# POLS 1101 – 07: Introduction to United States Government

Department of Political Science

Fall 2015 / 3 Credits

Idaho State University

## Instructor:

Daniel Hummel

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Graveley Hall: Room 306

ISU – Pocatello

Office Hours: Via Skype or In-Person

(Skype name: danieldini1)

Monday: 12 – 1:30PM

## Course Dates and Location:

August 24, 2014 – December 18, 2014

Web Course: Moodle / Online

## Required Textbook:

Barbour, C. & Wright, G.C. (2015). *Keeping the republic: Power and citizenship in American politics*.

7*th ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

## Course Description / Objective:

There are many elements that compose the U.S. government.  There are various institutions, democratic processes, civil liberties, laws, and the role of the media.  This is an introductory course on the different parts of the U.S. government.  It is an online course that will use forums and Blackboard Collaborate through Moodle to facilitate discussions on the role of democracy, the protection of minorities, the influence of the media and interest groups, the power of the courts, politics and political parties and the increasing partisan divide characterizing U.S. politics to date.  The primary goal of this course is to evaluate student’s knowledge of the U.S. government while instructing them in its subtleties to prepare them for more in depth courses they may take in the field of political science and public administration.  The main objective of this class is to facilitate fruitful discussions on the different aspects of the U.S. government to inform, challenge, inspire and motivate the students to study this topic in more detail.

## Course Format:

You will be expected to do the readings for each week, post comments/questions in the bi-weekly discussion forums according to the rules for posting, do the quizzes and exams on time, complete the bi-weekly homework assignments on time and engage with me for any questions/concerns that you have during the course. This course is an online class available on Moodle. There is one required textbook. The class will use discussion forums. Please see details below on the forums. Please refer to the grading percentages below and the grading scale. Please feel free to ask any questions at any time. I am really good at getting back to emails. My email is: [hummdani@isu.edu](mailto:hummdani@isu.edu).

### Communication with the Professor -

I will respond within 24 hours of receiving the email. If you do not get a response by this time, please email me again as emails get lost, etc. Please allow a longer timeframe for holidays and weekends. Please arrange a time with me to talk via skype if outside the designated office hours for this class (skype name: **danieldini1**) or call (office # is 208-282-2487) to discuss any concerns / questions you have regarding the course.

## Institutional Resources

I recommend you use the resources available at ISU.

* Please visit the writing center for help with your writing assignments (<http://www.isu.edu/success/writing/>).
* Please visit the online writing lab (<http://www.isu.edu/success/writing/owl.shtml>).
* Please visit/use the library for additional resources (<http://www.isu.edu/library/>).
* Please visit the student success center for tutoring (<http://www.isu.edu/success/cat/>).
* Please contact information technology services for problems with Moodle (<http://www.isu.edu/its/>).

## Prerequisite Knowledge and/or Competencies:

There are no prerequisites for this course. The course covers the basics of the U.S. government.

## Minimum Technical Skills:

This course will require you to have an active or developing knowledge of Moodle. We will actively use Moodle Discussion Forums and Collaborate in this class. Please see the resources on Moodle available at <http://www.isu.edu/itrc/m2/m2handouts_students.shtml>. See additional information below on each of these tools.

### Forums –

#### Posting Expectations

Please post questions and comments framed within the context of our readings/discussions for that week or incorporate material from the previous classes so long as it applies to the current week’s class. I also expect that you will comment on other postings by the professor or other students. A discussion is two way so please read other postings and respond as well as make your own postings. The rules to the forum are below.

Please post a reply to the professors initial post / question on that string. Please reply to other replies by other students. Replies should be informed agreement / disagreement or a good question for the poster. **Stating 'I agree' responses do not count.**

* **Please reply to my post by Tuesday.**
* **Please reply to another student's reply by Wednesday.**
* In addition, please post a question in a separate string. Every student must post their own set of questions (based on the readings / subject of this week's readings). **Please post this question / set of questions by Thursday.**
* **Please answer 1 of these questions from another student by Friday.**

These are the minimum requirements to get full credit, but don't feel constrained by them. POST AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE!!!!

#### Code of Conduct

Please refer to the student handbook, article III section 1b (1-4). The virtual classroom must be a place of mutual respect between classmates and between students and the professor. Opinions are welcome, but civility is paramount. Please be aware that comments shared online are just as hurtful as statements made to someone’s face. Tim O’Reilly, an active blogger, proposed a Blogger’s Code of Conduct which I will use in this class (http://radar.oreilly.com/2007/04/draft-bloggers-code-of-conduct.html). Please see the code below. Any violations of this code will have three strikes before I will take appropriate action at the university administration level. The first strike will be a warning. The second strike will be a loss of half of the points for the assignment and the third strike will be a 0 for the assignment and I will pursue options at the university to have you removed from the course.

Code of Conduct

1. We take responsibility for our own words and for the comments we allow on our blog.
   1. Unacceptable content is..
      1. Being abusive, harassing, stalking, or threatening
      2. Being libelous, knowingly false, ad-hominem, or misrepresenting another person
      3. Infringing upon a copyright or trademark
      4. Violating an obligation of confidentiality
      5. Violating the privacy of others
2. We won’t say anything online we wouldn’t say in person
3. We connect privately before responding publicly
   1. This is the teacher’s responsibility in the class. I will contact you directly via email to inform you that you have violated this code. I will not make a public statement regarding the issue until I have contacted you first.
4. When we believe someone is unfairly attacking another, we take action
   1. I expect the other students to police this forum besides the teacher alone. If there is a violation of this code occurring please email the professor immediately so that immediate action can be taken to limit the impact of the statements.
5. We do not allow anonymous comments
   1. As a member of the course you do not have control over this function anyways.
6. We ignore trolls (a troll is a online person looking to create trouble by posting outrageous comments)
   1. We will probably not ignore them, but a troll-type comment will be ignored by the teacher when grades are assigned hence the reason for the reduction in points from these comments.
   2. The other students are expected to not respond to the persons comment, but ignore it until the teacher can delete it and take appropriate action.

## Grading/Evaluation:

Grades will be updated weekly on Moodle to allow you to monitor your progress. Please refer to the policy on late work below. There are two quizzes worth 10 points each that will be available in Moodle. There is one Mid-Term Exam worth 15 points and one Final Exam worth 15 points. The Mid-Term Exam will include all the chapters until that point and the Final Exam will cover the remaining material i.e. not cumulative. The exams will be open book / open notes, but no collaboration between students (academic dishonesty – please see policy below). There will be six forums (every other week) worth 5 points each and there will be 5 homework assignments (every other week) worth 4 points each. These are mandatory and together comprise 50 points (5 HW \* 4 = 20 points / 6 Forum Sessions \* 5 = 30 points).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Quizzes | 20% |
| Forums | 30% |
| Homework | 20% |
| Mid-Term Exam | 15% |
| Final Exam | 15% |
| **Total Percent** | **100%** |

### Grading scale –

A = 95-100 points; A- = 90-94 points

B+ = 87-89 points; B = 84-86 points, B- = 80-83 points

C+ = 77-79 points; C = 74-76 points; C- 70-73 points

D+ = 67-69 points; D = 64-66 points, D- = 60-63 points

F=0-59

## Course or Institutional Policies:

### Policy on late work and make-up exam –

No make-up exam and no late homework. 0 points will be given. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time please contact me before the due date so that accommodations can be made.

### Students with Disabilities –

Any student who feels an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is necessary should talk with me privately to discuss your specific needs and the requirements of the course. You should also contact Disability Services at 282-3599 in the Rendezvous Building, Room 125 to coordinate reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor and Disability Services. Please see their web page at http://www.isu.edu/ada4isu for more information about this process. Email: disabilityservices@isu.edu

### Academic Honesty –

Please refer to the student handbook, article III section 1c for definitions and appropriate responses to academic dishonesty. Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class.

## Readings/Assignments:

### INTRODUCTION / EARLY YEARS OF AMERICA: (WEEK 1: AUGUST 24TH TO AUGUST 28TH)

**Forum Session 1:** August 24 (12AM) – August 28 (11:59PM) (Please follow rules to posting in syllabus)

**Questions on Syllabus Forum:** Post any questions on syllabus here.

**Watch:** Introduction to Class video

**Subject:** The Founding of America

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 3

**Powerpoints:** PPT 1

### US CONSTITUTION AND FEDERALISM: (WEEK 2: AUGUST 31ST TO SEPTEMBER 4TH)

**Subject:** The Creation of the Constitution; The Concept of Federalism

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 4

**Powerpoints:** PPT 2

**See:** Summary of U.S. Constitution & Full Online U.S. Constitution

**Homework 1:** Due via Moodle Friday, September 4th (End of Day)

### THE CONGRESS: (WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 8TH TO SEPTEMBER 11TH)

**Forum Session 2:** Available September 8 (12AM) until September 11 (11:59PM)

**Subject:** The Congress

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 7

**Powerpoints:** PPT 3

### QUIZ 1: (WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 14TH TO SEPTEMBER 18TH)

**Quiz 1:** Available September 14 (12AM) until September 18 (11:59PM) (Time Limit: 2 Hours)

### THE PRESIDENCY: (WEEK 5: SEPTEMBER 21ST TO SEPTEMBER 25TH)

**Subject:** The Presidency

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 8

**Powerpoints:** PPT 4

**Homework 2:** Due via Moodle Friday, September 25th (End of Day)

### THE BUREAUCRACY: (WEEK 6: SEPTEMBER 28TH TO OCTOBER 2ND)

**Forum Session 3:** Available September 28 (12AM) until October 2 (11:59PM)

**Subject:** The Bureaucracy

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 9

**Powerpoints:** PPT 5

### THE COURTS: (WEEK 7: OCTOBER 5TH TO OCTOBER 9TH)

**Subject:** The Courts

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 10

**Powerpoints:** PPT 6

**See:** Idaho Court System

**Homework 3:** Due via Moodle Friday, October 9th (End of Day)

### MID-TERM: (WEEK 8: OCTOBER 12TH TO OCTOBER 16TH)

**Mid-Term:** Available October 12 (12AM) to October 16 (11:59PM). Time limit = 4 Hours.

### PUBLIC OPINIONS (WEEK 9: OCTOBER 19TH TO OCTOBER 23RD)

**Forum Session 4:** Available October 19 (12AM) until October 23 (11:59PM)

**Subject:** Opinions in the Political Process

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 11

**Powerpoints:** PPT 7

### POLITICAL PARTIES: (WEEK 10: OCTOBER 26TH TO OCTOBER 30TH)

**Subject:** Political Parties and their Roles

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 12

**Powerpoints:** PPT 8

**Homework 4:** Due via Moodle Friday, October 30th (End of Day)

### INTEREST GROUPS: (WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 2ND TO NOVEMBER 6TH)

**Forum Session 5:** Available November 2 (12AM) until November 6 (11:59PM)

**Subject:** The Role and Controversy of Interest Groups

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 13

**Powerpoints:** PPT 9

### QUIZ 2: (WEEK 12: NOVEMBER 9TH TO NOVEMBER 13TH)

**Quiz 2:** Available November 9 (12AM) until November 13 (11:59PM)

### VOTING: (WEEK 13: NOVEMBER 16TH TO NOVEMBER 20TH)

**Subject:** Voting as a Civic Duty and the Problems with Representation

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 14

**Powerpoints:** PPT 10

**Homework 5:** Due via Moodle Friday, November 20th (End of Day)

### FALL RECESS: (WEEK 14: NOVEMBER 23RD TO NOVEMBER 27TH)

**No Class**

### CIVIL LIBERTIES: (WEEK 15: NOVEMBER 30TH TO DECEMBER 4TH)

**Forum Session 6:** Available November 30 (12AM) to December 4 (11:59PM)

**Subject:** The Challenge of Equality in the United States

**Please read:** B&W, Chapter 5; B&W, Chapter 6

**Powerpoints:** PPT 11 & PPT 12

### CLOSED WEEK: (WEEK 16: DECEMBER 7TH TO DECEMBER 11TH)

Post questions to Closed Week forum on Final Exam (Optional)

### FINAL EXAM: (WEEK 17: DECEMBER 14TH TO DECEMBER 18TH)

**Final Exam:** Available December 14 (12AM) to December 18 (11:59PM). Time limit = 4 Hours

**HAVE A GREAT WINTER BREAK!**