



POLA 2100: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

COURSE SYLLABUS – SPRING 2018

When: Monday/Wednesday/Friday (10:00AM – 10:50AM)
Where: 118 Norman Mayer Building

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Scott N. Nolan
Office Location: 119 Norman Mayer Building
Department of Political Science
Tulane University
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday/Friday (8:00AM – 9:00PM)
Email Address: snolan4@tulane.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an overview of the American political system. It examines the constitutional foundation of the system and its development over time. It analyzes the increasingly important role of campaigns and elections in contemporary American politics (with some emphasis on the upcoming 2018 and 2020 elections) and how civic society and non-governmental entities, such as political parties, interest groups, and the media, influence the policy-making process. It studies how the institutions of the federal government (Congress, presidency, and courts) operate, both in theory and in practice, and how they interact with one another. Through the use of various pedagogical tools, you will learn to think analytically about American politics and the study of American government. This is an introductory course designed for those students who have not taken any previous courses in American government, but who are interested in learning about how the American political system works.

GOALS

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and describe the key functions of the three branches of government, as well as formal and informal political institutions.
- Recognize and evaluate the basic debates and issues in governance.
- Explain how government and politics impact your daily life.
- Assess the causes and consequences of different forms of political participation, and outline the ways in which individuals and groups can affect political outcomes in the United States, through electoral and non-electoral politics.
- Recognize and unravel normative opinions and information; better communicate with non-normative empirical information.

OBJECTIVES To achieve the goals listed above by attending lectures, participating in classroom discussions, and the evaluation of student assignments including quizzes and/or exams, and completing short essays.

OUTCOMES Students satisfactorily completing this course will have demonstrated substantive knowledge of the subject matter indicated above and they will have demonstrated an appropriate level of mastery of the skills of analysis, reasoning and communication. Outcomes will be measured quantitatively and qualitatively via the “grading scale” described below.

GENERAL NOTES This syllabus is the first place you should look if you have questions about your responsibilities or the structure of this course. If you do not find the information that you are looking for in this syllabus, please email me with any and all questions (snolan4@tulane.edu).

Information contained in the syllabus, especially regarding scheduling, is subject to change at my discretion during the semester. I will announce, in advance, any changes that are made via e-mail and/or announcements on the course website.

The best way to ensure that you are aware of any changes is to check your Tulane e-mail and course website regularly. Students are required to check their Tulane e-mail on a regular basis, as I may distribute important course information by e-mail and/or through the course website.

- **Your first [non-graded] assignment will be agreeing that you have read this syllabus in its entirety and understand its terms. If you do not complete the Syllabus Assignment as soon as you begin the course, then I cannot grade your subsequent coursework.**

ACCESS TO INSTRUCTOR I try to be available for students Monday – Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and I generally respond to e-mails from students within one (1) business day. If you do not receive a reply within three (3) business days, please send me an e-mail reminder. I sometimes respond to e-mails from students during evenings and weekends, but I do not always do so. Keep this in mind, and don't wait until the last minute if you have a question or need help.

PARENTS AND PEERS Due to privacy laws, I do not take questions from, or take meetings with, any student's parent(s). Please do not have parents, significant others, classmates, friends, etc. contact me on your behalf; the sole exception is if you have been injured, hospitalized, or are otherwise physically unable to contact me – and I will forward them to university administration for help.

**STUDENTS
WITH
DISABILITIES**

If you have any kind of special circumstances, such as a disability, illness or handicap, or if you are involved with a university activity that requires you to miss class, let me know as soon as possible. This information is confidential. All students attending Tulane University with documented disabilities are eligible and encouraged to apply for services with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students needing accommodations must provide me with a Course Accommodation Form and if applicable, an Exam Request Form (“blue sheet”) in order to schedule an exam to be taken at ODS. Accommodations involving exams must be requested to me at least four days before a test or seven days before a final exam. Any student receiving an exam-related accommodation should plan to take the exam at ODS. Please alert me to your request as soon as possible because accommodations are not made retroactively. Please see me for information, or go to: <http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/disability/>

**ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY**

Academic honesty is expected of all students at Tulane. Your responsibilities as a Tulane student include being familiar with the honor code and the plagiarism policy of the university. See further: <http://tulane.edu/college/code.cfm>

PLAGIARISM

Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Board, and may result in a failing grade for the class, academic probation, or expulsion. Ignorance is not a valid excuse. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- presenting another’s work as if it were one’s own;
- failing to acknowledge or document a source even if the action is unintended (i.e. plagiarism) (this includes copying & pasting material from the internet);
- giving or receiving, or attempting to give or receive, unauthorized assistance or information in an assignment or examination;
- submitting the same assignment in two or more courses without prior permission of the respective instructors;
- having another person write a paper or sit for an examination (including using online paper-mills); and/or
- using tests or papers from students in prior semesters.

**CLASSROOM
ETIQUETTE**

Discussions in this course will focus on how politics works and how politics should work. I may ask students for their opinions on various controversial social, political, and legal topics. As in political systems, classrooms work best when people participate. You are encouraged to express your thoughts, but you are expected to do so in a thoughtful and respectful manner. The political opinions of your classmates are based on their unique experiences, personalities, and backgrounds. Be mindful of your words. Any student who is exceedingly disruptive or disrespectful towards the instructor, guests, and/or other students may be asked to leave the classroom or withdraw from the course altogether.

USE OF ELECTRONICS

I strongly suggest that you take notes by hand (using a pen, paper and/or notebook). Note-taking on electronic devices and/or laptops is not forbidden, but they tend to distract you and your classmates. People abusing electronics may lose those privileges at my discretion. No photos, audio or video recordings of any kind are allowed without my written consent. Please email me if you want to record my lectures.

As a courtesy to me and your classmates, please silence all electronics and do not text or take or make calls during class. If you absolutely must take a call, then quietly excuse yourself into the hall. Use good judgment.

The use of electronics of any kind during graded in-class assignments (quizzes, exams, etc.) is absolutely forbidden – is assumed to be cheating – and you will receive a grade of zero (0) for the assignment.

ASSIGNMENTS

Some assignments will be submitted via email or through the course website. It is your responsibility to ensure you have internet access, access to your Tulane/student email account, and access to the course website for the duration of the course. I recommend that you access the course webpage in an environment where internet service interruptions are at a minimum. “My internet was down” is never a valid reason for missing an assignment or deadline. The sole exception to this rule will be if natural events (like hurricanes) suspend access for all of us.

For all written work you must turn in an electronic copy of your work on Canvas; no printed/paper copies are required. You must use one of the following file formats to ensure that I can review your work: Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx), Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), rich text (.rtf), Word Perfect (version 6.0 or newer, .wpd), Microsoft Works (Version 6.0 or newer, .wps), or plain text (.txt). **Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat are the preferred formats.** Similarly, please include the course number and name of the assignment you are turning in when submitting it – which will help keep things organized and ensure you get your credit/grade.

If you have technical issues with the course website, email, attachments, etc., then please let me know as soon as possible. Please note that the university Computer / Technology Help Desk is the first place you should go with technical questions since they are the experts.

- **For all written work, use one inch (1”) margins; Calibri, Arial, or Times New Roman 12-point font; double-spaced lines; numbered pages; and fully-justified margins. (I deduct points for these issues.)**
- **Visit the Writing / Tutoring Center on campus for additional help.**

GRADING SCALE

Your final grade is assigned as follows:

100-94=A; 93-90=A-; 89-87=B+; 86-84=B; 83-80=B-; 79-77=C+;
76-74=C; 73-70=C-; 69-67=D+; 66-64=D-; 63-60=D-; and 59-0=F

GRADING SYSTEM

Your final grade in this course is computed as follows:

Attendance and Participation (10% of Final Grade)

You will sign a class roster that I pass around every class. You are given two (2) unexcused absences per semester. After that, your absences will count against you unless they are excused. Excused absences include but are not limited to personal emergencies and/or health-related illnesses with appropriate documentation. I do not excuse absences for extracurricular events without documentation from a faculty sponsor, coach, etc. Email me or come to office hours if you have a problem attending class. You are expected to read each assignment prior to coming to class and be prepared, when asked, to participate in substantive discussions of the course material. If participation is lackluster, then I may add unannounced pop quizzes to the course that will factor into the participation grade.

Mini-Essay Posts (30% of Final Grade; 15 Posts x 2% Each)

You will complete 15 mini-essays based on the material we cover in the textbook and in class. Several questions will be posted on Canvas and you will answer one each week. Responses are due by 11:59pm on Saturdays. The response should demonstrate that you have thought deeply about the material and be at least 250 words, but not longer than 500 words, in length. Possible Scores: 0 (Fail/Blank); 1 (Weak/Needs Improvement); 2 (Strong)

Exams (60% of Final Grade)

You will take four (4) exams over the course of the semester. Exams will focus on the material covered in the readings and in class – and any and all material covered in class or in the readings is fair game for exams. The exams will be taken on Canvas and contain a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and/or short answer/essay questions. There may be one or more bonus question(s) in each exam derived from material covered in class. Make-up exams will be given only for documented health or personal emergencies and they will be given at my discretion. The best thing to do is email me prior to the exam if and when you have a problem. Emails sent after the exam must include attached documentation that explains why you were not able to attend the exam/class (i.e. a doctor's note). Exams missed without supporting documentation will receive a grade of zero (0).

- **Exam 1** (Ch. 3 and 4) is worth **10%** of the final grade.
- **Exam 2** (Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) is worth **25%** of the final grade.
- **Exam 3** (Ch. 11, 12, and 14) is worth **15%** of the final grade.
- **Exam 4 [Final Exam]** (Ch. 15 and 16) is worth **10%** of the final grade.

FINAL EXAM As discussed above, Exam(s) 1, 2, and 3 will be taken online on Canvas. Exam 4 (the final exam) will be given during the final exam period. Exam 4 (the final exam) will focus on the material covered in the readings and in class – and any and all material covered in class or in the readings is fair game for the final exam. The exam will be taken online on Canvas and contain a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and/or short answer/essay questions. There may be one or more bonus question(s) in each exam derived from material covered in class.

No makeup final exams are allowed without obtaining permission from the dean and/or department chair after providing appropriate documentation.

TEXTBOOKS There is one required textbook, available for purchase online and at the campus bookstore:

1. Janda, Kenneth, et al. 2018. *The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics. 14th Edition*. Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781305955240

Please be sure to get the correct edition. Any additional required reading materials will be distributed in class, via e-mail and/or the course website.

- **Your second [non-graded] assignment will be agreeing that you have purchased and obtained this book. If you do not confirm that you have purchased and obtained the textbook as soon as you begin the course, then I cannot grade your subsequent coursework.**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As “One Wave,” Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, creed, religion, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as all forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences discrimination, domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment, please visit onewave.tulane.edu or call:

- **Strictly Confidential**
Student Health Center | (504) 865-5255
Counseling & Psychological Services | (504) 314-2277
Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education | (504) 654-9543
- **Mostly Confidential**
Coordinator of Violence Prevention | (504) 314-2161
Tulane University Police (TUPD) | (504) 865-5911
Office of Institutional Equity | (504) 862-8083

WEEK / DATES	LECTURE TOPIC	READ BEFORE CLASS
Wk. 00 01-17-18	Course + Syllabus Overview	Lecture Only
Wk. 00 01-19-18	How to get into Law School	Lecture Only
Wk. 00 01-20-18	Mini-Essay Post #1 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm (<i>Personal Intro</i>)	
Wk. 01 01-22-18	Revolution to Confederation	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 3: #46-56
Wk. 01 01-24-18	The U.S. Constitution	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 3: #56-67
Wk. 01 01-26-18	The Bill of Rights & Amendments	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 3: #67-80
Wk. 01 01-27-18	Mini-Essay Post #2 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 02 01-29-18	Dual & Cooperative Federalism	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 4: #80-93
Wk. 02 01-31-18	Federalism & Electoral Politics	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 4: #93-99
Wk. 02 02-02-18	Federal, State, & Local Crosscutting	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 4: #99-112
Wk. 02 02-02-18	Exam 1 (Ch. 3 & 4) on Canvas 02-02-18 and 02-03-18	
Wk. 02 02-03-18	Mini-Essay Post #3 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 03 02-05-18	Creating & Modeling Public Opinion	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 5: #112-122
Wk. 03 02-07-18	Political Socialization	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 5: #122-130
Wk. 03 02-09-18	Opinions, Values, & Ideology	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 5: #130-140
Wk. 03 02-10-18	Mini-Essay Post #4 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 04 02-12-18	Mardi Gras (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 04 02-14-18	The Evolution of Media in the U.S.	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 6: #140-155
Wk. 04 02-16-18	Media's Role in Modern Politics	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 6: #155-168
Wk. 04 02-17-18	Mini-Essay Post #5 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 05 02-19-18	Political Participation & Voting	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 7: #168-175
Wk. 05 02-21-18	Unconventional Participation	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 7: #175-187
Wk. 05 02-23-18	Why People Participate in Politics	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 7: #187-198
Wk. 05 02-24-18	Mini-Essay Post #6 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 06 02-26-18	The History of Political Parties	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 8: #198-209
Wk. 06 02-28-18	Ideology & Two-Party Systems	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 8: #209-226
Wk. 06 03-02-18	Professor at Conference (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 06 03-03-18	Mini-Essay Post #7 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 07 03-05-18	Parties, Candidates, & Primaries	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 9: #226-236
Wk. 07 03-07-18	Political Campaigns	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 9: #236-251
Wk. 07 03-09-18	Elections, Vote Choice, & Turnout	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 9: #251-260
Wk. 07 03-09-18	Exam 2 (Ch. 5,6,7,8,9) on Canvas 03-09-18 and 03-10-18	
Wk. 07 03-10-18	Mini-Essay Post #8 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	

Wk. 08 03-12-18	Organization & Powers of Congress	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 11: #284-295
Wk. 08 03-14-18	Leadership, Rules, and Procedure	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 11: #295-305
Wk. 08 03-16-18	Congress' Agenda & Legislation	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 11: #305-314
Wk. 08 03-17-18	Mini-Essay Post #9 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 09 03-19-18	The Evolution of Presidential Power	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 12: #314-325
Wk. 09 03-21-18	The President as a National Leader	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 12: #325-333
Wk. 09 03-23-18	The President as a World Leader	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 12: #333-346
Wk. 09 03-24-18	Mini-Essay Post #10 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 10 03-26-18	Spring Break (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 10 03-28-18	Spring Break (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 10 03-30-18	Spring Break (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 11 04-02-18	Spring Break (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 11 04-04-18	Civil & Criminal Law Systems	Lecture Only
Wk. 11 04-06-18	Organization of the Court System	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 14: #368-384
Wk. 11 04-06-18	Exam 3 (Ch. 11, 12, 14) on Canvas 04-06-18 and 04-07-18	
Wk. 11 04-07-18	Mini-Essay Post #11 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 12 04-09-18	Federalism and Types of Courts	Lecture Only
Wk. 12 04-11-18	Judges & Judicial Decisionmaking	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 14: #384-396
Wk. 12 04-13-18	The U.S. Supreme Court	Lecture Only
Wk. 12 04-14-18	Mini-Essay Post #12 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 13 04-16-18	The Bill of Rights	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 15: #396-407
Wk. 13 04-18-18	The 1 st & 2 nd Amendment	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 15: #407-418
Wk. 13 04-20-18	Rights in the Criminal Justice System	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 15: #418-428
Wk. 13 04-21-18	Mini-Essay Post #13 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 14 04-23-18	Civil Rights & Race	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 16: #428-438
Wk. 14 04-25-18	Civil Rights & Gender	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 16: #438-448
Wk. 14 04-27-18	Civil Rights & Sexuality, Part 1	<i>DoC</i> : Chapter 16: #448-462
Wk. 14 04-28-18	Mini-Essay Post #14 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 15 04-30-18	Civil Rights & Sexuality, Part 2	Lecture Only
Wk. 15 05-01-18	Mini-Essay Post #15 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 15 05-01-18	Exam 4 [Final Exam](Ch. 15 & 16) on Canvas 05-01-18 to 05-10-18	