

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**POL 101: American Government**

**Spring Semester / Session 2**

**March 11th - May 75th, 2024**

**INSTRUCTOR:**       SimonPeter Gomez, Ph.D.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a survey of topics in American government and politics. The objective is to establish a foundation upon which students can build an understanding of why our political structure, system, and values are as they are. With this foundation students can also begin to critically analyze political processes, issues and outcomes in the United States, and bring a basis of knowledge to future courses in the social sciences.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Janda, K., Berry, J.M., Goldman, J., Schildkraut, D.J., & Manna, P. (2018). *The challenge of democracy: American government in global politics* (14th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After completing this course, the student will be able to:

* Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for, and purposes of, government.

* Demonstrate how the structures, institutions and processes we choose to govern us influence political outcomes.

* Demonstrate an understanding of the methods that political scientists use to answer questions about the political world.

* Identify the variables that have influenced, and continue to influence, the dynamic trends in American government and politics.

**COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All assignments must be completed by the learner. Learners are expected to read and adhere to the Academic Integrity section of Reinhardt University’s Academic Catalog. Cases of academic dishonesty may result in expulsion from the University, a failing grade for the course, or a failing grade for the assignment.

The following are recognized as unacceptable forms of academic behavior at Reinhardt University:

* Plagiarizing, that is presenting words or ideas not your own as if they were your own. The words of others must be enclosed in quotation marks and documented. The source of the distinctive ideas must also be acknowledged through appropriate documentation. (NOTE: Strictly adhere to APA citation and referencing guidelines to avoid this).

* Submitting a paper written by another student or another person as if it were your own

* Submitting a paper containing sentences, paragraphs, or sections lifted from another student’s work or other publication; there must be written documentation.

* Submitting a paper written by you for another course or occasion without the explicit knowledge and consent of the instructor.

* Fabricating evidence or statistics that supposedly represent your original research.

* Cheating of any sort on tests, papers, projects, reports, etc.

* Using the internet inappropriately as a resource. See 3 above.

**CREDIT HOUR STATEMENT**

Courses offered in an 8-week session are twice as intensive as those held during a traditional full semester. Each week students should expect to spend 16 hours interacting with course content through a combination of direct instruction and out of class student work.

Examples of direct instruction may include viewing or reading course lectures, engaging in class forum discussions with the course instructor and other students, viewing or reading supplementary online content required by the instructor, completing course quizzes and/or examinations, and reading instructor announcements related to course material and instructor feedback on assignments.

Examples of out of class student work may include reading the assigned course textbook, doing independent library research, completing essay assignments, developing more extensive research papers, and studying in preparation for exams and quizzes.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS**

Knowledge of the material presented in this course will be evaluated based on the satisfactory completion of all coursework. Methods of instruction and learning include module reading assignments, discussion postings, video assignments, individual research, and weekly examinations.  Learners are expected to complete all module activities during the week they are assigned and in the manner prescribed.

**Reading Assignments**

Learner’s are expected to complete the assigned textbook readings for each module prior to participating in discussions and completing module examinations. The required textbook may be accessed through the "Vital Source Course Materials" link found in the left-side navigation menu.

**Module Discussion Posts**

Each module discussion posting must contain a minimum of a 200 word initial response. Deadlines for initial postings shall be published within individual module academic requirements. Initial posting requirements shall be specified for each module.

Learners must reply to THREE DIFFERENT students in the class with a minimum of a 100 word response. The responses must be substantive in nature by adding additional knowledge to the conversation. Deadlines for response postings shall be published within individual module academic requirements. Learners must reply to “follow up” discussion question posted by the instructor.

All postings and replies must adhere to APA 6th or7th edition writing style regarding citations and references. All postings must also employ proper grammar, punctuation, and correct spelling.

Students are not being graded on what they think. The focus will be on how well an argument is constructed; not on the shape, or position an argument takes.

**Module Examinations**

Each module shall require completion of a timed multiple choice examination.  Students should not start an examination unless prepared to answer each item.  A grade will be recorded upon submission or when the examination times out. The examination cannot be reopened by the student. Details regarding time limits and the number of examination items shall be published within individual module academic requirements.

**Position Paper**

Each student is required to submit a position paper of at least 1250 typed words (or about five typed, double spaced pages).

Please double space and include page numbers, and use a 12 point font.

The paper must comply with APA 6th or 7th edition writing style and include at least 5 academic sources.

The instructor reserves the right to apply a 10% academic penalty for each day the paper is late.

The following is a list of potential topics.    All students must have their topic approved by the professor in advance. Students are also free to choose a topic outside of this list.

* Should marijuana be legalized?
* Should the Electoral College be abolished?
* Should There Be a Wall of Separation Between Church & State?
* Should Abortion be Restricted?
* Should the U.S. be More Restrictive of Gun Ownership?
* Can Businesses Deny Services Based on a Customer’s Sexuality?
* Should college campuses ban hate speech?
* Should the death penalty be abolished?
* Should voter ID laws be outlawed?
* Should police officers be required to wear body cameras?
* Should for profit prisons be allowed in the U.S.?
* Do “three strikes” laws and other “get tough” approaches to fighting crime work?

Each topic has been stated in terms of a YES or NO question. Students may choose either the YES or NO side. Students will be required to critique the opposing position side in the paper.

**Tips for Doing Well:**

* First, get the arguments for BOTH sides down properly. While it is a position paper, a good one provides an honest and objective assessment of each side's argument.

* Second, identify weaknesses in BOTH arguments. This is the essence of the paper, to identify strengths and weaknesses of a policy positions.

* Ultimately, what side you come down upon will have no impact on your grade, what will is how well and honestly you presented and critiqued BOTH arguments.

The position paper must contain the following sections, labeled exactly as listed and in the exact order listed:

* **Title Page**. Use APA Style. See the [OWL at Purdue's APA Formatting and Style GuideLinks to an external site.](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html) for specific directions on the title page.

* **Issue Identification** (use this heading in your paper). Describe the controversy in brief as a way of introducing the audience to the issue. Then state the importance or significance of the issue, which is tell the audience why he or she should care about the issue. Also define any key concepts or terms essential to understanding the issue.

* **Evolution of the Controversy** (use this heading in your paper) . Trace the evolution of the controversy surrounding the issue and analyze the problems connected to the issue. Answer the questions of when did the issue arise and what caused it to be a controversy?

* **Position Statement** (use this heading in your paper) . Present your position on the issue. State your argument and present reasoning and evidence to support your position. Remember to cite additional sources. **Also identify the weaknesses in your side's argument in this section.**

* **Critique** (use this heading in your paper) . Briefly present and critique the opposing viewpoint. Be sure to identify the evidence that appears to refute your position and explain why this evidence is not valid. Critique the opposing view for errors in reasoning, faulty evidence, and omissions.

* **Conclusion** (use this heading in your paper). Restate your position and provide a concluding statement. Discuss how policy or the law should be changed to accommodate your position if necessary.

* **References** (use this heading in your paper) . A list of references in APA style. **At least five references are required for the paper**.  Use the [OWL at Purdue's APA Formatting and Style GuideLinks to an external site.](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_basic_rules.html) for assistance with APA citations and referencing.

**EVALUATION & GRADING**

The following grading scale will be utilized in the determination of the student’s course grade:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grade Percentage** | **Corresponding Letter Grade** |
| 90% to 100% | A |
| 80% to 89% | B |
| 70% to 79% | C |
| 60% to 69% | D |
| 0% to 59% | F |

**FINAL AVERAGE BREAKDOWN**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment Category** | **Final Grade Percentage** |
| Module Discussion Assignments | 45% |
| Module Examination | 45% |
| Position Paper | 10% |

**PROJECTED LEARNING SCHEDULE**

**Module 1:  March 11th – March 17th, 2024 (One week)**

* Chapter 1: Freedom, Order or Equality
* Chapter 2: Majoritarian or Pluralist Democracy

**Module 2: March 18th – March 24th, 2024 (One week)**

* Chapter 3: The Constitution
* Chapter 4: Federalism

**Module 3:  March 25th – March 31st, 2024 (One Week)**

* Chapter 5: Public Opinion & Political Socialization
* Chapter 6: The Media

**Module 4: April 1st - April 7th, 2024 (One Week)**

* Chapter 7: Participation & Voting
* Chapter 8: Political Parties

**Module 5: April 8th - April 14th, 2024 (One Week)**

* Chapter 9: Nomination, Elections, & Campaigns
* Chapter 10: Interest Groups

**Module 6: April 15th - April 21st, 2024 (One Week)**

* Chapter 11: Congress
* Chapter 12: The Presidency

**Module 7: April 22nd - May 5th, 2024 (Two Weeks)**

* Chapter 14: The Courts
* Chapter 15: Order & Civil Liberties

**ONLINE ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY**  
Students are accountable for all required work in each of their courses. They must assume full responsibility for class attendance in a way satisfactory to the instructor and for work missed because of absence. Since class sessions function not merely for individual learning but also for group interaction, absences can become a serious problem both for the individual and for the group.

This online course is delivered over a period of eight weeks with activities and assignments specified for each week. An online week is defined as being Monday 12:00 AM (EST) through Sunday at 11:59 PM (EST). Deadlines for attendance are based on Eastern Standard Time.  
A student will be considered in attendance for a given week of online instruction if he or she participates in the course. Participation is defined as posting a response to a discussion assignment or submitting a completed course room activity/assignment during the online week prior to Sunday at 11:59 PM (EST).

**Initial Course Participation**

A student who fails to participate during the first 8 calendar days of a course shall be administratively withdrawn from the course.

**Ongoing Course Participation**

Ongoing course participation is satisfied through the continued completion of course room activities, such as assignments or discussion question responses. Students who do not participate in a course for 7 or more consecutive days are not satisfying ongoing course participation.

Students who are not satisfying the ongoing course participation requirement will be notified  via University email. The learner must resume participation in the course within 3 calendar days following an absence.

Students who do not resume participation in the course will be administratively withdrawn from the course and issued a grade of “W” or “F”. A grade of “W” will be issued if the administrative withdrawal occurs before 11:59 PM (EST) on Monday of the fifth week of the course.

Students may be impacted academically and financially in the case of voluntary and administrative withdrawals. It is the student’s responsibility to understand these implications.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**  
Reinhardt University does not discriminate in any of its policies, programs, or activities on the basis of race, color, age, culture, national origin, socioeconomic status, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, physical (dis)ability or genetic information.

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 have a documented disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Academic Support Office (ASO).

Reinhardt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Therefore, if you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Academic Support Office (ASO). The ASO may be reached at 770-720-5567.