

	Department of History and Political Science POL 1065: U.S. Democracy 4 units
Spring 2024	

Semester Meeting Schedule: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-2:15 pm Colt Hall Forum	Instructor and Contact Info: Dr. Amy Nantkes Phone: 949.266.4822 Email: anantkes@pointloma.edu
Office Location and Office Hours: Colt Hall 118 Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:30 am (Additional hours available by appointment)	TA and Contact Info: Ellie Carlson Email: ecarlson0020@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Thursday May 2, 1:30-4:00pm	

PLNU MISSION: To Teach – To Shape – To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE MISSION

As followers of Christ, the Department of History and Political Science promotes wisdom and scholarship about historical contexts and political systems, so that graduates can become local and global leaders in the service of Christ and humanity.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an interactive introduction to the American government, its historical foundations, institutions, and political processes. We will examine how our political system was designed, how it has changed, and how public opinion, the media, and the "information age" have affected our government institutions and public policy. We will discuss the role and scope of government as it was conceived by the Founders and is viewed today. Finally, we will examine current policy issues, weigh the costs and benefits of actions, and engage in thoughtful discussion of contemporary policies and actions with a view toward how those issues and actions impact the current political scene.

COURSE REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required Resources:

- Ginsberg et al. *We the People Essentials*, 14th Edition. Norton Press, 2023 (ISBN: 978-1-324-03489-6)
- Articles, Podcasts, and Videos as listed in the syllabus and available on Canvas

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Explain how the government impacts your daily life;
- Recognize and evaluate the primary debates and issues in American government and American political history;
- Explain and critically assess the formal and informal political institutions and their respective roles in American politics;
- Identify and describe the critical functions of the three branches of government and
- Assess the causes and consequences of different forms of political participation and outline how individuals and groups can affect political outcomes in the United States.

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop an appreciation of politics (short, applied writing assignments).
- Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner (short writing assignments).

COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will meet twice weekly, and to maximize your learning process, it is in your best interest that you attend every day. It is also **essential** that the readings be completed before coming to class, as the lecture and discussion will expand on and draw from the readings. Class time activities will vary, but will often include a combination of lectures, discussion, group activities, writing, and videos.

COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 4-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 150 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

STATE AUTHORIZATION

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

COURSE POLICIES AND SUPPORTS

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All assignments are to be submitted by the due dates posted and will be considered late if submitted after midnight Pacific Standard Time on the day they are due. If an assignment is submitted late, the points possible for the assignment decrease by 10% each day for four days after the due date. **Any assignment or deliverable submitted more than four days late will not be accepted. Presentations, Exams, and Reading Responses cannot be "made up" and must be completed on the due date.**

All deliverables for the course, including assignments, projects, presentations, papers, etc., must be turned in by 11:59 pm on the last day of the course. No extensions or incompletes will be given to students to complete course requirements.

If you believe you have an extenuating circumstance, such as an illness or family emergency, please send me an email or talk to me as soon as possible so that we may speak about your options. With abundant notice, I'll be as accommodating as possible as long as it does not compromise fairness for all.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Completing this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the Class Schedules site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY

Respect for the views and values of others is an essential characteristic of a thriving learning community. Although it is likely that we may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in our course, we will behave and express our viewpoints in a manner that is courteous and professional. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a respectful and profound manner is encouraged. Our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of topics as presented in the course as scholars, using research and data to defend our assertions. We will develop Class Norms in Week 1 of the course and will keep each other mutually accountable to our commitment to productive and respectful discourse.

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice-free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups on any of the above. You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND DISCRIMINATION

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

CONTENT WARNING

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. Our course content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. If you are a trauma survivor and

encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center.

Should you choose to sit out on a discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material, but we can discuss other methods for accessing that material and assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in Political Science, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

PLNU POLICIES

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) is not permitted unless it is expressly stated in the assignment, and use of these tools will be treated as plagiarism.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to ensure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered

asynchronously and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. If absences exceed these limits but are due to university excused health issues, an exception will be granted.

SPIRITUAL CARE

Please be aware that PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information.

Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student is in need of technological resources please contact student-tech-request@pointloma.edu. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

ASSIGNMENTS

INQUIZITIVE ASSIGNMENT (WEEKLY ON TUESDAYS)

As a student of American Government, it is vital that you comprehend our readings and bring your critical thinking and discussion skills to each class session throughout the semester. Therefore, you will complete the InQuizitive module associated with our *We the People* textbook before Tuesday's class to support you in comprehension, critical thinking, and to bolster class discussion.

TOP THREE ASSIGNMENT (WEEKLY ON THURSDAYS)

After you have listened to/watched/read Thursday's content, answer the TOP THREE and submit to Canvas. This assignment is due before class starts on Thursdays.

1. What are your main takeaways from this content? (Focus on concepts, ideas, and themes, not on individual facts. You do not need to summarize the content!)
2. What would you like to explore further or gain clarity on?
3. What was new to you, and did it change how you think about or perceive democracy in the U.S.?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (5)

Students will submit 5 short writing assignments during the semester. These five papers will be 3 pages double spaced in APA or Chicago Author-Date format, using headings and subheadings with standard one-inch margins in 12-point font. Papers should include a reference page if you refer to texts from class or other outside sources, using correct formatting to create in-text citations within the body of the paper.

All writing assignments are due on Canvas; late papers will be penalized 10% for each calendar day past the due date and will not be accepted after four days.

Further details about these assignments will be given in class and are available on Canvas.

GOVERNMENT IN THE NEWS TEAM PRESENTATION (1)

Another goal of this class is to familiarize students with how we can see different elements of the American Government at work in our contemporary times. This activity allows you to check your learning, understanding, and ability to apply course concepts to current events outside our course readings.

During the semester, you will work with a team to produce **one written analysis and presentation of a category of American Government studies** to bring to light an American Government concept currently happening in the United States.

Government in the News Presentations are two-part:

1. **A 2-page paper** (APA or Chicago Author-Date format) that analyzes a current (within the last 30 days) news article. The purpose of asking you to analyze a story from the last month is that I want you to read quality news articles *throughout this course*, continuously exploring how the course relates to current events. Your write-up should link the news story to the week’s assigned topic and give a critical analysis (*not* just a summary) of the article, drawing on lessons from lectures, readings, and class discussions. Please attach the article to your analysis. The article must come from one of the following approved sources: the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *Newsweek Magazine*, or *Time Magazine*. *If you find an article from another credible source and wish to use it, clear it with Dr. Nantkes first. **Papers must be submitted before presenting in class.**
2. **A 20-minute in-class presentation consisting of: 10-minutes on the content of your analysis.** (No PowerPoint is necessary unless you have visuals to share with the class.) **You will then engage your classmates in a 10-minute discussion** (2-3 prepared questions should suffice). **You must present with your teammate(s) to receive points for this assignment.**

DEMISTIFYING DEMOCRACY VIDEO (FINAL EXAM)

Based on what you have learned this semester, what would you say is one of the most important concepts for the average person to better understand how government/politics works that is, in fact, widely misunderstood by the American public? How might U.S. democracy work better if more people properly understood this concept?

For this final assignment, you will write a short script and create a 3-minute video explaining the reality of this concept versus how it is commonly misused/misunderstood. You must cite credible sources to make your case and give interesting examples to keep your audience engaged.

Further details about this assignment will be given in class and are available on Canvas.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Percentage of Grade
InQuizitive Assignments	15%
TOP THREE Assignments	15%
Government in the News Team Presentation (1)	10%
Writing Assignments (5)	40%
Final Project: Demystifying Democracy Video & Presentation	20%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	100%

Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentage of Points Earned				
A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-88	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F < than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNED READING/MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 1 Course Introduction & Building our Classroom Community	Tuesday January 9	Review Syllabus & Canvas course site	Getting to Know You Survey (on Canvas, by midnight Tuesday)
	Thursday January 11 We are going on a class walk: wear comfortable shoes to class!	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How Americans Can Tackle Political Division Together (Coleman & Godwin) 	How to Use InQuizitive (requires book with code for online access) (due Sunday midnight)
WEEK 2 The Founding & the Constitution	Tuesday January 16	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 2 	Chapter 2 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday January 18	Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast Episode: Founding Documents: The Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers, Civics 101 (33 min) Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federalist Papers #10 (Annotated) 	Top Three (due before class) Writing Assignment #1: Political Autobiography (due Thursday before class, all students prepare to share 2-3 minutes in class)
WEEK 3 Federalism	Tuesday January 23	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 3 	Chapter 3 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday January 25	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mallory SoRelle & Alexis N. Walker, Washington Post “Both Dems & Reps care about ‘states rights’—when it suits them” Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After Bush v. Gore: 2000 Election Documentary, The New York Times (12 min) 	Top Three (due before class) Government in the News Presentation (Group 1)

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNED READING/MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 4 Civil Liberties	Tuesday January 30	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 4 	Chapter 4 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday February 1	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korematsu and Civil Liberties (26 minutes) <p>Listen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast Episode: 14th Amendment, Civics 101 (41 min) 	Top Three (due before class) Government in the News Presentation (Group 2)
WEEK 5 Civil Rights	Tuesday February 6	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 5 	Chapter 5 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday February 8	Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast Episode: The 1965 Voting Rights Act: Where Does It Stand?, Civics 101 (38 min) Podcast Episode: The Native American Voter, a Group Plagued by Voter Marginalization, Viewpoints Radio (14 min) 	Top Three (due before class) Government in the News Presentation (Group 3) Writing Assignment #2: Federalism Analysis (due Sunday)
WEEK 6 Public Opinion	Tuesday February 13	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 6 	Chapter 6 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday February 15	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pew Research Center, Random Sampling (3 min) <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gallup: Crisis in Confidence 2023 Gallup: Historically Low Faith in U.S. Institutions Continues 	Top Three (due before class) Government in the News Presentation (Group 4)
WEEK 7 The Media & Political Information	Tuesday February 20	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 7 	Chapter 7 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday February 22	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: UCR School of Public Policy, Filter Bubbles and Media Bias: Bridging Gaps Amongst Political Polarization 	Top Three (due before class) Government in the News Presentation (Group 5) Writing Assignment #3: Voting Rights Today (due Sunday)

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNED READING/MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 8 Political Parties & Interest Groups	Tuesday February 27	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 8 	Chapter 8 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday February 29	Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast: The Ezra Klein Show, The Age of Mega-Identity Politics (1 hr, 15 min) 	Top Three (due before class) Government in the News Presentation (Group 6) Midcourse Survey (due Sunday midnight)
SPRING BREAK MARCH 4-8 (No class or assignments)			
WEEK 9 Participation, Campaigns, & Elections Dr. Nantkes at United Nations	Tuesday March 12 Dr. Nantkes in NY: CLASS CONTENT ON CANVAS	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 9 	Chapter 9 InQuizitive (due by Tuesday midnight)
	Thursday March 14 Dr. Nantkes in NY: CLASS CONTENT ON CANVAS	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street Fight (2005) documentary by Marshall Curry (1 hr, 20 min) Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Policy Institute of California, California's Exclusive Electorate, A New Look at Who Votes and Why It Matters Ballotpedia, California 2024 Ballot Propositions 	Top Three (due by Thursday midnight)
WEEK 10 Congress	Tuesday March 19	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 10 	Chapter 10 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday March 21	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Day in the Life of Congressman John Lewis (6 min) Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast: NPR, Throughline: The Battle Over the Filibuster's Future is a Battle Over Its Past (7 min) 	Top Three (due before class) Writing Assignment #4: Interest Group Analysis (due Sunday)

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNED READING/MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
		Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find your home district's Representative and research their committee assignments along with 2 recent pieces of legislation they have supported. Bring info to class. 	
WEEK 11 The Presidency	Tuesday March 26	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We the People Chapter 11 	Chapter 11 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday March 28 EASTER RECESS: NO CLASS		
MARCH 28-APRIL 1 EASTER RECESS (NO CLASS)			
WEEK 12 The Bureaucracy	Tuesday April 2	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We the People Chapter 12 	Chapter 12 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday April 4	Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast: The Politics of School Lunch, Civics 101 (33 min) • Podcast: What Does the U.S. Space Force Actually Do?, The Daily by <i>The New York Times</i> (34 min) 	Top Three (due before class) Writing Assignment #5: Congress Member Profile (due Sunday)
WEEK 13 The Federal Courts	Tuesday April 9	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We the People Chapter 13 	Chapter 13 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday April 11	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vox News How a Case Gets to the Supreme Court (5 min) Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conversation Sandra Day O'Connor's experience as a legislator guided her consensus-building work on the Supreme Court Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Things Considered "The Roots of Judicial Activism" 2009 (4 minutes) 	Top Three (due before class)
WEEK 14 Domestic Policy	Tuesday April 16	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We the People Chapter 14 	Chapter 14 InQuizitive (due before class)

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNED READING/MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
	Thursday April 18	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose one domestic policy brief to read from a website posted on Canvas in this week's module. Be prepared to share about this brief with your peers. 	Top Three (due before class)
WEEK 15 Foreign Policy	Tuesday April 23	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We the People Chapter 15 	Chapter 15 InQuizitive (due before class)
	Thursday April 25	Course Wrap-Up NO READING!	Top Three Course Reflection Edition (due before class) Course Evaluation Extra Credit (due Sunday midnight)
Final Exam: Demystifying Democracy Video Presentation	Thursday May 2, 1:30-4:00pm	NO READING!	Videos are due before class on Canvas at 1:30 pm Present in class for Final Exam 1:30-4:00pm