POS2041 - American National Government

Dr. Bruce M. Wilson

"Each of us is entitled to [our] own opinion, but not [our] own facts."

---Attributed to Former Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger ("Intelligence Identities Protection Legislation" Senate hearing, June 24, 1980: p 110

- About Dr. Wilson
- Course Rules and Policies
- An example of solid discussion board reply posting
- How to avoid common, serious errors in your written class work

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Welcome to POS2041 American National Government!

These are truly exciting times to be living in the United States of America!

We are currently in uncharted political waters where much of what we traditionally expect in US politics has been turned on its head with major domestic policy issues being re-conceptualized and/or readdressed as the result of the outcome of the most unusual presidential election in my lifetime. Compounding the situation, numerous international crises (military actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine), heightened tensions with Iran and North Korea (sometimes), and serious spats with and reevaluations of long-standing diplomatic, trading, and security relations with our allies including the European Union, the G7, as well as our neighbors to the north and south.

Many difficult domestic policy issues (immigration, gun rights, building a "wall" between the US and Mexico, health care, tax reform, affirmative action, same-sex marriage rights etc., are adding to an increasingly polarized polity in which one candidate won the popular vote, but another won the necessary 270 Electoral College votes necessary to become president.

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The **good news** is that by the end of this class you will possess the necessary tools to be able to objectively understand these intractable issues, rationally evaluate competing arguments, and be able to draw your own conclusions about elections, their outcomes, and the laws that follow.

To that end, we will investigate the historical foundations of the United States, the institutions of government, the policy-making processes, and policy areas of the country. The free online Textbook (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. provides a solid, broad foundation for your knowledge, but the class requires that you keep up-to-date with current events and do some directed independent research. This process 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 make sense of the current political debates, help you form your own informed opinion, and make you better equipped to be an engaged citizen.

Throughout the course, you will be required to provide solid evidence to support your ideas, to question your peers and challenge them to provide compelling evidence to support their arguments, and to critically evaluate 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 interactive modules** with a variety of multimedia, discussion forums, essays, and an optional final essay exam.

The modules typically have **discussions** or **essays** (occasionally both) to further explore core concepts and to push you to apply them to specific issues and integrate what you learned in critical reflection.

Finally, each module has deadlines within the module time frame: There is a deadline for the first discussion posting and a separate one for the additional follow-up posting(s). (This allows the discussion to flow like a real face-to-face discussion).

Short papers, if required, 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.

Getting Started

To get started, please review the material on this page, as well as the *Announcements*, *Syllabus*, and the *Course Rules and Policies* (available at the top of this page).

On the homepage, I have uploaded a statement on how to write clear, concise, well-documented short papers and an example of a solid reply for a discussion posting that you can use as a model for your own discussion posting replies.

There are some additional readings that I have added to the modules and/or the textbook that you might find interesting and/or helpful.

If you're new to using the Webcourses@UCF, please check out the **Webcourses@UCF Student Tour** and/or the **Success Resources** link located to the left of this page.

Now, select the **Modules** link in the left sidebar of this page; then open "*Module 1: Introduction*" and follow the instructions.

I wish you all a great semester and welcome to the class!

POS2041 Syllabus: Spring 2019

Instructor Contact

Instructor	Dr. Bruce M. Wilson
Office	Phillips Hall 305E (access via the Political Science Dept office 302)
Office Hours	Dr. Wilson's Office Hours: Tues & Wed 9:30- 11:30 am & by appointment. To contact your assigned GTA use the course *Inbox* to send an email Davide Dell'Isola: Groups 1-6 (Tuesdays 10am - 12pm & by appt) Jennifer Hudson: Groups 7-9 (Mondays 1pm - 3pm & by appt) Nyerere Hodge: Groups 10-14 (Wednesdays 10am - 12 pm & by appt) • all GTA office hours are held in the Political Science PhD office in Philips Hall • Contact GTAs using the Canvas email system
Homepages	Professor Wilson's homepage at UCF; at the CMI in Bergen, Norway
Phone	407-823-2608 (no voice mail)

E-mail	Please use the course *Inbox* for all email communication.

Course Information

Course Name	POS2041 American National Government
Credit Hours	3 Credit Hours
Semester/Year	Spring 2019
Location	Completely online (no required face-to-face meetings)

Required Free Text *(Click on the image below.)*

Course Requirements

Civic Literacy Objectives	As part of the 2017 legislative session, a new requirement for students initially entering college in the 2018-19 academic year to demonstrate civic literacy has been enacted (see section 1007.25(4), Florida Statute (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.). One way for students to demonstrate civic literacy is to successfully complete POS 2041 that address the following four learner outcomes that are included in this course: 1. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our Federated form of government. 2. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.

	3. Students will develop and demonstrate knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance. 4. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.

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

Late, make-up, and extra credit work	• You can replace your lowest module grade by taking the optional final exam
	  ○ You do not need to tell me that you wish to do this, the grade replacement will happen automatically at the end of the semester
	  ○ This policy is designed to accommodate any and all reasons for missing a module: illness, family vacation, missing deadlines, etc.
	• Other late work (initial discussion postings and essays) will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day late (including weekend days and holidays unless otherwise noted in the module).
	• Because discussion postings cannot be made after the discussion is closed - there is **no late option** for final discussion postings.
	• No work will be accepted more than five days after the deadline (or three days after the deadline for the final exam).
	• There are no substitute assignments and positively NO EXTRA CREDIT, so please don't ask!

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**
Modules #1 through #8	(each *Module is worth 12.5% of your final class grade)* You can replace your lowest Module grade by taking the Optional Final Exam.
Optional Final Exam	If you take the Final Exam, that grade will automatically replace your lowest Module grade at the end of the semester. *(Please see the important caveat in Academic honesty, below).*
Total	100%

Outline of the course

	Topic/Module	**Readings**
PART I: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT		
	Module #1: Introduction	Chapter 1
	Module #2: US Government Foundations, Constitution, and Federalism	Chapters 2 & 3

PART II: RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES		
	Module #3: Civil Rights and Liberties	Chapters 4 & 5
PART III: THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY		
	Module #4: Interest Groups and Political Parties	Chapters 9 &10
	Module #5: Public Opinion, Voting. Politics and the Media	Chapters 6 & 8
	Module #6: Campaigns and Elections	Chapter 7
PART IV: INSTITUTIONS		
	Module #7: The Courts and the Bureaucracy	Chapters 13 & 15
	Module #8: Congress and the Presidency	Chapters 11 & 12
	Optional Final Exam	all textbook chapters

NB. *Full deadlines details are available in each module instructions (and in the live schedule 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 and participate in all parts of each of the modules. Note that each module contains several deadlines; 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 score less than 70% on this quiz when you are applying for citizenship, you would fail and would not be able to gain US citizenship until your score passes 70%.*

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on any examination 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.

All your work must be done on your own; you are not allowed to collaborate on discussion postings, essays, or exams. 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.

Accessibility 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 connect with Student Accessibility Services, Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course, you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these

could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.