

PLSC 1-001 American Politics
Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:35—5:50 PM
Zoom University on Tuesdays ONLY

Webinar Link:

<https://psu.zoom.us/j/91477081092?pwd=cUN2ekJoY0FveURYODdZeHZmcGJVUT09>

Webinar ID:

914 7708 1092

Password: introfall

Course Number: 18852

Fall 2020

Dr. Amy Sentementes (she/her)

Email: sentementes@psu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00-1:00 pm on Zoom and by appointment on August 26th, September 16th, October 14th, November 11th, December 9th

Office Location: Zoom Room Information Below

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://psu.zoom.us/j/99318489572?pwd=Y0c2RWJiUFpFNy9OVjU4cVF5SnRSZz09>

Zoom Meeting ID: 993 1848 9572

Password: officehour

TA's and Their Grading Responsibilities:

Giovanni Castro: Discussion Groups 1-20

Sang Yeon Kim: Discussion Groups 21-40

Rhianna Franchini: Discussion Groups 41-60

Course Description and Expectations

This course provides an overview of American government and politics at the national level. In this course, we will first learn about the political institutions that comprise our political system. We will discuss their origins and the ways in which they structure our society. We then will transition into learning about the behavior of both the American mass public and political elites. We will discuss how everyday Americans make political decisions and how their elected representatives respond to the public's political sentiments.

This course provides information concerning both historical and current political topics in the United States. I expect everyone to be kind and respectful to each other during online discussions and assignments. I strive to create an environment in which all students feel comfortable expressing their political opinions, and I expect these opinions to be diverse. Thus, I will tolerate neither disruption nor disrespect. Please complete the reading and watch the lecture prior to each week's activity.

An Important Message from Snoop Dogg:

https://www.cameo.com/v/5f2b392a0299b100202e624a?fbclid=IwAR1XoM7RCk7h7yUaZtmWeIV239GPu72L_hqLVirwxSNkaQVWDZi6WFeLG8

Required Textbook (You Can Also Purchase the EBook)

Kollman, Ken. *The American Political System*. 3rd Full Edition with 2018 Election Update. W.W. Norton & Company.

Course Expectations and Guidelines

Webinar Lectures

I will hold live lectures on Zoom every Tuesday during class time. Please tune in, and use the Q&A function to ask questions. I will record each lecture and post them to Canvas following class in case you miss a day. You will not see your faces or cameras, and you will not be able to speak verbally using this format.

Attendance and Participation

You should attend the lecture webinar every Tuesday, participate in the Canvas activities, and actively listen during lecture. However, I am happy to accommodate any Covid-19-related concerns during this session. Please keep in touch throughout the term. Mental health is just as critical to maintain as physical health, so please reach out if you are struggling in any way. I am here to help.

Exams

There will be two exams in this course. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. I will give you more information about each specific exam prior to the exam. Exam dates are listed in the Tentative Course Schedule. Each question is worth 5 points, and each exam totals 200 points.

Chapter Quizzes

You will complete short quizzes assessing your understanding of the material covered in our textbook. These questions are designed to ensure you grasp the key points, become familiar with the history of American politics that may not be covered in class, and realize when you may want to seek help understanding the material. Each chapter quiz will be administered on Canvas and consist of approximately 20 questions drawn from the textbook. There are 14 possible quizzes. I will count your best 10 (out of 14) chapter quizzes toward your final grade. The deadline for each assignment is 11:59 p.m. EST (midnight) on the date indicated in the course schedule. Quizzes are worth 200 points total.

Canvas Activities

This class is quite large, so unfortunately, we cannot have meaningful discussions live on Zoom. However, I strive to create meaningful opportunities for you to engage with the course material and with your peers. Thus, I have assigned students randomly to semester groups. You and your group members will have the ability to discuss current events related to each week's topic, participate in activities that will help you internalize the concepts, as well as discuss updates related to the election and to the pandemic. Rest assured, each student will receive an individual grade, but I set up the small groups to provide a more engaging atmosphere than attempting to discuss the lesson with over 300 other people. The activities will be made available at 12 am Eastern following Tuesday's lecture, and you have until Friday at 11:59 to complete them. I will

vary the level of intensity of each activity based on the rest of the week's requirements (e.g. I will not assign a difficult activity during an exam week).

Course Grading

Be certain to record all your grades and double-check your final semester score to ensure your work was correctly entered. I do not "give" grades. You earn your grade in this course. Exams, quizzes, and in-class participation are your chances to exhibit your knowledge and command of the literature and grow as a student of political science. There are 700 possible points in this course. Your grade in this course will be determined using the following formula:

Exams: 400 Points
Quizzes: 200 Points
Canvas Participation: 100 Points

Grade Scale

I will base final course grades on the scale below. I will provide extra credit opportunities throughout the semester, yet I will **NOT** adjust final grades at the end of the session. All grades are final. If you turn in an assignment after 11:59 pm on the due date, I count this assignment as late. I deduct 10% off your grade each additional day following the due date. If you earn a 100% on an assignment, but you turn it in a day late, you will receive a 90%.

Letter Grade	Percentage Score
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 or below

Extended Absences

During your enrollment at Penn State, unforeseen challenges may arise. If you ever need to miss an extended amount of class in such a circumstance, please notify your professor so you can determine the best course of action to make up missed work. If your situation rises to a level of difficulty you cannot manage on your own with faculty support, reach out to the Student Care & Advocacy office by phone at (814-863-2020) or email them at StudentCare@psu.edu. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m."

Academic Integrity

Penn State defines academic integrity as “the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner” ([Senate Policy 49-20](#)). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without permission from the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students facing allegations of academic misconduct should not drop the course; those who do will be added to the course again and will be expected to complete course work and meet course deadlines. If the allegations are dismissed, then the drop will be permitted. Students found responsible for academic misconduct often receive academic sanctions, which can be severe, and put themselves at risk for disciplinary sanctions assigned by the University's Office of Student Conduct (see [Senate Policy G-9](#)).

Students with Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines at (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients’ cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS) (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395 Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses (<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400 Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the University's Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>)

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Homework
8/25	Introductions	N/A
8/27	Introduction Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
9/1	Course Framework	Read Chapter 1 Prior to Class
9/3	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
9/8	The Constitution	Read Chapter 2 Prior to Class
9/10	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
9/15	Federalism	Read Chapter 3 Prior to Class
9/17	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
9/22	Congress	Read Chapter 5 Prior to Class
9/24	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
9/29	The Presidency	Read Chapter 6 Prior to Class
10/1	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
10/6	The Bureaucracy	Read Chapter 7 Prior to Class
10/8	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
10/10	First Exam	First Exam due by 11:59 PM on 10/10
10/13	The Judiciary	Read Chapter 8 Prior to Class
10/15	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
10/20	Civil Rights and Liberties	Read Chapter 4 Prior to Class

10/22	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
10/27	Political Participation	Read Chapter 10 Prior to Class
10/29	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
11/3	Public Opinion	Read Chapter 9 Prior to Class
11/5	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
11/10	Political Parties	Read Chapter 12 Prior to Class
11/12	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
11/17	Interest Groups	Read Chapter 11 Prior to Class
11/19	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
12/1	Elections	Read Chapter 13 Prior to Class
12/3	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
12/8	Mass Media	Read Chapter 14 Prior to Class
12/10	Canvas Activity	Complete Activity on Canvas
12/11	Second Exam	Second Exam due by 11:59 pm on 12/11

Tentative Quiz Schedule

Chapter	Quiz Due Date by 11:59 pm
Chapter 1	September 4 th
Chapter 2	September 11 th
Chapter 3	September 18 th
Chapter 5	September 25 th
Chapter 6	October 2 nd
Chapter 7	October 9 th
Chapter 8	October 16 th
Chapter 4	October 23 rd
Chapter 10	October 30 th
Chapter 9	November 6 th
Chapter 12	November 13 th
Chapter 11	November 20 th
Chapter 13	December 4 th
Chapter 14	December 11 th

Tentative Activity Schedule

Chapter	Activity Due Date by 11:59 pm
Intro Activity	August 28 th
Chapter 1	September 4 th
Chapter 2	September 11 th
Chapter 3	September 18 th
Chapter 5	September 25 th
Chapter 6	October 2 nd
Chapter 7	October 9 th
Chapter 8	October 16 th
Chapter 4	October 23 rd
Chapter 10	October 30 th
Chapter 9	November 6 th
Chapter 12	November 13 th
Chapter 11	November 20 th
Chapter 13	December 4 th
Chapter 14	December 11 th