



POLA 2100: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

COURSE SYLLABUS – FALL 2018

When: Mon. / Wed. / Fri. (10:00AM – 10:50AM)

Where: 200A Norman Mayer Building

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Scott N. Nolan

Email Address: snolan4@tulane.edu

Office Location: 119 Norman Mayer Building

Office Hours: Mon. / Wed. / Fri. (11:00AM – 2:00PM)

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, exams, and completing a research paper.

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.

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 am normally available to 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, and/or from my cell phone, 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) or peers. Please do not have parents, significant others, roommates, classmates, friends, et al. 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.

**STUDENT
ACCESSIBILITY**

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, then 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 Goldman Center for Student Accessibility (GCSA). 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 GCSA. 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 GCSA. Please alert me to your request as soon as possible because accommodations are not made retroactively. See further: <https://accessibility.tulane.edu/>

**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**

Many discussions in this course will focus on how courts work and how they should work. I will at times 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, at my discretion.

**USE OF
ELECTRONICS**

I strongly suggest that you take notes by hand (using a pen, paper and/or notebook). Note-taking on portable electronics and/or laptops is allowed, but they tend to distract you and your classmates. People abusing electronics may lose those privileges at my discretion.

As a courtesy to me and your classmates, please silence all electronics and do not text, 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.

**COURSE
FORMAT**

The goals of this course are: (1) that you complete and understand the course objectives listed above as they relate to the specific content of this course; and (2) that you proceed through your academic career learning and using skills that apply to the professional settings you will encounter after you graduate.

You will be treated as the young professional adults you are – this means that you are responsible for completing the assignments, following all instructions and rules laid out in class and this syllabus, and respecting deadlines for completing assignments. Unless otherwise noted, you are not to work with anyone else on any assignment, quiz, or exam; your work should be yours and yours alone.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have internet access, access to your Tulane student email account, and access to Canvas for the duration of the course. I recommend that you access Canvas 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.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are submitted electronically and directly on canvas; no printed copies are required in this course. If you have technical issues with Canvas, email, attachments, etc., then please let me know as soon as possible. Please note that the university Computer/IT Help Desk is the first place you should go with technical questions since they are the experts.

**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

(Examples: 93.49 = A-; 93.50 = A; 89.49 = B+; 89.50 = A-)

GRADING SYSTEM

Your final grade in this course is computed as follows:

Attendance and Participation (10% of Final Grade)

You will sign a daily roster that I pass around every class. You are given three (3) 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.

Documentary Reviews (15% of Final Grade; 3 Reviews x 5% Each)

You will watch 3 documentaries outside of class (many options will be listed on Canvas from which you will choose 3) and respond to a list of about 5 questions for each film. Each response should be 5 full pages in length. Responses are worth 1-100 points; blank/missing responses are worth 0 points; 25 points are deducted for each day the response is late. Responses are due by 11:59pm on the date listed in the schedule below.

Mini-Essay Posts (30% of Final Grade; 10 Posts x 3% Each)

You will complete 10 mini-essays based on the material we cover in the textbook and in class. Several questions will be posted on Canvas; choose one to answer each week. Your response should be at least 500 words in length. Responses are worth 1-100 points; blank/missing responses are worth 0 points; 25 points are deducted for each day the response is late. Responses are due by 11:59pm on the date listed in the schedule below.

Exams (45% of Final Grade; 4 Exams x 11.25% Each)

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. Since they are taken online, when and where you are most comfortable, you have access to all your notes and the course slides; but the exams run quite long (~ 3 hours).

- **Make-Up Exams** will be given only for documented health or personal emergencies and they will be given at my discretion. If and when you have a problem, email me right away so I can give you an extension or schedule a makeup exam. Emails sent after the exam closes must include attached documentation that explains why you were not able to take the exam (i.e. a doctor's note); exams missed without supporting documentation will receive a grade of zero (0).

TEXTBOOKS

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

1. Abernathy, Scott F. 2017. *American Government: Stories of a Nation: The Essentials. 1st Edition.* CQ Press. (It has a teal cover.) ISBN: 1452287309

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 such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at titleix.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private” as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am mandated by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator, as Tulane and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You do not need to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

- **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**
Case Management & Victim Support Services | 504-314-2160
Tulane University Police (TUPD) | 504-865-5911
Title IX Coordinator | 504-314-2160

WEEK / DATES	LECTURE TOPIC	READ <u>BEFORE</u> CLASS
Wk. 01 08-27-18	Course + Syllabus Overview	Lecture Only
Wk. 01 08-29-18	Political Science and Vocabulary	Chapter 1, #01-10
Wk. 01 08-31-18	Colonialism and Revolution	Chapter 1, #10-20
Wk. 01 09-01-18	Mini-Essay Post #0 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm (Personal Intro)	
Wk. 02 09-03-18	Labor Day (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 02 09-05-18	Radicals and New Institutions	Chapter 1, #20-36
Wk. 02 09-07-18	The Articles of Confederation	Chapter 2, #40-52
Wk. 02 09-09-18	Documentary Review #1 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 03 09-10-18	The Constitutional Convention	Chapter 2, #52-58
Wk. 03 09-12-18	The Constitution	Chapter 2, #58-68
Wk. 03 09-14-18	Anti-Federalists vs. Federalists	Chapter 2, #68-79
Wk. 03 09-15-18	Mini-Essay Post #1 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 04 09-17-18	Dual Federalism	Chapter 3, #82-100
Wk. 04 09-19-18	Yom Kippur (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 04 09-21-18	Cooperative Federalism	Chapter 3, #100-117
Wk. 04 09-23-18	Exam 1 is open on Canvas from 09-21 to 09-23 at 11:59pm	
Wk. 05 09-24-18	Types of Political Participation	Chapter 6, #194-208
Wk. 05 09-26-18	Determinates of Voting	Chapter 6, #208-217
Wk. 05 09-28-18	Modern Political Activism	Chapter 6, #217-226
Wk. 05 09-29-18	Mini-Essay Post #2 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 06 10-01-18	Political Knowledge & Public Opinion	Chapter 7, #226-239
Wk. 06 10-03-18	Measuring Public Opinion	Chapter 7, #239-245
Wk. 06 10-05-18	Political Socialization & Ideology	Chapter 7, #245-256
Wk. 06 10-06-18	Mini-Essay Post #3 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 06 10-07-18	Documentary Review #2 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 07 10-08-18	The Purpose of Political Parties	Chapter 9, #293-318
Wk. 07 10-10-18	The Evolution of Political Parties	Chapter 9, #318-330
Wk. 07 10-12-18	Fall Break (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 07 10-13-18	Mini-Essay Post #4 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 08 10-15-18	Primary and General Elections	Chapter 10, #334-344
Wk. 08 10-17-18	Executive/Presidential Elections	Chapter 10, #344-356
Wk. 08 10-19-18	Legislative/Congressional Elections	Chapter 10, #356-366
Wk. 08 10-20-18	Mini-Essay Post #5 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 08 10-21-18	Exam 2 is open on Canvas from 10-19 to 10-21 at 11:59pm	

Wk. 09 10-22-18	The Constitution and Congress	Chapter 12, #406-425
Wk. 09 10-24-18	The Organization of Congress	Chapter 12, #425-430
Wk. 09 10-26-18	The Legislative Process	Chapter 12, #430-449
Wk. 09 10-27-18	Mini-Essay Post #6 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 10 10-29-18	The Constitution and Congress	Chapter 13, #453-464
Wk. 10 11-31-18	The Evolution of Executive Power	Chapter 13, #464-476
Wk. 10 11-02-18	The Modern Presidency at Work	Chapter 13, #476-490
Wk. 10 11-03-18	Mini-Essay Post #7 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 10 11-04-18	Documentary Review #3 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 11 11-05-18	Sources of Law in the United States	<i>Judicial Process</i> , Chapter 2 (Canvas)
Wk. 11 11-07-18	The Federal Court System	<i>Judicial Process</i> , Chapter 3 (Canvas)
Wk. 11 11-09-18	The State and Local Court Systems	<i>Judicial Process</i> , Chapter 4 (Canvas)
Wk. 12 11-12-18	The Constitution and Courts	Chapter 15, #534-549
Wk. 12 11-14-18	Civil Cases in the Courts	Chapter 15, #549-571
Wk. 12 11-16-18	Criminal Cases in the Courts	Slides & Handouts
Wk. 12 11-17-18	Mini-Essay Post #8 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 12 11-18-18	Exam 3 is open on Canvas from 11-16 to 11-18 at 11:59pm	
Wk. 13 11-19-18	The Bill of Rights & 14 th Amendment	Slides & Handouts
Wk. 13 11-21-18	Thanksgiving (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 13 11-23-18	Thanksgiving (No Class)	No Reading
Wk. 14 11-26-18	Amend. I: Speech, Religion, Protests	Chapter 4, #120-138
Wk. 14 11-28-18	Amend. II: Firearms	Chapter 4, #138-144
Wk. 14 11-30-18	Amend. IV, V, VI, and VIII	Chapter 4, #144-150
Wk. 14 12-01-18	Mini-Essay Post #9 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 15 12-03-18	Civil Rights: Race	Chapter 5, #158-180
Wk. 15 12-05-18	Civil Rights: Gender	Chapter 5, #180-191
Wk. 15 12-07-18	Civil Rights: Sexuality	Chapter 4, #150-158 & Handouts
Wk. 15 12-08-18	Mini-Essay Post #10 Due on Canvas by 11:59pm	
Wk. 16 12-16-18	Exam 4 is open on Canvas from 12-08 to 12-16 at 11:59pm	