

POL 1065: American Government
Point Loma Nazarene University
Department of History and Political Science

Spring 2020

Course Time: Tues./Thurs. 3:00-4:45pm

Course website: Canvas.pointloma.edu

Location: Liberty Station , Room 202

Instructor: Professor Amy Nantkes

Office: Colt Hall 118

Office Hours: Tues./Thurs. 10:00-11:00 am
(and by appointment)

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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 course is designed to be an interactive introduction to American government, its historical foundations, institutions and political processes. We will examine how our political system was designed, how it has changed over time 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 as it 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 OBJECTIVES

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Explain how government impacts your daily life;
- Recognize and evaluate the basic 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 key functions of the three branches of government; and
- 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.

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).

COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will meet two times per week and, in order 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 prior to coming to class as the lecture and discussion will usually 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 REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required Resources:

- Christine Barbour, *AMGOV: Long Story Short* CQ Press, 1st edition, 2019 (ISBN: 9781544325927)
- America's Founding Documents (ISBN: 9781544362441)
- Articles, Podcasts, and Videos as listed in syllabus and available on Canvas

Recommended Resources for Additional Exploration:

- The *AMGOV* student companion website is a particularly good resource for review of course materials: <http://edge.sagepub.com/amgov>

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Points Possible
3-2-1 Reading Responses (14 @ 10 points each)	140
Government in the News Team Presentation	100
Writing Assignments (5 @ 80 points each)	400
Final Exam: Civic Engagement Paper	160
Final Exam: Civic Engagement In-Class Presentation	100
Course Participation and Attendance (Instructor evaluated)	100
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	1000

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	

ASSIGNMENTS

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (5)

Students will be required to submit 5 writing assignments during the semester. Each of these five short papers should be 3-4 pages double spaced in [APA 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 APA formatting to create in-text citations within the body of the paper.

All writing assignments are due on Canvas *at the beginning of class*; any late papers will be penalized 10% for each calendar day past the time they are due and will not be accepted after four days.

Further details about these assignments will be given in class and are available on Canvas in the POL 1065 Writing Assignments document posted in modules.

3-2-1 READING RESPONSES (14)

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 write brief 3-2-1 Reading Responses to support you in comprehension, critical thinking, and to bolster class discussion. **These responses must be submitted on Canvas before class begins on the day they are due and cannot be made up.** 3-2-1 Reading Responses will help you to be prepared for class and will drive our discussions. A template is available on Canvas.

POL 1065 3-2-1 Reading Response			
Name: Reading Topic: Date:			
3 Read what is assigned, then choose and describe the three most important aspects (concepts, issues, factual information, etc.) of the reading, justifying your choices.	1.	2.	3.
2 Identify two aspects of the reading you do not understand, and briefly discuss why these confusing aspects interfered with your general understanding of the reading. Put them in priority order.	1.	2.	
1 Pose a question to the text's author, the answer to which should go beyond the reading content and does not reflect the areas of confusion in requirement.	1.		

GOVERNMENT IN THE NEWS TEAM PRESENTATION (1)

Another goal of this class is to familiarize students with how we can see different elements of American Government at work in our contemporary times. This activity provides you the opportunity to check your learning, understanding, and ability to apply course concepts to current events outside of 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 as it is currently happening in the United States. You will choose from the list on the first day of class when we review the syllabus and form teams.

Government in the News Updates are two-part:

1. **A 2-3 page paper** (APA format) that is an analysis of 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 be reading quality news articles *throughout this course*, continuously analyzing 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 lecture, the readings, and class discussions. Please attach the article to your analysis. The article must come from one of the following approved sources: *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, you must clear this with Professor Nantkes first. **Papers must be submitted prior to presenting in class.**
2. **A 20 minute in class presentation consisting of: 10-minutes on the content of your analysis.** (No PowerPoint necessary unless if 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) on the issue. **You must present with your teammate(s) in order to receive points for this assignment.**

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PAPER AND PRESENTATION (FINAL EXAM)

This final exam is comprised of three parts: participation in an activity/event that is political in nature, a 4-5 page written paper, and a 5-minute in-class PowerPoint presentation on our final exam day. Please plan ahead and choose an activity earlier in the semester rather than later, to give you time to complete the project.

Further details about this assignment will be given in class and are available on Canvas in the POL 1065 Civic Engagement Paper and Presentation document posted in modules.

COURSE PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE (INSTRUCTOR EVALUATED)

This assessment will include: 1. Attendance 2. Frequency of Participation in Class (discussion, answering questions, offering ideas, and engaging in class activities) 3. Respectful and Thoughtful Approach to Discussion (displaying active listening, contributing with substantive approach using evidence, carefully considering the ideas of others). Please see rubric in Canvas for more detail on criteria for participation points.

POLICIES

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, points possible for the assignment decreases 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 3-2-1 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 11:59pm 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 illness or family emergency, please send Professor Nantkes an email or come 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

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.

CLASSROOM CIVILITY POLICY

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 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.

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

	DATE	PREPARATION FOR CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 1 Course Introduction	January 16	Bring textbooks to class Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meilee Bridges, Southwestern University, Championing Civil Discourse in an Era of Partisan Rancor 	Review Canvas and Syllabus
WEEK 2 Politics and Citizenship	January 21	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 <i>AmGov</i> • Articles of Confederation <i>America's Founding Documents</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	January 23	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of Independence <i>America's Founding Documents</i> • Nikole Hannah Jones, 1619 Project in <i>The New York Times</i>, The Idea of America (p. 14-26) 	Writing Assignment #1: Political Autobiography (All students prepare to present 2-3 minutes in class)
WEEK 3 The United States' Founding	January 28	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 <i>AmGov</i> • Constitution of the United States <i>America's Founding Documents</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	January 30	Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lillian Cunningham, Constitutional Podcast, Framed Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalist #10 & Federalist #51 <i>America's Founding Documents</i> 	Government in the News Presentation (Group 1)
WEEK 4 Federalism	February 4	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crash Course Government and Politics, Federalism (9 minutes) Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookings Institution, Why Federalism Matters 	3-2-1 Reading Response

	February 6	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emily Badger, <i>New York Times</i> "Blue Cities Want to Make Their Own Rules. Red States Won't Let Them." Mallory SoRelle & Alexis N. Walker, <i>MonkeyCage</i>, "Both Dems & Reps care about 'states rights'—when it suits them" 	Government in the News Presentation (Group 2)
WEEK 5 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	February 11	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 3, <i>AmGov</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	February 13	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federalist Paper #84 <i>America's Founding Documents</i> <p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korematsu and Civil Liberties (26 minutes) 	<p>Writing Assignment #2: Federalism Analysis</p> <p>Government in the News Presentation (Group 3)</p>
WEEK 6 The Legislative Branch	February 18	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4, <i>AmGov</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	February 20	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Legislative Process in the U.S. Congress <p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Day in the Life of U.S. Congressman John Carney (10 minutes) <p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find your home district's Representative and research their committee assignments. Bring info to class 	Government in the News Presentation (Group 4)
WEEK 7 The Executive Branch	February 25	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 5, <i>AmGov</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	February 27	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precis: The Myth of the Modern Presidency 	Government in the News Presentation (Group 5)

		Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics 101 Podcast: Separation of Powers (13 minutes) 	
WEEK 8 The Judicial Branch	March 3	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6, <i>AmGov</i> Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eugene Kim, Overview of the Federal Court System 	3-2-1 Reading Response Watch California Primary Results tonight!
	March 5	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seth Masket, Pacific Standard, The Supreme Court Nomination that Tore the Country Apart • Arisha Hatch and Terri Gerstein, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Re-Envisioning the Roles of Prosecutors and Attorneys General to Make the Justice System Work for Everyone Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Things Considered "The Roots of Judicial Activism" 2009 (4 minutes) 	Writing Assignment #3: Congress Member Profile Government in the News Presentation (Group 6)
SPRING BREAK MARCH 9-13 (No class or assignments March 10 & 12)			
WEEK 9 Parties and Interest Groups	March 17	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7, <i>AmGov</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	March 19	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heather Ondercin, SSN, Exploring the Trends That Have Shaped America's Growing Partisan Gap Listen	Government in the News Presentation (Group 7)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This American Life</i>, "Take the Money and Run for Office" (60 minutes) 	
WEEK 10 Public Opinion, Campaigns, and Elections	March 24	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8, <i>AmGov</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	March 26	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khan Academy, Measuring public opinion • CBS This Morning, How polling works and what it says about America Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putnam, <i>Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital</i> 	Writing Assignment #4: Interest Group Analysis Government in the News Presentation (Group 8)
WEEK 11 Voting and Civic Engagement	March 31	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schroedel and Hart, <i>Vote Dilution and Suppression in Indian Country</i> • Public Policy Institute of California, California's Exclusive Electorate, A New Look at Who Votes and Why It Matters 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	April 2	Listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ezra Klein Show, The Age of Mega-Identity Politics (About 1.15 hours) Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fixing Democracy Demands the Building and Aligning of People's Motivation and Authority to Act 	Government in the News Presentation (Group 9)
WEEK 12	April 7	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9, <i>AmGov</i> 	Writing Assignment #5: Voting Rights Today 3-2-1 Reading Response

Media and Political Communication			
EASTER RECESS APRIL 9-13 (No class or assignments April 9)			
WEEK 13 State and Local Politics	April 14	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stanford Social Innovation Review, Revitalizing Civic Infrastructure at the State Level Is Necessary for a Healthy Democracy PPIC, The Initiative Process in California Ballotpedia, California 2020 Ballot Propositions <p>Listen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPR, How California's Jungle Primary System Works 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	April 16	<p>Guest Speaker: Lauren Cazares, PLNU Political Science Alumna</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 11 of <i>Governing States and Localities</i> Local Government, Function Follows Form (on Canvas) Voting for Mayor is More Important Than Voting for President, The Hill <p>Watch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Kevin Faulconer, 2019 San Diego State of the City Address 	Government in the News Presentation (Group 10)
WEEK 14 Domestic Policy	April 21	<p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 10, Section 10.1-10.4 <i>AmGov</i> 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	April 23	Read	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose two domestic policy briefs to read from two different websites posted on Canvas in this week's module. Be prepared to share about these briefs with your peers. 	
WEEK 15 Foreign Policy	April 28	Read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 10, Section 10.5-end of chapter <i>AmGov</i> Choose two foreign policy briefs to read from two different websites posted on Canvas in this week's module. Be prepared to share about these briefs with your peers. 	3-2-1 Reading Response
	April 30	Course Wrap-Up NO READING!	
Final Exam: Civic Engagement Paper and Presentation	Time and Date TBA (Will announce once schedule is posted)		Civic Engagement Papers and Presentation slides are due before class on Canvas at 3:00pm Present in class for Final Exam 4:30-7:00pm