

American Government
POL 1200-80 Winter 2013
Dec. 26 – Jan. 14

Instructor: Yvonne Wollenberg
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Course description

This course is designed as an introduction to the workings of the American governmental system. We will survey many aspects of American government, from its ideological and structural foundations to its participants and institutions.

Required text

Edward Sidlow and Beth Henschen, *Govt*, 4th edition.

Course requirements

This course is intense, and will move quickly. Falling behind even by one day could be disastrous for your grade!

This course will unfold fully online on the Blackboard site, through Tegrity lectures, video and audio files, online text and power point slides, as well as discussion groups. Course material and assignments will be posted in daily folders on Blackboard. Each folder will contain clear and specific instructions, including grading rubrics, on what you need to do each day.

There will be an online quiz after each chapter, for 5 points each. There also will be a total of three discussion forums (4 points each) and three short writing assignments (6 points each). One discussion forum and one online assignment will be assigned each week, and they will be due on Monday morning of each week of class (Dec. 31, Jan. 7 and Jan. 14) by noon (12 p.m.).

The online quizzes will also be due on Monday mornings. However, I strongly encourage you to complete the quizzes on a daily basis.

Work posted after the deadline will lose a full point for each 24-hour period.

To summarize the due dates:

Monday Dec. 31: Chapters 1, 2, 3 quizzes
Discussion forum contributions #1
Online assignment #1

Monday, Jan. 7: Chapters 11, 12, 6, 7 quizzes
Discussion forum #2
Online assignment #2

Monday, Jan. 14: Chapters 8, 9, 14, 10, 4, 5 quizzes
Discussion forum #3
Online assignment #3

To summarize, course grades will consist of:

Online quizzes – 14 @ 5 points each	70 points
Discussion forums – 3 @ 4 points each	12
Online assignments – 3 @ 6 points each	18
Total	100 points

How to contact me

I will log on to the classroom site every day, and the discussion forum is generally the best place to ask most questions. There is a forum in the discussion forum labeled “Student Lounge” where all of you can carry on casual conversations, as well as a “Q and A” forum where questions about class requirements or other miscellaneous matters may be asked.

For individual questions, you can email me at ywollenberg@verizon.net. This is probably your best bet if you need a fast answer, since I check this on a regular basis throughout the day. I will try to reply within 24 hours. We can also set up virtual office hours on Blackboard at times that are convenient to you and me. Just let me know, and we’ll set up a time that is convenient for both of us.

Reading schedule

Dec. 26	America in the 21 st Century, chapter 1
Dec. 27	The Constitution, chapter 2
Dec. 28	Federalism, chapter 3

Discussion forum #1 and online assignment #1 due Dec. 31

- Dec. 31 Congress, chapter 11
- Jan. 1 Happy New Year!
- Jan. 2 Presidency, chapter 12
- Jan. 3 Interest Groups, chapter 6
- Jan. 4 Political Parties, chapter 7

Discussion forum #2 and online assignment #2 due Jan. 7

- Jan. 7 Public Opinion and voting, chapter 8
- Jan. 8 Campaigns and elections, chapter 9
- Jan. 9 Judiciary, chapter 14
- Jan. 10 Media, chapter 10
- Jan. 11 Civil Liberties, chapter 4
- Jan. 12 Civil Rights, chapter 5

Discussion forum #3 and online assignment #3 due Jan. 14

Course objectives

The primary objective of this course is to prepare students for active and effective citizenship in a democratic society and a diverse and pluralistic world. Specific objectives under this broad goal are to:

- Develop students' critical thinking skills;
- Develop the ability to locate and interpret basic social scientific data related to American government and politics;
- Develop the ability to integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner;
- Learn how to work effectively with others;
- Provide students with a broad working knowledge and critical understanding of the constitutional foundations, and basic institutions and processes of American government and politics;
- Provide students with an understanding of how the American political system has evolved historically and is currently being affected by economic, demographic, technological and geopolitical changes;

Provide students with a rudimentary knowledge of the ways the American political system differs from other democratic systems;

Provide students with a critical understanding of the mechanisms and procedures through which politicians communicate with citizens and through which citizens communicate their concerns to elected and appointed officials and organize to affect public policy.