

PS 114: Introduction to American Government and Politics

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Course Page: <https://mycourses.siu.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>

Class	Instructor	Day	Time	Room
Lecture	Habel	M/W	11:00 – 11:50	Pulliam 42
Discussion Section 005	Seib	M	9:00 – 9:50	Pulliam 318
Discussion Section 006	Seib	M	10:00 – 10:50	Faner 1224
Discussion Section 007	Seib	F	11:00 – 11:50	Applied Science & Arts 118
Discussion Section 008	Seib	F	12:00 – 12:50	Faner 1005

1 Course Description

This course provides a college level introduction to American government and politics. I expect that by the end of the semester, you will be capable of analyzing and critiquing the structures and institutions of the American government and the political actors who shape and mold our system. Students will learn about democratic principles, the structures of the U.S. political system, civil liberties and rights, the inputs to democratic governance such as public opinion, the media and elections, and public policy.

More specifically, by the end of our time together, students will understand:

- what the fundamental characteristics of American government are and how the U.S. Constitution affects the organization of government, the relationship between national and state governments, and the relationship between government and citizens;
- how and why the executive, legislative and judicial branches are organized and the role they play in the policymaking process;
- political behavior as it is expressed individually and collectively;
- how to effectively use the material from this course as thoughtful citizens participating in civil society.

2 Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

2.1 Available Points and Events Schedule

Item	Date	Points
Exam 1	February 18	120
Exam 2	April 1	120
Final Exam	Thursday, May 7, 10:00-11:50 AM	120
Reading Quizzes	See Table in Section 2.4.1	165
First Assignment	February 11	70
Second Assignment	April 22	30
Discussion Section Preparation & Participation	See Table in Section 5.1	80
Attendance and Participation	See Table in Section 5.2	20

2.2 Grading Scale

Grades are distributed on the basis of the following scale:

Total Points	Grade
725 to 652	A
651 to 580	B
579 to 507	C
506 to 435	D
Below 434	F

2.3 Exams 1, 2, and Final

There will be two midterm exams held in class. You will have the entire period – 50 minutes for both Exams 1 and 2, and 1 hour 50 minutes for the final exam – to complete each 120 point exam. All exams will be of the same format, featuring a combination of multiple choice, key term identification, and short essay. The exams will not be cumulative. That is, Exam 1 covers material from January 12 to February 11; Exam 2 covers material from February 16 to March 25; and the Final Exam covers material from March 30 to April 29.

Exams will focus more attention on material presented in the lectures than in the Bianco and Canon text, given that reading quizzes will be assigned based on the Bianco and Canon reading. Some questions derived from the readings for discussion section will appear on each exam.

2.4 Monday or Friday Discussion Sections

Monday and Friday Discussion Sections will be comprised of three components. You will begin the hour with a quiz, followed by lecture review, followed by reading discussion.

2.4.1 Quizzes

A total of 11 reading quizzes will be assigned during discussion sections, each worth 15 points. You will take these multiple choice quizzes during the first 10 minutes of your section. (If you arrive late, you will take the quiz in the time remaining.) Of the 11 quizzes, your 2 lowest scores will be dropped. Thus if you are absent for any reason, including sickness, you should consider the missed quiz as one of your dropped scores. (The only exception to this rule is for athletes and military personal who may be absent more regularly. These students should contact the professor early in the semester to make appropriate arrangements.) Quizzes are based entirely out of material presented in the BC text. Below is a list of quiz dates and the readings covered in these quizzes.

Item	Date	Reading Covered
Quiz 1	January 23/26	BC 1
Quiz 2	January 30/February 2	BC 2
Quiz 3	February 6/9	BC 3
Quiz 4	February 13/16	BC 4 & 14
Quiz 5	February 27/March 2	BC 5 & 6
Quiz 7	March 20/23	BC 7 & 8
Quiz 8	March 27/30	BC 9
Quiz 9	April 10/13	BC 10
Quiz 10	April 17/20	BC 11 & 12
Quiz 11	April 24/27	BC 13

2.4.2 Review

Each week following your quiz, your graduate teaching assistant, Drew Seib, will provide a review of key concepts and ideas presented in lecture and in the text. On weeks preceding an exam, your T.A. will spend more time reviewing material.

2.4.3 Discussion and Grading Standards

Your teaching assistant has provided a list of readings in Section 4.2 of this syllabus that will form the basis of what you discuss during the remainder of the time following your weekly quiz and review. Note that your participation grade is based on how much you contribute to classroom discussion. In order to actively participate, you should come to class prepared. This means doing the assigned reading prior to your class *and* taking some time to think about the readings. For each reading, you should be able to provide a summary of the article and an explanation of the author's central argument. You should also consider the evidence provided by the author, the importance of the argument to the political process, and how the readings tie in with the lecture topics. Your discussion section grade constitutes 80 points, or roughly 11% of your total course grade.

2.5 Assignments

You will complete two assignments this semester. You will have your choice for the second assignment, whether to complete a written analysis or to participate in academic research.

2.5.1 First Assignment

Your first assignment will expose you to scholarly research in the social sciences. In lecture and in discussion section, we will spend time explaining to you how to go about collecting and analyzing data. Detailed assignment instructions will be posted on the course website. The assignment is due on February 11 at the start of lecture and is worth 70 points. No that no late work will be accepted, given that the due date of the assignment is made known to you well in advance. See Problems & Emergencies, Section 3.5.1 if you have questions.

2.5.2 Second Assignment

A second research assignment will expand on your work in Assignment 1. Again, more details will be provided in class and on the course website. This assignment is due on April 22.

However, in lieu of completing this second research assignment, students may participate in up to 6 hours of academic research as research participants. Students who choose this second option will be provided with opportunities to sign up for research participation and with detailed information on how to participate. Students are free to choose either this or the former option for Assignment 2, but not both. The choice is entirely the students; students will not be advantaged or disadvantaged for choosing one option over another. Upon completion of the responsibilities of a research participant, students will receive all 30 points.

2.6 Lecture Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance comprises the bulk of these 20 points. Each student is expected to attend every lecture. Although lectures in an introductory course of this size do not lend themselves well to discussions (hence the reason we schedule a separate discussion section), I will ask for some audience participation during each lecture.

2.7 Extra Credit

Your instructor will periodically make extra credit opportunities available to you, often for attendance at talks sponsored by the Paul Simon Institute. Dates and times and the amount of extra credit points will be announced in lecture and posted on Blackboard. Although not all events sponsored by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute qualify for extra credit, you can keep abreast of what the Institute offers by checking their website: <http://www.siu.edu/~ppi/events.htm>

3 Class Policies

3.1 Contacting the Instructor and Teaching Assistant

Your instructor and teaching assistant prefer to address most questions during office hours. Email is best for shorter questions or clarifications. Please direct all emails to *both* your instructor and your teaching assistant. All email communication must be appropriately written. This includes using proper grammar and identifying yourself by your first and last name. The subject heading of your email must include “PS 114.” Emails not properly addressed or formatted will be ignored.

3.2 Absences

You are expected to attend every lecture and every discussion session. If for some reason you must miss a lecture, you can receive an excused absence by contacting your professor in advance. Your instructor reserves the right to see documentation for your absence or to decide what constitutes a reasonable excuse. If you miss a lecture, you are responsible for finding out what you missed. Students absent from a Friday or Monday discussion section should refer to Problems & Emergencies, Section 3.5.2 and to Section 2.4 of this syllabus. Note that for those enrolled in the Friday sections, it is possible to makeup the section by attending one of the Monday classes, with prior approval from your instructor.

3.3 Appropriate Behavior

My courses reward students who attend class, put forth a high level of effort, and accept responsibility for their education. Students will receive no attendance or participation points in discussion sections or in lecture if found engaging in disruptive behavior, which includes holding conversations with one another, sleeping, listening to an iPod, reading a newspaper, doing homework, or any other similar activity. Note that notebook computers should be used for notetaking purposes only. If you must arrive to late or leave early, contact your professor and teaching assistant in advance to ensure you will receive credit for your attendance.

3.4 Makeup Exams or Quizzes

There will be no makeup exams or quizzes except in cases of emergency or where university policy applies. If you miss an exam or a quiz, you will receive a 0. If you are late to an exam or a quiz, you must take it in the time that is remaining when you arrive. If you arrive to an exam after the first student has completed his/her exam, you will receive a 0. See Problems & Emergencies Sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 for additional clarification.

3.5 Problems & Emergencies

There are four types of problems and emergencies that may arise:

3.5.1 Problems the Due Date of the Assignment

If a problem arises the day an assignment is due, you are still required to submit the assignment on time via email to your professor. A hard copy should be submitted on the next day you are able to attend. That is, no late work is accepted for conditions such as illness, poor weather, computer and printer problems, traffic violations, etc.

3.5.2 Problems the Day of a Discussion Section

All students are eligible to drop 2 of their lowest quiz scores. Thus if a problem or emergency arises that will prevent you from attending a discussion section and taking a quiz, you should consider this absence to be one of your dropped quiz scores. Concerning the points lost due to missing a discussion section, you should contact both your professor and your teaching assistant via email, and provided you have a credible excuse (as determined by your professor), your absence will not count against you. You will however, be asked to provide a summary of the readings. Note for those enrolled in a Friday section, it would be possible to makeup a missed Friday by attending one of the Monday classes. You will need prior approval from your instructor to do so.

3.5.3 Problems the Day of an Exam

If a problem or emergency arises that will prevent you from attending an exam, you should contact me as soon as possible. If you are ill, I expect to be contacted via email before the exam. If you have another extenuating circumstance, you must contact me as soon as possible – no later than 24 hours after the exam. Contacts can be either by email, in person, or by contacting the political science department at 618-536-2371 and leaving a detailed message with the administrative assistant. If you are unable to take an exam due to sickness, you must provide evidence that you visited a doctor. Note that the format for a makeup exam will be essay.

3.5.4 General Problems

If a problem arises that impedes your ability to perform well in the course, you need to communicate with me in some fashion at the onset or early stages of the crisis. I understand that family situations, personal problems, or other circumstances can arise. I will make arrangements with you regarding how to deal with the situation provided you alert me to the problem early. Note that the later you wait to alert me to the problem, the less I can do to help you.

3.6 Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Any student engaging in cheating/plagiarism will receive a F in the course and will be reported to the Dean for further disciplinary action outlined in the university code of student conduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating/plagiarism, you should examine the university policy and/or ask the instructor prior to turning in any assignment. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policy.

3.7 Grading Policies & Standards

Graded quizzes, exams, and your assignments will be returned as promptly as possible. If you have questions about a quiz or exam grade, you should come and talk with your instructor during office hours.

3.8 Disability Policy

It is the policy of this university and this professor to help disabled individuals succeed in the classroom. The student is responsible for notifying the professor and the university of any special problems or needs as soon as possible. The professor and university are responsible for doing whatever they can within university policy to accommodate that student. For more information, please contact Kathleen Plesko, kplesko@siu.edu, at Disability Support Services or go to the DSS homepage: <http://www.siu.edu/~dss>.

3.9 SIUC's Emergency Procedures

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT'S website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

4 Texts

The reading assignments form the foundation of our lectures and discussions and your quizzes. You are expected to keep up with the readings.

The materials below are required and can be found at the campus bookstore. Note that we are using the Core Edition of the BC text, as the Full Edition will not be available until February. I will, however, make pdf copies of the final chapters of the BC Full Edition text available to you via Blackboard. Please notify your instructor about problems obtaining the readings as soon as possible.

4.1 Core Text

- **BC:** Bianco, William T. and David T. Canon. *American Politics Today*. Core Edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0-393-93286-7
- PDFs of Bianco and Canon Chapters 15, 16, 17

4.2 Discussion Section Readings

- Locke, John. 1690. "Of the Ends of Political Society and Government" in *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*.
- Publius (Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay.) 1787. *Federalist Paper No. 10*.
- Publius (Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay.) 1788. *Federalist No. 51*.
- Winston, Pamela, Olivia Golden, Kenneth Finegold, Kim Rueben, Margery Austin Turner, and Stephen Zuckerman. 2006. "Federalism after Hurricane Katrina: How Can Social Programs Respond to a Major Disaster?" Urban Institute. June 27, 2006.
- Dempsey, James. 2002 "Civil Liberties in a Time of Crisis." *Human Rights Magazine*. Winter, 2002.
- ACLU. 2007. "ACLU Sues TSA Official, JetBlue for Discriminating Against Passenger Wearing Arabic T-Shirt." August 9, 2007.
- Schudson, Michael. 2000. "America's Ignorant Voters." *Wilson Quarterly*. 24(2):16-22.
- Fowler, James. 2008. "The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful Than Truthy." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 41(3): 553-539.
- Fleischer, Doug. 2006. "Review of *The Semisovereign People: A Realist View of Democracy in America*." April 20, 2006.
- Mayhew, David. 1991. "Divided Party Control: Does It Make a Difference?" *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 24(4):637-640.
- Arrington, Theodore and Saul Brenner. 1984. "Should the Electoral College Be Replaced by the Direct Election of the President? A Debate." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 17(2): 237-250.
- Woodward, Bob. 1989. "The Abortion Papers." *The Washington Post*. January 22, 1989.
- Banner, Stuart. 2002. "The Death Penalty's Strange Career." *Wilson Quarterly*.
- Paul Singer. 2005. "By the Horns." *National Journal*. March 26, 2005.
- Articles I, II, and III of the Constitution

5 Topic Schedules

5.1 Discussion Section Topic Schedule and Reading Assignments

Below you will find the schedule for our time spent together in discussion sections, either Fridays or Mondays. Students must complete the reading before arrival. For more information about discussion sections, including the dates of quizzes, see Section 2.4.

Date	Topic of Discussion	Reading
January 12/16	Introduction	
January 19	No Session	
January 23/26	Constitution	Locke, Publius, Publius
January 30/February 2	Federalism	Winston
February 6/9	Civil Liberties and Rights	Dempsey, ACLU
February 13/16	Public Opinion	Shudson
February 20/23	No Sessions	
February 27/March 2	Media	Fowler
March 6	No Session	
March 16	No Session	
March 20/23	Interest Groups	Fleischer
March 27/30	Congress	Article I, Mayhew
April 3/6	No Sessions	
April 10/13	Executive	Article II, Arrington
April 17/20	Courts	Article III, Woodward, Banner
April 24/27	Policy	Singer

5.2 Lecture Topic Schedule and Reading Assignments

Below you will find the schedule for our time spent together in lecture. Students are encouraged to complete the reading before arriving at lecture. For a summary of key dates, including assignment due dates, see Section 2.1.

Date	Topic	Reading Covered
January 12	Introduction	BC 1
January 14	The Constitution	BC 1 & 2
January 19	Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday	
January 21	The Constitution	BC 2
January 26	The Constitution	BC 2
January 28	Federalism	BC 3
February 2	Federalism	BC 3
February 4	Civil Liberties	BC 4
February 9	Civil Liberties	BC 4
February 11	Civil Rights	BC 14
February 16	Public Opinion	BC 5
February 18	EXAM 1	
February 23	Public Opinion	BC 5
February 25	Media	BC 6
March 2	Media	BC 6
March 4	Parties	BC 7
March 9	Spring Break	
March 11	Spring Break	
March 16	Parties	BC 7
March 18	Elections	BC 8
March 23	Elections	BC 8
March 25	Interest Groups	BC 9
March 30	Congress	BC 10
April 1	EXAM 2	
April 6	Congress	BC 10
April 8	Congress	BC 10
April 13	Executive	BC 11
April 15	Executive	BC 12
April 20	Courts	BC 13
April 22	Policy	BC 15
April 27	Policy	BC 16
April 29	Policy & Course Overview	BC 17
Thursday, May 7	FINAL EXAM, 10:00-11:50 AM	