

POL 165: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Spring 2019
MWF 10:55 am – 12:05 pm, Colt 120

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Office Hours: Monday 1:30-4 pm, Friday 1:30-2:30 pm, and by appointment

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.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class serves as an introduction to American political processes and governmental structures, focusing on national institutions, practices and values. Beginning with the Constitutional period, we will discuss the underlying motives and processes by which our governmental system was founded and how it has changed over time. We will examine the role of individuals in American politics through public opinion, electoral participation, political socialization and the rights individuals have under the law. We will also discuss the role of intermediary groups that connect individuals to our political institutions -- the media, political interest groups, and political parties. We will identify the rules, structure and processes of our electoral system, and analyze how they work in light of the 2016 presidential campaign. Finally, we will examine the role that our major governmental institutions -- Congress, the President, the bureaucracy and the Supreme Court -- play in the political system. This course aims to further your development as scholars by requiring you to read and think critically about American government; to increase the depth and breadth of your knowledge of both current and historically important events in American politics; and to write analytically about the structures, processes and products of political systems.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- Identify the political ideals that influenced the framers of our American governmental system, and discuss how they are structured into our political processes.
- Describe and explain the fundamental institutions and processes of American politics.
- Assess your own political socialization process, an interest group's political effectiveness, and your own member of Congress using theories and research in political science.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our political system in providing democratic representation.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will develop an appreciation of the field of politics (short applied writing assignments).

- Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner (short writing assignments).

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of 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.

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.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in 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. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

CITATION STYLE AND INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In political science, the most common form of citations is the **“author-date” format** from the **Chicago Manual of Style**. Please use this style in any work for this class. Examples can be found at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Because of the changing standards of English usage, language that refers appropriately to all persons (inclusive of gender) should be used whenever possible. Some simple guidelines include replacing "man" or "mankind" with "humanity," "humankind," "persons," or "people." "He," "him" and "his"--when not referring to an actual male person--can be replaced with "he or she," "him or her," or "hers or his," or the singular "they," "them," and "their" is also grammatically appropriate. Gender specific terms may be replaced by their current alternatives: for example, "Congressman" has been correctly replaced by "Congressperson" or "member of Congress," etc. As it is becoming more prevalent and more considerate to refer to persons by the gender pronouns they prefer, when possible, I appreciate your kindness in using gendered language that feels respectful and hospitable to each person.

IN-CLASS EXPECTATIONS

While coming to this class will hopefully be an enjoyable experience, it is not like attending a movie, viewing a sporting event, or watching television; your respectful behavior and engaged attention is expected at all times. Class time is precious. It is our opportunity to interact, discuss, and create knowledge together. It is not a passive experience, but one that you should be ready to participate actively in.

In this spirit, here are a few basic expectations to make the most of our class time together: Please be on time to class each day. Cell phones should be turned off during class time, and no electronic devices (including laptop computers and iPads) may be used to surf the web, check email, text, network on Instagram/Facebook/Twitter/etc., play games, or engage in other multi-tasking activities during class; this is distracting to your classmates and the instructor. Because of this, and because of research showing the greater value of taking notes by hand rather than using a computer (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>), **I am asking students NOT to use laptops during class at all.** Please see me privately if there are extenuating circumstances that you feel might necessitate using a computer during class and we can discuss possible limited adjustments to this policy.

Please do not leave the class (for a drink, to use the restroom, etc.) unless it is absolutely necessary. No one is allowed to leave the classroom for ANY reason whatsoever during exam periods. My expectation is that we will all strive to treat one another with respect, kindness and professionalism, which includes listening carefully and responding thoughtfully and with grace to the thoughts and opinions of our colleagues. All of these behaviors will lead to a more fruitful learning environment for all of us.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are a variety of assignments and activities required for successful completion of this course. The most basic, but most important, is regular attendance and participation in class sessions. Regular attendance is probably the single best predictor of success on exams, and much of what you learn in this course will be as a result of discussion and interaction with your peers; thus it is in your own best interest to come to class well-prepared each day. As an added incentive, class participation – including any in-class writing assignments, group work, or pop quizzes – along with reading assignments are worth a significant portion (20%) of your final grade. Please note that your

participation grade will reflect the quality of your participation – the goal is not mere quantity. Your contributions to discussion should be thoughtful and relevant. Sometimes a good question is far more helpful and appreciated than a statement trying to be profound or that shuts the conversation down. Everyone should make an effort to take up their fair share of the endeavor: some of you will need to resist the urge to speak too much and some of you will need to gather your courage to speak more than you normally do. We should all make space for one another’s voices, perspectives and experiences. We may disagree and challenge one another’s ideas, but we will strive to be respectful, kind, patient, and not engage in personal attacks, modeling the civility most useful to political debate and to learning.

Course requirements include:

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Five short papers	40% (8% @ paper x 5 papers)
Reading/CONNECT assignments & participation	20%

Exam dates are noted on the syllabus, and writing assignment due dates will be given with ample notice in class. Please make special arrangements with the instructor ahead of time if you have a problem completing any of the requirements at the scheduled time, as absolutely no make-up exams will be given. Any written assignment turned in late will be penalized one letter grade (10% of the assignment’s worth) for each calendar day that it is late.

Grading Scale:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	0 -59%

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Losco and Baker, *AmGov 2019* (6th edition), CONNECT electronic version, McGraw-Hill.
Ari Berman, *Give Us the Ballot*, Picador, 2016.
Articles as assigned, available online via links in syllabus.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS (subject to revision as semester unfolds):

- January 8** **INTRODUCTION**
- January 9** **ROOTS OF OUR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**
Am Gov ch. 1
- January 11** Seth Masket, Pacific Standard, [The Crisis in Political Science Education](#)
 Julia Azari, FiveThirtyEight, [Forget Norms. Our Democracy Depends on Values](#)
- January 14** **US CONSTITUTION**
Am Gov ch. 2
- January 16** Lillian Cunningham, Constitutional Podcast, [Framed](#)
- January 18** *Federalist* #10 and 51
- January 21** **Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – no class meeting**
- January 23** **FEDERALISM**
Am Gov ch. 3
- January 25** Badger, Emily. 2017. "[Blue Cities Want to Make Their Own Rules. Red States Won't Let Them.](#)" *New York Times* 7/6/2017
 Mallory SoRelle & Alexis N. Walker, *MonkeyCage*, "[Both Dems & Reps care about 'states rights'—when it suits them](#)"
 Please watch <http://www.pbs.org/tpt/constitution-usa-peter-sagal/watch/a-more-perfect-union/> on federalism (53 minutes)
- January 28** **CIVIL LIBERTIES**
Am Gov ch. 4
- January 30**
- February 1** *Federalism Paper Due*
- February 4** **CIVIL RIGHTS**
Am Gov ch. 5
- February 6** Green, Emma, "[Gay Rights May Come at the Cost of Religious Freedom,](#)" *The Atlantic* (2015)
 Podcast episode TBA
- February 8** Read Berman chapters 1-2 – be prepared to discuss in class
- February 11** **POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION & PUBLIC OPINION**
Am Gov ch. 6
- February 13** Khan Academy, [Measuring public opinion](#)
 CBS This Morning, [How polling works and what it says about America](#)

February 15 **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Am Gov ch. 7

February 18 Heather Ondercin, SSN, [Exploring the Trends That Have Shaped America's Growing Partisan Gap](#)

Political Socialization Paper Due

February 20 Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, The Conversation, [The other 2018 midterm wave: A historic 10-point jump in turnout among young people](#)

“Election Day” documentary (view together in class)

February 22 Read Berman chapters 3-4 – be prepared to discuss in class

February 25

February 27 **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 1 **INTEREST GROUPS**

Am Gov ch. 8

March 4-8 **Spring Break, no classes**

March 11

March 13 *This American Life*, “[Take the Money and Run for Office](#)” (about 60 minutes)

March 15 **POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

Am Gov ch. 9

Interest Group Website Analysis Paper Due

March 18 Berman chapters 5-6 – be prepared to discuss in class

March 20 Lilliana Mason, The Ezra Klein Show podcast, [The age of "mega-identity" politics](#)

March 22 **MEDIA**

Am Gov ch. 10

March 25 Berman chapters 7-8 – be prepared to discuss in class

March 27 **CONGRESS**

- Am Gov* ch. 11
- March 29** Meredith Conroy, FiveThirtyEight, [At Least 123 Women Will Be In The Next Congress. Just 19 Are Republicans](#)
“Run Granny Run” documentary (will view together in class)
- April 1** Richard Fenno, [Home Style, Chapter 1](#)
- April 3** Molly E. Reynolds, Brookings, [Congress in 2019: Five things to watch for in the budget battles to come](#)
Sarah Binder, Brookings podcast, [The Senate Filibuster](#)
- April 5** [Congress Paper Due](#)
- April 8** **THE PRESIDENCY**
Am Gov ch. 12
- April 10** Farida Jalalzai, SSN, [“Why the U.S. Needs a Woman in the Presidency”](#)
- April 12** Berman chapters 9-10 – be ready to discuss in class
- April 15** **THE COURTS**
Am Gov ch. 14
- April 17** Seth Masket, Pacific Standard, [The Supreme Court Nomination that Tore the Country Apart](#)
Listen to [“The Roots of Judicial Activism”](#) All Things Considered. 2009. (4 minutes)
- April 19-22** **Easter Break, no class meetings**
- April 24** [Berman response due](#)
- April 26**

****FINAL EXAM: Monday April 29, 10:30 am - 1 pm *****