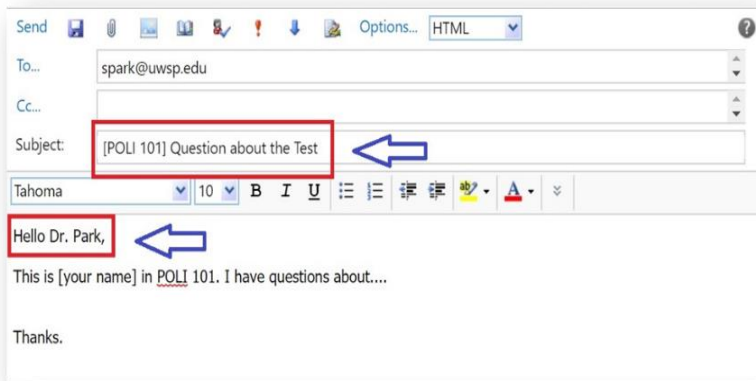
Lectures: Before we begin a topic in class, I will post an outline of the lecture material on the course website. The outlines give you the framework of the lecture but do not give you the entire script. If you wish, you can print these outlines and bring them with you to class to use as a base for note taking. You will learn and remember better when you write things down yourself. Regarding notetaking, 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: I will have regular office hours in two different ways (in-person & online). Please utilize this opportunity for your study. I highly recommend you visit my office hours to discuss your assignments such as policy briefing and policy memo. Email consultation on these assignments is not recommended. If my regular office hours do not work for you, you can certainly schedule a meeting for a different time and date. Just email me to set up the appointment. The Zoom link will be posted on the course site.

- **In-Person:** 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM (T/TH) & by appointment
- **Online:** 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (W) & by appointment

Technology Policy: Technology devices EXCEPT cell phones are allowed to be used in class for note taking. Out of respect for your fellow students, your professor, and the educational process, all other technology devices must be powered down and put away, not on the desk or in your hoodie pocket, or on your lap, during class. If you feel you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to vibrate, please clear this with the professor before class begins.

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 the paper and research project, please visit my office hours for an in-depth consultation. While students should take advantage of this email communication opportunity with me, you should also do so in a professional manner. I may NOT reply to emails that do not follow the email communication format.



Include a course number in a parenthesis & indicate a brief reason for contact in the subject line.

Have a proper salutation.

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 do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours during weekdays (not weekends), 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 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 lectures. Since there will be differences and disagreements, students are expected to show respect to the comments and positions of fellow students and me.

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. Please 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 on 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 & www.uwsp.edu/tlc) for more information.

COURSE CALENDAR

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

Topic	Dates	Readings
Introduction	Jan. 23	None
Understanding American Politics	Jan. 25	Ch. 1
The Constitution	Jan. 30, Feb. 1 & Feb. 6	Ch. 2
Federalism	Feb. 8 & Feb. 13	Ch. 3
Exam I	Feb. 15	
Civil Liberties	Feb. 20, Feb. 22 & Feb. 27	Ch. 4
Special Activity	Feb. 29	
Civil Rights	March 5 & March 7	Ch. 5
Congress	March 12, March 14 & March 26	Ch. 11
Exam II	March 28	
The Presidency	April 2 & April 4	Ch. 12
The Courts	April 9 & April 11	Ch. 14
Film Presentation Week	April 16 & April 18	
Public Opinion	April 23 & April 25	Ch. 6
Campaigns and Elections	April 30 & May 2	Ch. 9
The Media	May 7 & May 9	Ch. 7
Exam II	May 13 (Monday)	