



On-Campus Course Syllabus

POL 203 L1

Introduction to American Politics

Spring 2021

Class Information

Day and Time: Thursdays, 12:15-3:00pm

Room Number: E205

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Brandon Seitzler

Instructor Email: bseitzler@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: 214.818.1309

Instructor Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-11am

Course Description and Prerequisites

An examination of the history, branches, and functions of the United States government, as well as how the public interacts with the government. (This course satisfies for a Social/Behavioral Science course.)

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to think about historical and contemporary questions and problems in American government and politics using the tools and methods of political science. This course places a heavy emphasis on analyzing current political events and debates within a political science framework.

Required Textbooks

- Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, Ansolabehere. American Government: Power and Purpose. 15th Edition.

Recommended Reading

- The Economist
- The Washington Post
- www.khanacademy.org

Course Requirements and Assignments

- 30% - Weekly Reading Quizzes in Canvas
- 10% - Weekly 5-point News Briefings (submitted and presented in class) –If you are not present to present your weekly briefing you will receive a zero for that week.
- 30% - Midterm Exam
- 30% - Final Exam

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

- You may not have your cell phone anywhere in sight during class.
- The one exception to my cell phone rule is using your cell phone as a calculator or to look something up online as a part of class participation. Other than these two exceptions, phones belong in bags.
- You may not use your laptop during class for anything other than class-related activities.

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to attend every class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Instructors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual instructors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades.

Grading Scale

			Grade Definitions
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	Exceptional
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	Above Average
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	Average
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	Below Average
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	Unacceptable

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be

removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the “I” will become an “F.”

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college’s academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student’s course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student’s work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students’ institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students, at deanofstudents@criswell.edu.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Offsite login information is available in Canvas in the “Criswell Student Training Course” under “Library Information.”

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203, or schedule an appointment by emailing tutoringcenter@criswell.edu or by calling 214.818.1373.

Course Outline/Calendar

Date	Class topic	Readings and assignments due
Week 1 January 21	<u>Course Introduction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Tools for academic success 	None
Week 2 January 28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1 – Five Principles of Politics • Ch. 1 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 3 February 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 2 – Constructing a Government: The Founding and the Constitution • Ch. 2 Reading Quiz • Ch. 3 – Federalism and the Separation of Powers • Ch. 3 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 4 February 11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 4 – Civil Liberties • Ch. 4 Reading Quiz • Ch. 5 – Civil Rights • Ch. 5 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 5 February 18		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 6 – Congress: The First Branch • Ch. 6 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 6 February 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 7 – The Presidency as an Institution • Ch. 7 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 7 March 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 8 – The Executive Branch • Ch. 8 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 8 March 11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 9 – The Federal Courts • Ch. 9 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing

Week 9 March 18	<u>Spring Break – No Class</u>	
Week 10 March 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Exam is Due • Ch. 10 Public Opinion • Ch. 10 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 11 April 1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 11 – Elections • Ch. 11 Reading Quiz • CH. 12 Political Parties • Ch. 12 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 12 April 8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 13 – Groups and Interests • Ch. 13 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 13 April 15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 14 – The Media • Ch. 14 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 14 April 22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 15 – Economic Policy • Ch. 15 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 15 April 29		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 16 Social Policy • Ch. 16 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 16 May 6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 17 – Foreign Policy • Ch. 17 Reading Quiz • Weekly 5-point news briefing
Week 17 May 13	Final Exam	None

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.



In the event that Criswell College has to close the campus to on-campus classes during the SP-21 semester, this addendum specifies how your instructor intends to adjust the course in order to allow students to meet the course objectives.

The course requirements, assignments, calendar, and attendance requirements from the syllabus for this course are replicated below. Notes and changes to the information in syllabus are highlighted. Information that is no longer relevant is indicated with a ~~strike through the font~~ and *replacement or new information is placed in italics*.

Course Requirements and Assignments

No change to this requirement.

Remote Class Sessions: Identity and Participation Verification

Every class session will be synchronous and use Zoom. You are required to use your web camera for these sessions.