

**American National Government  
POLS 206**

**Course Information:**

Spring 2017  
Classroom: PMEC 151  
Meeting Time: MW 4:10-5:25 p.m.  
Course Website: eCampus

**Contact Information:**

Instructor: Elizabeth Nyman  
Email: [enyman@tamug.edu](mailto:enyman@tamug.edu)  
Office: CLB 217  
Office Hours: TBD

**Course Description**

This course is designed as a survey of American national government, politics, and constitutional development. It is an introductory course designed to cover the basic structures of American government and politics.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the various institutions of American government
- Know what democratic and federalist systems look like
- Understand the various actors in American politics
- Be familiar with the history of the Constitution and the protections guaranteed therein

**Required Texts**

There is one required text for this class:

Joseph M. Bessette and John J. Pitney Jr. 2014. *American Government and Politics 2E: Deliberation, Democracy, and Citizenship*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

**Course Requirements**

(1) **Exams:** There will be 4 exams in this course, each worth 20% of the course grade. Exams will be given online through eCampus on the indicated dates.

(2) **Online Discussion:** Students are responsible for posting to the discussion board on eCampus on most Wednesdays. Students are responsible for posting one original post (OP) and one response post (RP) per week. This is worth 20% of your grade. Detailed instructions are found below.

**Discussion Requirements**

Note that taking part in the discussion board for this class is a requirement, and failure to complete the discussion assignments will negatively impact your grade. The discussion board posts are worth 100 points total and 20% of your overall grade for the course. There are ten weeks of discussion posts; each week is worth 10 points total.

**Format and style:** Your posts should use formal academic writing. This means that there should be no slang, abbreviations, ALL CAPS, or use of emoji or other symbols. You must use standard default fonts in order to be sure that your words will display correctly across multiple computers and operating systems. Spelling and grammar must be correct and you must write in complete sentences.

**Original Posts (OP):** You must post at least one OP for each discussion week. Your OP must be at least 200 words long and follow the guidelines listed above for spelling/grammar, etc. You must be on topic to the discussion and contribute an original position or thought to the discussion. Therefore, this should not be a mere summary of the readings or recap of someone else's position – it should be your original thoughts on the topic.

**Reply Posts (RP):** You are also required to reply to one of your classmates' posts. This post should be at least 100 words long and contribute something substantive to your classmate's thoughts. It should not consist solely of either a compliment or an attack, but rather be a thoughtful comment on their original post. You should also address your classmate by name to make it clear whose comment you are responding to.

**All Posts:** In order to receive full credit for your discussion posts, you must follow these guidelines. I want to see your original thoughts and understanding in both your OP and your RP each week, as well as a reflection of the week's course material in your discussion and the evidence you provide. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade.

**Grading Rubric:**

10 points: OP and RP are both of the correct length, reflect original thought and course reference material, and follow the other guidelines above.

7 points: Either OP or RP are present but ONE of these is either not of the correct length or does not follow the guidelines above.

5 points: Only one of the OP or RP was completed according to the guidelines above.

3 points: Either both OP and RP fail to reflect the above guidelines, or one is missing and the other does not reflect the guidelines.

0 points: No postings.

**Posts Due on Fridays by 23:59.**

### **Course Letter Grades**

Final course letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- F: 59 and below

I will not respond to end of semester emails requesting a grade change.

### **Absences from Exams and Late Work**

Makeup exams will be allowed when students are participating in formally sanctioned University events if proper documentation is provided to the instructor prior to the exam. Makeup exams will also be allowed in the case of an extraordinary circumstance if accompanied by sufficient documentation within two days after the exam. The instructor reserves the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance.

### **Academic Honor Policy**

An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students committing these violations will be punished according to University policy. Be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism; ignorance is not an excuse. See <http://www.tamug.edu/HonorSystem> for more details.

### **Courtesy in the Classroom**

Attention to classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distraction. As such, please silence and put away all cell phones and other electronic devices during class time. Please be on time to class and remain in class until you are dismissed. If you must arrive late or leave early, please take the seat nearest an exit, and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please show respect for your fellow students by refraining from talking during lectures, as well as when other students are speaking. Similarly, please respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you are in disagreement with them. Repeated disruption of class will lead to a reduction of your final grade.

### **Americans With Disabilities (ADA) Policy Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Counseling Office, Seibel Student Center, or call (409)740-4587. For additional information see <http://www.tamug.edu/counsel/Disabilities.html>.

## Course Outline\*\*

Week 1 (January 17-20)	Introduction to Course
Week 2 (January 23-27)	Democracy (Chapter 1)
<b>Discussion Week 1</b>	
Week 3 (January 30-February 3)	The Constitution (Chapter 2)
<b>Discussion Week 2</b>	
Week 4 (February 6-10)	Federalism (Chapter 3)
<b>Discussion Week 3</b>	
Week 5 (February 13-17)	Citizenship (Chapter 4)
<b>Exam 1: February 15</b>	
Week 6 (February 20-24)	Civil Liberties (Chapter 5)
<b>Discussion Week 4</b>	
Week 7 (February 27-March 3)	Civil Rights (Chapter 6)
<b>Discussion Week 5</b>	
Week 8 (March 6-10)	Public Opinion & Participation (Chapter 7)
<b>Exam 2: March 8</b>	
Week 9 (March 13-17)	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Week 10 (March 20-24)	Political Parties (Chapter 9)
<b>Discussion Week 6</b>	
Week 11 (March 27-31)	Elections and Campaigns (Chapter 10)
<b>Discussion Week 7</b>	
Week 12 (April 3-7)	Mass Media (Chapter 11)
<b>Exam 3: April 5</b>	
Week 13 (April 10-14)	Congress (Chapter 12)
<b>Discussion Week 8</b>	
Week 14 (April 17-21)	The Presidency (Chapter 13)
<b>Discussion Week 9</b>	
Week 15 (April 24-31)	Bureaucracy (Chapter 14)
<b>Discussion Week 10</b>	
Week 16 (May 1-2)	Judiciary (Chapter 15)
<b>Exam 4: May 5, 3:30-5:30</b>	

**\*\* The syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change if necessary.**