

POL 1065: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Spring 2022
MWF 11 am – 12:05 pm, Rohr 111

Dr. Linda Beail
Colt Hall 116

Office Hours: M 2-4 pm, W 10-11 am and by appointment

Getting in touch with me: For short questions – email me at lbeail@pointloma.edu. As a general rule, I answer emails during the work day (9-4), and I try to answer emails within 24 hours, except on weekends. If I happen to miss your email, please follow up again with me. I want to make sure I get back to you! For everything else – come to office hours or make an appointment. Office hours are a chance for you to get help on class assignments; go over material covered in class; talk about connections between class material and other ideas; talk about the political science major/possible careers/vocation; and so on. I would love to get to know each of you better and help you succeed in this course, so I encourage you to take advantage of this time.

To [make an appointment](#) with me, see my appointment calendar in Google. If you need to Zoom with me for that appointment, use my [personal meeting link](#).

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 historical context, philosophical ideals 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 recent election cycles. Finally, we will examine the role that our major national governmental institutions -- Congress, the President, 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 and events 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 and 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).

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due (or the due date specified on Canvas & the syllabus)—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

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

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center (DRC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). The DRC's policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student's specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all **synchronous** 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. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

PLNU's credit hour policy is approximately 10 hours per week for a four-unit class (150 hours total over the semester). You should be spending about 3.25 hours in class each week and 6.75 hours reading or studying for our course outside of class time. I have designed the readings and assignments with this in mind.

**Due to our current pandemic conditions, there is the possibility that classes may periodically need to be held in an asynchronous or synchronous online format. The attendance policy still applies to these types of class formats. Our course will follow all of the PLNU policies related to Covid-19. Please see the [PLNU Covid-19 website](#), the Covid-19 Canvas course, and the [PLNU catalog](#) for the most current policies. All of us, including me, can show our respect and care for each other by not coming to class if we have any Covid symptoms. Covid-related absences are excused, however: *You are still responsible for getting the notes from a classmate for any classes you miss and turning in assignments on time.* Please let me know if you are seriously ill and need accommodations for some period of time, and we will work together on a plan to help you successfully meet course requirements. If I or a member of my household are in ill or quarantined, our class may need to meet remotely for that time. Please check your PLNU email and Canvas announcements on a regular basis for any course updates.

FINAL EXAM 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.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

The [PLNU Tutoring Center](#) offers support with everything you need to succeed — whether it's learning study strategies and test-taking techniques, getting help from a tutor, using technology to read and write, or editing a research paper. They also offer individual or small group tutorial sessions and special review sessions before exams for several courses. These services are **free** for PLNU undergraduate students. Some helpful **study strategies** that may assist you in this course can be found [here](#).

Research librarians are available to help you with your research papers and projects in Ryan Library. You can reach them by phone at (619) 849-2337, by text at (619)592-8884, or by [email](#). To search the library's databases for books and articles, or to find quick and easy reference to our citation style guide and resources in political science, please visit our department's excellent [research guide](#) from Ryan Library.

[The Wellness Center](#) is available for medical, counseling and nutrition services to students. Many college students experience strained relationships, stress, anxiety, depression, physical health challenges, and other barriers to learning. The Wellness Center offers help and resources to deal with these kind of issues. T

STYLE GUIDELINES

In political science, the most common form of citations is the **"author-date" format** from the [Chicago Manual of Style](#). Please use this style if using citations in this class – examples are available at the hyperlink. For our short response papers and in-class exams, if you are referring to something from our shared syllabus, simply indicate the author's name or title as you are writing – you do not need formal footnotes or works cited. (For example: "As Karen Brodtkin explains in her essay, 'How Jews Became White Folks,' racial categories changed meaning over the course of the twentieth century.")

Language can be tricky, as it is always evolving in its usage. Some observations might be helpful. 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 considerate to refer to persons by the gender pronouns they prefer, I appreciate your kindness in using gendered language that feels respectful and hospitable to each person when possible.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

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. Whether face-to-face or via Zoom, I hope our time together will be lively, valuable, energizing and irreplaceable. In this spirit, I'd ask for your respectful behavior and engaged attention at all times during class, in person or virtually.

There is a lot of polarization, controversy, miscommunication and misunderstanding involved in discussions of American politics these days. We all bring different backgrounds, experiences and opinions with us into this semester. You are each situated at different places across the political spectrum – or may not be sure where you fit on that spectrum of issues, ideologies and partisanship! That's normal and good. My hope is that you enter this class with an open heart and mind, curious about the experiences and opinions of others even as you value and think through your own. My goal is to share historical information and political science research that can help you become more knowledgeable and better able to understand, evaluate and form opinions on political issues and policies. I want to give each of you the context and background to enter these conversations wisely and well.

Given all of the polarization, fear, anger and mistrust in our civic discourse right now, I want to remind you that our goal this semester is not to debate or demonize one another's partisanship, but to learn more about how American politics works & why. Our political system has, from its inception, been one of continually contested ideas – about the size and scope of government, who counts as a citizen, what equality and freedom mean in practice, the role of religion in public life, and more. It is important to hear and understand this unfolding conversation, to know how we have ended up at this moment and think about how we want our system to look moving forward, shaped by our own voices and contributions. I want you to see how none of these issues has been "settled" or taken for granted, but always critiqued & debated. I also want you to understand how many of our current dilemmas and conflicts could be better addressed and resolved by putting them into some context – where these conflicts come from, what's been tried before, why certain ideas/policies/alliances are trusted or mistrusted by political actors today.

I don't want anyone to feel silenced – or to dominate the conversation – but to collaborate in gaining knowledge and insight. There is much to learn by wrestling with ideas, but not from attacking or belittling one another on a personal level. We are not here to doubt one another's intelligence, morality, or good faith. 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. Our opportunity and privilege this semester is to help one another grow intellectually, hold one another accountable in love, and emerge with more knowledge, tools and practice at speaking & thinking about divisive but important topics.

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 in completing the assignments, 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.

Exam and due dates are noted on the syllabus. Reading responses MUST be turned in on time (each Tuesday night before midnight), or they will not receive any credit. You may choose not to submit reading notes/responses 2 times during the semester for no penalty. You may also have 2 days of grace period for turning in any of the short papers (2 days per the entire semester, not 2 days per each assignment). You may use the 2 days together, or 1 day for one project, 1 for another – and you do not need to ask me for permission to use that extension. However, once you have used a total of 2 days’ worth of extensions, you will lose 10% for each calendar that paper is late.

Course requirements include:

Weekly 3-2-1 Reading Responses – due every Tuesday evening by 11:59 pm in Canvas, should cover that week’s readings assigned for Monday & Wednesday.	140 points
Four short “Analyzing American Politics” papers	400 points (4@ 100 each)
“Government in the News” – paper and presentation/discussion	100 points
Three Exams – two midterms and final	360 points (3@ 120 each)
TOTAL	1000 points

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:

Benjamin Ginsberg et. al., *We the People* (13th essentials edition), WW Norton, 2021.
Ari Berman, *Give Us the Ballot*, Picador, 2016.
Articles, podcasts and films as assigned, available online via links in syllabus.

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

	DATE	PREPARATION FOR CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 1 Introduction – The Roots of Our Democratic Republic	January 11	Log in to our class Canvas site, become familiar with how our class modules will work, and read through syllabus. Please pay special attention to the course description & learning outcomes; class expectations; and course requirements.	
	January 12	Read <i>We the People</i> chapter 1	
	January 14	Listen to the Constitutional Podcast, Framed (60 minutes)	
WEEK 2 The US Constitution	January 17	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – no class meeting	
	January 19	<i>We the People</i> chapter 2	
	January 21	Federalist #10 and Federalist #51	
WEEK 3 Federalism	January 24	<i>We the People</i> chapter 3 Watch Crash Course Federalism (9 minutes)	
	January 26	Brookings Institution, Why Federalism Matters Watch http://www.pbs.org/tpt/constitution-usa-peter-sagal/watch/a-more-perfect-union/ on federalism (53 minutes)	
	January 28	Badger, Emily, “ Blue Cities Want to Make Their Own Rules. Red States Won’t Let Them. ” <i>New York Times</i> 7/6/2017 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 1)
WEEK 4 State and Local Governing	January 31	Readings and Guest Speakers TBA	
	February 2		

	February 4		<p>“Government in the News” Presentation (Group 2)</p> <p>Paper #1: Federalism Analysis due in Canvas no later than 11:59 pm on Sunday February 6</p>
WEEK 5 Civil Liberties	February 7	<i>We the People</i> chapter 4	
	February 9	Watch Korematsu and Civil Liberties (26 minutes)	
	February 11	Emma Green, “ Gay Rights May Come at the Cost of Religious Freedom ,” <i>The Atlantic</i> (2015)	“Government in the News” Presentation (Group 3)
WEEK 6 Civil Rights	February 14	<i>We the People</i> chapter 5	
	February 16	Read Berman, <i>Give Us The Ballot</i> , Prologue and chapters 1-2 (pp. 3-64) and be prepared to discuss in class	“Government in the News” Presentation (Group 4)
	February 18	In-class midterm exam	EXAM ONE
WEEK 7 Political Socialization and Public Opinion	February 21	<i>We the People</i> chapter 6	
	February 23	Khan Academy, Measuring public opinion CBS This Morning, How polling works and what it says about America	
	February 25	Berman, <i>Give Us the Ballot</i> chapters 3-4	“Government in the News” Presentation (Group 5)
WEEK 8 Media	February 28	<i>We the People</i> chapter 7	
	March 2	Readings TBA	Paper #2: Political Socialization and Public Opinion due in Canvas no

			later than 11:59 pm, Wednesday March 2
	March 4	Berman, <i>Give Us the Ballot</i> chapter 5	"Government in the News" Presentation (Group 6)
WEEK 9	March 14	<i>We the People</i> chapter 8	
Political Parties and Interest Groups	March 16	<i>This American Life</i> , " Take the Money and Run for Office " (about 60 minutes)	
	March 18	Lilliana Mason, The Ezra Klein Show podcast, The age of "mega-identity" politics	"Government in the News" Presentation (Group 7)
WEEK 10	March 21	<i>We the People</i> chapter 9	
Participation and Elections	March 23	Whose Vote Counts , Netflix Explained Heather Ondercin, SSN, Exploring the Trends That Have Shaped America's Growing Partisan Gender Gap Public Policy Institute of CA, California's Exclusive Electorate, A New Look at Who Votes and Why it Matters	"Government in the News" Presentation (Group 8)
	March 25	In-class exam – midterm two	EXAM TWO
WEEK 11	March 28	Berman, <i>Give Us the Ballot</i> chapters 6-7	
Congress	March 30	<i>We the People</i> chapter 10	
	April 1	Watch A Day in the Life of Congressman John Carney Introduction to the Legislative Process in the US Congress , Congressional Research Service, November 2020 Find your home Congressional district's House Member and research their committee assignments – bring that info to class with you	"Government in the News" Presentation (Group 9)

WEEK 12 Legislative Process: Presidency and Congress	April 4	Berman, <i>Give Us the Ballot</i> chapter 8	
	April 6	The legislative process and the Senate filibuster: Benjamin Wallace-Wells, " Examining the Case Against the Filibuster ," The New Yorker, February 4, 2021 Politifact, The History of the Filibuster as Jim Crow Relic	
	April 8	<i>We the People</i> chapter 11	Paper #3: US House Member Analysis due in Canvas no later than 11:59 pm, Sunday April 10
WEEK 13 Presidency	April 11	Berman, <i>Give Us the Ballot</i> chapter 9	"Government in the News" Presentation (Group 10)
	April 13	Berman, <i>Give Us the Ballot</i> chapter 10	
	April 15	Easter Break – no class meeting	
WEEK 14 Courts	April 18	Easter Break – no class meeting	
	April 20	<i>We the People</i> chapter 13 Watch Eugene Kim, Overview of the Federal Court System (9 minutes)	
	April 22	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) Voting Rights in 2022 – updates	"Government in the News" Presentation (Group 11)
WEEK 15 Future of Democracy	April 25		Paper #4: Voting Rights Analysis due no later than 11:59 pm, Monday April 25
	April 27	Readings TBA	

	April 29	Readings TBA	
Final Exam	Monday, May 2 10:30 am – 1 pm		