

POL 165: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Spring 2017
MWF 10:55 am – 12:05 pm, Colt Hall Forum

Dr. Linda Beail

Office: 116 Colt Hall

Phone: 849-2408; email at lbeail@pointloma.edu

Office Hours: Monday 12:30-1:30 pm, Wednesday 1-3 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 the operations of American political institutions (such as federalism, public opinion, interest groups, elections, Congress, the presidency and courts) with regard to a particular policy area.
- 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.

CITATIONS 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 room (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 attendance

and participation – including any in-class writing assignments, group work, or pop quizzes -- are worth a significant portion (10%) of your final grade. You are allowed to miss only two class sessions without your absences negatively affecting your grade; please note that the university drop policy (missing more than 8 total class sessions during the semester leads to withdrawal as failing the course) will be strictly enforced.

Course requirements include:

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Five short papers	40% (8% @ paper x 5 papers)
Reading, attendance & 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%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	0 -59%

Required Texts:

Losco and Baker, *AmGov 2017* (5th edition), CONNECT electronic version, McGraw-Hill.

Ari Berman, *Give Us the Ballot*, Picador, 2016.

Articles as assigned, available online via our POL165 Canvas site.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to adjustment by instructor):

I. The Framework of American Democracy

January 10	Introduction
January 11	Roots of our democratic republic -- <i>Am Gov</i> ch. 1
January 13	United States Constitution
January 16	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – no class meeting
January 18	US Constitution -- <i>Am Gov</i> ch. 2
January 20	No class meeting – please watch/read about today's US Presidential Inauguration

January 23
January 25 Federalism -- *Am Gov* ch. 3
January 27 Before class begins: watch <http://www.pbs.org/tpt/constitution-usa-peter-sagal/watch/a-more-perfect-union/> on federalism (53 minutes)

January 30
February 1 Civil Liberties – *Am Gov* ch. 4
February 3 *Federalism Paper Due*

February 6 Civil Rights – *Am Gov* ch. 5
February 8
February 10 Read Berman chapters 1-2

II. Democratic Participation: Individuals and Groups

February 13 Political Socialization and Public Opinion – *Am Gov* ch. 6
February 15
February 17 Read Berman chapters 3-4

February 20 Political Participation – *Am Gov* ch. 7
Political Socialization Paper Due

February 22
February 24 “Election Day” documentary (view together in class)

February 27 Read Berman chapters 5-6
March 1
March 3 *MIDTERM EXAM ONE*

March 6-10 Spring Break, no classes

March 13 Interest Groups – *Am Gov* ch. 8
March 15
March 17 Read Berman chapters 7-8

March 20 Political Parties and Campaigns -- *Am Gov* ch. 9
Interest Group Website Analysis Paper Due

March 22
March 24 Read Berman chapters 9-10

March 27 Media -- *Am Gov* ch. 10
March 29
March 31 *Berman response due*

III. Institutions of American Governance – Three Branches Sharing Power

- April 3 Congress – *Am Gov* ch. 11
April 5 David Mayhew, *Congress: the Electoral Connection* (excerpt on Canvas)
 Richard Fenno, “US House Members in Their Constituencies” (on Canvas)
April 7 “Run Granny Run” documentary (in class)
- April 10
April 12 *Congress Paper Due*
- April 14-17 EASTER BREAK, no class meetings
- April 19 Presidency – *Am Gov* ch. 12
April 21
- April 24
April 26 Courts – *Am Gov* ch. 14
April 28

****FINAL EXAM: Wednesday May 3, 10:30 am - 1 pm *****