

POLI 101-03: American Politics

Course credits:

3

Prerequisites:

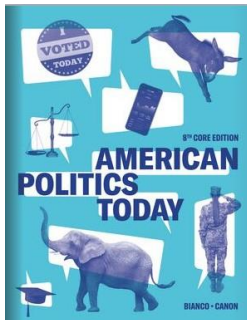
None

Course Description

This course examines how the American political system works, with emphasis on the U.S. Constitution, civil and political rights, the media and public opinion, elections, and the structure, powers, and processes of Congress, the presidency, and the courts. This is a three-credit course that satisfies the SS general education requirement.

Required Course Materials

- *American Politics Today* by William T. Bianco and David T. Canon. 8th Core Edition. W. W. Norton. ISBN: 978-1-324-04018-7.



Course Learning Objectives

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

Course Overview

TOPIC	ACTIVITIES
Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Quiz • Introduce Yourself Forum • Peer Reviews
Understanding American Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Political Typology Test • Peer Reviews
The Founding and the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Amending the Constitution Forum • Peer Reviews
Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • News Story on Federalism • Peer Reviews
Exam I	
Civil Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Civil Liberties Disputes • Peer Reviews
Civil Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Literacy Test • Peer Reviews
Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Research on Your Representative • Peer Reviews
Special Module: Introducing Political Science Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Information • Reflections on Poli Sci Major/Minor
The Presidency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • News Stories on POTUS Roles • Peer Reviews
Exam II	
The Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • The Selection Methods of Judges • Peer Reviews
Film Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the film • Start Your Film Analysis Paper
Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Research on Public Opinion Survey • Peer Reviews
Campaigns and Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Campaign Ads Analysis • Peer Reviews

The Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Learning Materials • Research on Media Influence • Peer Reviews
Exam III	

Evaluation Methods

Your final grade will be based on your performance on the following:

1. 12 Modules Activities (10 pts each; 120 pts in total)
2. 12 Sets of Peer Reviews (10 pts each set; 120 pts in total)
3. Three Exams (60 pts each; 180 pts total)
4. Film Analysis Paper (30 pts)
5. 1 Special Module (10 pts; optional)

Module Activities (120 points)

Each module asks you to complete a brief activity by Saturday. It could be answering the discussion questions or submitting the assignment featuring the class topic. It does NOT require any outside research. Reviewing lecture videos and reading the textbook chapter are sufficient to complete this task. Each module will have a different task. More information will be provided in each module. It is worth 10 points. You must incorporate class materials to complete these exercises.

Peer Reviews (120 Points)

For each module activity, you are also invited to review two other students' assignments. It is designed to promote in-depth class discussion and "in-person feeling" of interaction between peers. Once you submit the original activity by the deadline, you will be automatically assigned to TWO peers to review their work. Canvas may need a few hours to complete the automatic assignment, so it would be safe for you to check the course site the next morning to see your assigned peers. Peer reviews need to be completed by the following Tuesday.

Each set of peer reviews is worth 10 points. Read the "Information about Peer Review Requirements" page for more details on the peer reviews.

Three Exams (180 Points)

You will take THREE exams throughout the semester. Exams are NOT cumulative. Each exam will be open at 9 AM on Thursday and close at 11:59 PM on Friday during the scheduled week. It will be open for two days, but you will be given one attempt for two hours. Once you start the test, you are not allowed to take a break to return. If you need accommodation for the exam, please contact the relevant office on your campus and arrange for your official letter to be delivered to me by the third week of the semester.

The format of exams is a combination of multiple-choice and short identification questions. There will be 30 questions (2 points per question), and each exam is worth 60 points. I will share a study guide for each exam. After the grading is over, the exam will be reopened for you to review the questions. Because it is an online exam that is open for a day, no re-takes or make-up exams are offered.

Film Analysis Paper (30 Points)

You will watch the film in light of the lecture materials and assigned readings for this course. After watching the film, you are asked to write a brief analytic essay. Please keep in mind that this assignment is NOT a film review. You should NOT discuss if you like or dislike the film. Instead, you will find the theme that is relevant to our class topics and develop the thesis statement to lay out your thoughts on many pressing questions about American Politics. 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.

Special Module (10 Points)

Although we will not cover learning materials during the Spring Break, a special module will be given to you as an extra credit opportunity. You are invited to explore the special module to learn more about the political science major. You will learn what kind of career pathways are available with a degree in political science. You will be asked to complete a brief activity, and this point will be added to your total number grade as a bonus point.

Grading Scale

The following grading scale for each assignment is as follows:

Points Range	Letter Grade
423-450	A
405-422	A-
392-404	B+
373-391	B
360-372	B-
346-359	C+
328-345	C
315-327	C-
301-314	D+
283-300	D
232 and under	F

Spring 2024 - 15 Week Course Calendar

Week	Topic(s)	Tasks	Due Dates
1 Jan. 22 - Jan. 28	Introduction to POLI 101	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Quiz • Module 1 Discussion 	1/27/2024
2 Jan. 29 – Feb. 4	Understanding American Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 2 Discussion 	2/3/2024
3 Feb. 5 – Feb. 11	The Founding and the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 3 Discussion 	2/10/2024
4 Feb. 12 – Feb. 18	Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 4 Discussion 	2/17/2024
5 Feb. 19 – Feb. 25	Exam I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Exam I 	2/23/2024
6 Feb. 26 - March 3	Civil Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 6 Discussion 	3/2/2024
7 March 4 – March 10	Civil Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 7 Discussion 	3/9/2024
8 March 11 – March 17	Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 8 Discussion 	3/16/2024
Special Module March 18 – March 24	Introducing Political Science Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Activity (optional) 	3/25/2024
9 March 25 – March 31	The Presidency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 9 Discussion 	3/30/2024
10 April 1 – April 7	Exam II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Exam II 	4/5/2024
11 April 8 – April 14	The Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 11 Discussion 	4/13/2024
12 April 15 – April 21	Film Presentation Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start Film Analysis Paper 	5/17/2024
13 April 22 – April 28	Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 12 Discussion 	4/27/2024
14 April 29 – May 3	Campaigns and Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 14 Discussion 	5/4/2024
15 May 6 – May 12	The Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 15 Discussion 	5/11/2024
16 May 13-May 17 Note: 5 Days	Exam III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Film Analysis Paper • Final Exam 	5/17/2024