

POLS Y103
Introduction to American Politics
Summer 2014 – Online Version

Professor Bianco
Office Hours: By appointment

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This course is an introduction to American national politics. The central premise is that nothing in politics happens by accident – everything you see is the result of the choices people make. The goal is to understand American politics by examining these choices and their consequences. The secondary emphasis is on facts, both to provide basic information about American politics and to demonstrate that there is evidence behind the theories and arguments presented in the class. The class will be ruthlessly contemporary, emphasizing the political issues, campaigns, and controversies that are part of our everyday life.

The sole text is *American Politics Today* (third edition). I have ordered an e-text for the class, which you get access to as part of your course registration – it is available on the Courseload tab in Oncourse.

The attached syllabus gives details on your daily assignments. **We will not meet as a class, either for lectures or for exams.** All of the assignments (including pretests but not exams) are available for completion in advance of the day they are listed in the syllabus – however they are due at 11:00 PM on the day they are listed (the same times hold for exams). However, while you can work ahead on assignments, you have to take exams at the times noted on the syllabus.

On a typical weekday (no weekend assignments), you will have the following assignments:

- take a 30-question multiple choice pretest
- read a chapter (and take notes)
- correct your mistakes on a previous pretest

On some days there will be no reading, but you will have a short written assignment.

In addition, at least two times per week (more if you prefer), you must sign into an on-line video conference with a course AI or the course instructor. We will send you an e-mail with connection details for each day. We will be using Adobe Connect software to run the video conferences. You will need a computer with a reliable internet connection, an up-to-date browser like Firefox, Safari, Explorer, or Chrome, a web cam, and Adobe Flash. If you don't have a cam, you can participate audio-only. Mobile users can download the Adobe Connect App. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING YOUR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE READY PRIOR TO THE START OF CLASS.**

Check-in sessions will be held at 10:00 am – 11:00 am Monday – Friday and 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm Monday – Thursday. You can sign in at any point in the time interval, and you don't

need to stay signed in more than 15 minutes. These sessions are to give you the opportunity to ask questions and for the course instructors to review material and prepare you for exams.

The pretests will be available on Oncourse and will be graded only for completion – they are intended to measure your knowledge and understanding BEFORE you read the assigned material. (However, to encourage attention, I will penalize students who do not take the pretests seriously – which is to say, if your grade is unrealistically low or if you complete the pretest in record time, you’ll be hearing from me, and not in a good way.) You’ll correct your pretests on the day after the exam – that is, you’ll make a Word copy of the exam, and add the correct answer and a textbook page reference to any questions you missed the first time around. The written assignments will focus on the significance of critical terms in each chapter, and are intended to give you practice before the actual exams.

There will be a total of four exams that will be available on Oncourse. Each exam will have 30 multiple choice questions that you must answer; you’ll also write two (out of three possible) short essays. Prior to each exam, I will distribute a list of key terms that might appear as an essay question. The exams will be open-book, meaning you can use the book as an information source when working on the exam. However, the exams are also timed (50 minutes), so you do not have time for extensive searches.

There is an additional source of review material for the exams: the Norton Study Space for the text – <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/american-politics-today3/>. (W. W. Norton is the publisher of the text.) This site has practice multiple choice questions and other material. All you need to do to use this site is register (free).

Your final grade will be the weighted average of your scores as follows:

- Exam 1 (10%)
- Exams 2, 3, and 4 (17.5% each)
- Chapter pretests (10%)
- Pretest corrections (10%)
- Written assignments (10%)
- Conference check-ins (7.5%)

If you have any questions on procedures (for example, assignments, course format) or substance (the information in the text), you can ask questions in an on-line conference, through the Oncourse Message Boards, or via an e-mail to me.

Finally, you are responsible for complying with IU’s policy on academic dishonesty – see <http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>.

Course Syllabus

Part 1: The Constitution

Monday, June 9

Take Chapter 2 Pretest
Check in using Adobe Connect (this does not count as one of your two per week)

Tuesday, June 10

Take Pretest Chapter 4
Read APT Chapter 2
Correct Pretest Chapter 2

Wednesday, June 11

Read APT Chapter 4
Correct Pretest Chapter 4

Thursday, June 12

Take Pretest: Chapter 9
Writing Assignment 1
Exam prep

Friday, June 13

Exam 1 (Chapters 2 and 4)

Part 2: Political Parties and Interest Groups

Monday June 16

Take Pretest: Chapter 7
Read: APT Chapter 9
Correct Pretest for Chapter 9

Tuesday June 17

Take Pretest: Chapter 5

Read APT Chapter 7
Correct Pretest Chapter 9

Wednesday June 18

Exam Prep
Writing Assignment 2

Thursday June 19

Exam 2 (Chapters 7, 9)

Part 3: Public Opinion, Elections, and the Media

Friday June 20

Take Pretest: Chapter 6
Read: APT Chapter 5
Correct Pretest Chapter 5

Monday June 23

Take Pretest: Chapter 8
Read: APT Chapter 6
Correct Pretest Chapter 6

Tuesday June 24

Take Pretest: Chapter 10
Read: APT Chapter 8
Correct Pretest Chapter 8

Wednesday June 25

Writing Assignment 3
Exam prep

Thursday June 26

Exam 3 (Chapters 5, 6, and 8)

Part 4: National Political Institutions

Friday June 27

Take Pretest: Chapter 11

Read: APT Chapter 10
Correct Pretest Chapter 10

Monday June 30

Take Pretest: Chapter 12
Read: APT Chapter 11
Correct Pretest Chapter 11

Tuesday July 1

Take Pretest: Chapter 13
Read: APT Chapter 12
Correct Pretest Chapter 12

Wednesday July 2

Read: APT Chapter 13
Correct Pretest Chapter 13
Prep for Final

Thursday July 3

Exam 4 (Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13)