

POLI 101: American Government

College of Charleston

Fall 2016

Time: TR 10:50 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

Place: Education Center, 118

Instructor: Professor Matthew Nowlin

Email: nowlinmc@cofc.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1–3 p.m. 114 Wentworth, Office 102

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the core concepts of American government and politics. The emphasis of this course will be placed on approaching topics associated with government and politics as *social scientists*, therefore this course will be organized around social science concepts and methods.

The first part of the course will examine the foundation of the American political system including the constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and civil rights. The second part of the course will focus on the fundamental role played by the institutions of American government including, Congress, the President, the bureaucracy, and the courts. The third section focuses on the intermediary institutions such as public opinion, elections, political parties, and interest groups. Finally, the fourth section will cover economic policy in the United States.

Political Science Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures, and decision-making processes of the American political system
- Evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas
- Relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates, and outcomes in the United States
- Develop an analytical, social science disposition toward American politics.

General Social Science Education Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social

interactions or social institutions. This will be assessed in the second paper.

Student Responsibilities

- Devices: **All phones, tablets, and laptops must remain put away during lecture**, unless you asked to use them specifically for class purposes.
- Taking Notes: Notes should be taken by hand, with pen and paper. *You learn better that way. Lecture slides will NOT be made available outside of class.* I recommended using the **Cornell Method** to take notes during lectures.
- Attendance: Attendance is required for this course and will be taken at each session. *You are allowed two absences without penalty, after the second absence you will lose 10 points per absence. 6 or more total absences will result in a grade of WA.*

Required Texts

The following texts are **required** and additional readings will be provided on OAKS OR through links on the schedule portion of the syllabus.

Kollman, Ken 2013. *The American Political System: Core Edition*. W.W. Norton and Company. ISBN: 978-0393923308

Sides, John and Henry Farrell (Eds.) *The Science of Trump: Explaining the Rise of an Unlikely Candidate*. This book is an eBook available through **Amazon**, and is readable on a computer, tablet, or smart phone.

Course Requirements and Grading

This course will make extensive use of **OAKS**. OAKS is accessible through this link <https://lms.cofc.edu> as well as through your My Charleston page. All course materials including the syllabus, assignments, reading quizzes and some readings will be available through **OAKS**. *All of the reading quizzes will be taken through OAKS and all assignments will be uploaded to the associated dropbox folder on OAKS. No assignments will be accepted by email or in-person.* Please watch the following **video** about how to submit assignments and take quizzes on OAKS. Be sure to allow yourself plenty of time up-load assignments, *issues with OAKS are not an excuse for a missing or late assignment.*

The schedule below provides links to additional readings

All reading quizzes will be taken on OAKS. All assignments must be turned in on OAKS.

Performance in this course will be evaluated based on 10 reading quizzes, 4 exams, 3 papers, and class attendance and participation.

Assignment	Possible Points (Percent of Overall Grade)
Reading Quizzes	200 points (10 at 20 pts. each) (20%)
Paper 1	20 points (2%)
Paper 2	100 points (10%)
Paper 3	130 points (13%)
Exam 1	100 points (10%)
Exam 2	100 points (10%)
Exam 3	100 points (10%)
Final Exam	200 points (20%)
Attendance & Participation	50 points (5%)
Total	1000 points (100%)

There are 1000 possible points for this course. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points and calculated as a percentage of 1000.

A = 93 to 100%; A- = 90 to 92%; B+ = 87 to 89%; B = 83 to 85%; B- = 80 to 82%; C+ = 77 to 79%; C = 73 to 76%; C- = 70 to 72%; D+ = 67 to 69%; D = 63 to 67%; D- = 60 to 62%; F = 59% and below

Assignments

Reading quizzes: There will be 11 assigned reading quizzes, however only 10 will be applied to your reading quiz grade. Reading quizzes consist of 10 multiple choice / true-false questions based on all assigned readings. *Reading quizzes are due by 10:30am EST on the due date.*

Exams: All exams will be multiple choice / true-false and taken with a scantron. The scantrons will be provided, but you *must bring a number 2 pencil on exam days*. Exam questions will come from the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The first three exams will have 25 questions, and the final exam will have 50 questions and will cover material from the entire semester.

Papers: There are three assigned papers for this class. The first paper is a short paper about the positions of the various presidential candidates. The second paper is a reflection paper about the Constitution. The final paper is an analytical paper that examines the insights offered in the book *The Science of Trump*.

Attendance and Participation: The attendance and participation portion of your grade is based on attendance—which will be taken each

Specific details and expectations for each assignment will be posted on OAKS. Assignment due dates are in the following course schedule.

class—and in-class discussion. The discussion portion is based on the *quality* (not quantity) of your contributions to class discussion.

Bonus Points: There will NOT be any opportunities for extra credit, however if you attend the Political Science Convocation Lecture, *tentatively scheduled for Nov 1st from 4:00pm to 5:30pm and write a one-page reaction paper* you can receive up to 20 bonus points. In addition, if you complete all 11 reading quizzes, your grade on the 11th quiz will count as bonus points.

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED

Course Schedule

Subject To Change. Changes will be announced in class.

Important Dates

See the schedule below for more information

Date	Event
Sept 1st	No Class
Sept 2nd	I Side With paper due
Sept 13th	No Class
Sept 16th	Constitution paper due
Sept 22nd	Exam 1
Oct 22nd	Exam 2
Nov 7th–8th	Fall Break
Nov 22nd	Exam 3
Nov 23rd–25th	Thanksgiving break
Dec 5th	Trump paper due
Dec 13th	Final exam

Readings, Assignment Due Dates, and Exam Dates

Assigned readings come from the Kollman text, the links listed below, and **OAKS**.

Kollman: Kollman, Ken 2013. *The American Political System: Core Edition*.

Part I: Foundations

AUG 23RD–25TH: INTRODUCTION AND CLASS OVERVIEW

- *Reading:*
 - **Political Science**

All assigned readings for the week will be on the reading quizzes

ALL READINGS QUIZZES ARE DUE BY 10:30am EST ON THE DUE DATE AND ALL OTHER ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY 5:00pm EST ON THE DUE DATE

- Careers in Political Science

AUG 30TH–SEPT 1: COLLECTIVE DILEMMAS AND GOVERNMENT

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 1
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 1 due Aug 30th
 - *I Side With* paper due Sept 2nd
- **NO CLASS: Sept 1st**

SEPT 6TH–8TH: THE CONSTITUTION I

- *The Declaration of Independence*
- *The Constitution*
- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 2
 - *The Federalist* No. 10
 - *The Federalist* No. 51
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 2 due Sept 6th

SEPT 13TH–15TH: THE CONSTITUTION II: FEDERALISM

- **NO CLASS: Sept 13th**
- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 3
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 3 due Sept 13th
 - *How Democratic is the Constitution?* paper due Sept 16th

SEPT 20TH–22ND: THE CONSTITUTION III: CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 4
- **EXAM 1: Sept 22nd**

Part II: Institutions

SEPT 27TH–29TH: CONGRESS

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 5
 - *Setting the Agenda* on OAKS
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 4 due Sept 27th

OCT 4TH–6TH: THE PRESIDENCY

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 6
 - *The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency*, explained
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 5 due Oct 4th

OCT 11TH–13TH: THE BUREAUCRACY

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 7
 - *Learning While Governing* on OAKS
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 6 due Oct 11th

OCT 18TH–20TH: THE JUDICIARY

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 8
- **EXAM 2: Oct 22nd**

Part III: Mass Participation and Intermediary Institutions

OCT 25TH–27TH: PUBLIC OPINION AND PARTICIPATION

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 9 (*skim section on measuring, pgs. 305-312*)
 - Kollman Chap 10
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 7 due Oct 25th

NOV 1ST–3RD: INTEREST GROUPS

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 11
 - *Affluence and Influence* on OAKS
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 8 due Nov 1st

NOV 8TH–10TH: ELECTIONS

- **FALL BREAK: Nov 7th–Nov 8th VOTE!**
- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 13
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 9 due Nov 10th

NOV 15TH–17TH: POLITICAL PARTIES

- *Reading:*
 - Kollman Chap 12
 - *Why Parties?* on OAKS
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 10 due Nov 15th

NOV 22ND–24TH

- **EXAM 3: Nov 22nd**
- **THANKSGIVING BREAK: Nov 23rd–Nov 25th**

NOV 29TH–DEC 1ST: POLITICAL ECONOMY

- *Reading:*
 - *Unequal Democracy* on OAKS
 - TBD
- *Assignment:*
 - Reading quiz 11 due Nov 28th
 - *Trump paper* due Dec 5th

FINAL EXAM DEC 13TH AT 8:00AM

Important Information

Center for Student Learning

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL [website](#) or call (843) 953-5635.

Students with Disabilities

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the [Center for Disability Services](#) located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me at least one week before any accommodation is needed.

Cheating or Plagiarism

A grade of zero will be given to anyone cheating on any exam, homework assignment or committing plagiarism in a paper. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own ideas, the words, writings, music, graphs/charts, etc that were created by another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. It does not matter from where the material is borrowed—a book, article, material off the web, another student's paper—all constitute plagiarism unless the source of the work is fully identified and credited. Plagiarism is cheating and a violation of academic and personal integrity and will not be tolerated. It carries extremely serious consequences. To avoid plagiarism it is necessary when using a phrase, a distinctive idea, concept or sentence from another source to reference that source in your text, a footnote, or end-note. Please contact me if you need assistance in citing a source.

Religious Holiday Policy

It is the policy of the College to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work

that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class any time during this semester.