POS2041 American National Government

Dr. Bruce M. Wilson

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- How to avoid common, serious errors in written work
- LINKS (includes all extra readings)
- Course Rules and Policies
- An example of solid reply posting
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Welcome to POS2041 American National Government!

NB: This is a college-level, three credit course that is taught over a 6 week period instead of the 15-week regular semester. It is necessarily fast paced and requires you to keep up and complete your work before the deadlines.

Introduction

These are truly exciting times to be living in the United States! Major domestic policy issues are being re-conceptualized as the result of the outcome of the most unusual presidential election in my lifetime. Numerous international crises (military actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Ukraine), the UK leaving the European Union, and the reopening of diplomatic relations with Cuba, etc, all need to be addressed by the new president and Congress. There are also many, difficult domestic policy issues in the US including immigration, health care, and the implementation of the Supreme Court's recent same-sex marriage decision that appear to be adding to an increasingly polarized polity in which the popular vote went one way, but the Electoral College went a different way.

The good news is that by the end of this class you will possess the necessary tools to be able to understand these intractable issues, rationally evaluate competing arguments, and be able to draw your own conclusions about elections and their outcomes. To that end, this class investigates the historical foundations of the United States, the institutions of government, the policy-making processes, and policy areas of the country. The textbook provides a solid foundation for your knowledge, but the class requires that you keep up-to-date with current events and do some independent research. This will allow you to see how the material you learn in the book actually applies to current events and issues. Understanding the political underpinnings of U.S. politics will help you understand current political debates better, help you form an informed opinion, and make you better equipped to be an engaged citizen. Throughout the course, you will be required to provide evidence to support your ideas, to question your peers, and challenge them to provide compelling evidence to support their arguments and to critically examine the evidence provided by different sources. This is part of what the discipline of political science is all about - to

collect, analyze, and critically evaluate empirical evidence and to present it in a compelling, accurate manner.

Course structure

The course contains eight modules, 14 chapters pop quizzes, and a final essay exam. Modules typically have discussions to explore core concepts further and push you to apply them to specific issues and/or essays that integrate much of what you learned in critical reflection. For each module I have uploaded the publisher's PowerPoint slides summarizing the main points of the assigned textbook chapters, this should help you structure the course material, but they cannot be used as an alternative to reading the textbook.

Finally, each module has deadlines within the module period - typically, pop quizzes are due first, since you need to complete the reading before you can enter into an informed discussion. If there is a class discussion, you will be pre-assigned to small discussion groups and there will be two deadlines: For the initial substantive discussion posting and a separate one for the additional follow-up postings (this allows the discussion to flow like a real face-to-face discussion).

Short essays are typically due at the end of the module. It is crucial that you are aware of all these deadlines as soon as a module opens so you don't miss any parts and lose points. (You can see all the semester's deadlines below in the schedule and also within each module's instructions). You are responsible for keeping track of all deadlines.

Chapter pop quiz grades will be combined into a single percentage score that will be added to your final class grade (see the syllabus for more information on how your class grade is calculated).

To get started, please review the Announcements, Syllabus, Schedule (available below), and the Course Rules and Policies available at the top of this page): these are the ground rules, policies, and expectations for the class. I will also upload a statement on how to write clear, concise, well documented short papers and an example of a good quality reply posting that you can use as a model for your own discussion posting replies.

There are also some additional class readings that I have uploaded to the LINKS page. If you're new to using the CANVAS program, please check out the guide to webcourses above and/or the "Success Resources" link to the left of this page.

Instructor Contact

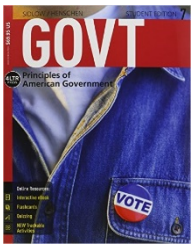
Instructor	Dr. Bruce M. Wilson
Office	Phillips Hall 302
Office Hours	Dr. Wilson's Office Hours: by appointment in Summer A For GTA help or appointments (use Coursemail and send an email to your assigned GTA)

	Alex Norat: Groups 1-4 (Mon 12-4 pm and Friday 12-3 pm & by appointment) Miroslav Shapovalov: Groups 5-8 (Mon 10-2 pm & Thur11-2 pm & by appointment) Frank Fan: Groups 9-12 (Tuesdays 1:00 pm-3:00 pm & by appointment)
Homepages	Professor Wilson's homepage at UCF; at the CMI in Bergen, Norway
Phone	407-823-2608 (no voice mail)
E-mail	Please use Coursemail for all emails

Course Information

Course Name	POS2041 American National Government
Credit Hours	3 Credit Hours
Semester/Year	Summer 2017
Location	Completely online (no required face-to-face meetings)

Required Text



- "GOVT7." 2015. Edward I. Sidlow & Beth Henschen. Wadsworth Publishing; 7th edition.
- (First three chapters only are available on the class homepage)
- This edition of the book can be bought either online or at the UCF bookstore
    - While you **do not** need the access code for this class, the UCF bookstore has some editions of the textbook on sale with the access code for the same price.

Course Requirements

Assignments	• You are responsible for:
	  o Keeping track of all deadlines and uploading your work before those deadlines
	  o keeping a copy of all assignments for this class
	  o checking that your grades posted online are correct;
	  ▪ discrepancies must be reported to the instructor <u>within</u> <u>one week</u> of being posted.

Late, make-up, and extra credit work	• All quizzes are opened on the first day of the semester, but their deadlines correspond with the modules in which the material is discussed (see schedule). o If you miss a quiz deadline, you will NOT be permitted to take that quiz, no exceptions! • Other late work (initial discussion postings and essays) will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day late (including weekend days and holidays). • Discussion postings cannot be made once the deadline passes and the discussion closes: there is no late option for final discussion postings. • No work will be accepted more than three days after the deadline. • There are no substitute assignments and positively NO EXTRA CREDIT, so please don't ask! • No module grade will be discussed more than a week after it was posted.

Evaluation and Grading

The following scale will be used for the assignment of final grades. I use traditional rounding up/down of grades, e.g., 89.5 will be rounded up to an "A"; 89.4 remains a "B."

Letter Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69

F	59 or below

Assignment	**Percentage of Grade**
Module #1	1%
Each module is worth 13.5% of your final class grade	You have the option of dropping your lowest substantive module grade and replacing that grade with the grade you earn from the optional final exam (see caveat in Academic honesty, below).
Pop Quizzes	4.5%
Optional final exam (you should take this exam only if you want the grade to replace your lowest module grade)	13.5%
Total	100%

Schedule

Module Dates	**Topic/Module**	**Readings/quizzes**
PART I: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT		
May 15-22	Module #1: Introduction Module #2: US Government Foundations, Constitution, & Federalism	Module #1: Chapter One Module #2: Chapters two & Three
PART II: RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES & PART III: THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY		
May 22-June 1	Module #3: Civil Rights & Liberties Module #4: Interest Groups & Political Parties	Module #3: Chapter Four & Five Module #4: Chapter Six & Seven

June 1-11	Module #5: Public Opinion, Voting, Politics, & Media Module #6: Campaigns & Elections	Module #5: Chapter eight & Ten Module #6: chapter Nine
PART IV: INSTITUTIONS		
June 11-21	Module #7: The Bureaucracy and the Judiciary Module #8: Congress and the Presidency	Module #7: Chapter Thirteen & Fourteen Module #8: Chapter Eleven & Twelve
June 21-23	Optional final cumulative essay exam uploaded before 5 pm	Read: all chapters in textbook

NB Full deadlines details are available in each module instructions (and in the syllabus below).

Attendance Policy

Because this is a completely online class with no face-to-face meetings, there is no attendance policy, per se. Having said that, you need to keep up with the pace of the class, which is very fast in this short semester and participate in all parts of each of the modules.

It is important to note that each module contains more than one deadline; that is, not all work for a module is due on the last day listed on the Schedule. You must read each module's instructions for a list of deadlines for the various assignments and deadlines. It is your responsibility to check these deadlines as soon as a module opens so you won't miss any due dates.

NB: The federally-mandated attendance reporting policy requires you to complete an assignment before the end of the first week (before 5 pm on Friday). I will use the citizenship quiz for this purpose. It does not matter what score you receive on the citizenship quiz, but you must complete it before the deadline. Failure to do so might impact your financial aid and/or other support.

FYI, if you apply for US citizenship and you fail to score more than 70% on this quiz, you would be denied citizenship!

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on any examination, quiz, or assignment will result in an "F" for that assignment and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the updated UCF Golden Rule for further information. Any module that contains any material that is identified by the professor as plagiarized will not be eligible to be dropped as your lowest grade. *Please do not plagiarize!*

I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Furthermore, any attempt to save, store, distribute, or discuss any quiz questions for this class will be interpreted as cheating and will be treated accordingly.

All your work must be done on your own; you are not allowed to collaborate on quizzes, discussion postings, or essays. In short, all your written work and work submitted for grading must be your own, original work.

Sexual Harassment

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex that interferes with educational opportunities is an offense subject to the same penalties as offenses based on other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources, and information concerning reporting options at shield.ucf.edu. Perpetrators are subject to expulsion or termination and may also be subject to criminal penalties.

Disability Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.