

POLS 1300A, American Political Systems (94070)

Tuesday & Thursday 8:30am—9:45am Lafayette L207

Dr. Jonathan Doc Bradley.

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Office: Old Mill, 5th Floor, Office #513

Office Hours: 10am-11am Tuesday and Thursday, 1pm-3pm Wednesday, or by appointment...or just email to see if I'm in.

Teaching Assistant: Zoe Fay; zfay@uvm.edu

Teaching Assistant Office: Old Mill 524 Wednesday 10:35a—11:35a

Add:

Assignments are to be turned in on time. If you need to submit an assignment late, you need to clear it with me first. I may be willing to accept assignments late if there are extenuating circumstances, but I reserve the right to deduct points automatically from that assignment because it is late. You must keep up with the schedule and when items are due.

Not every assignment will have a clear explanation of exactly what you need to do. Life is not full of explanations. You have to figure some things out on your own.

Merely doing everything you think you are supposed to do to meet the minimum requirement of the assignment is what an average student does to earn an average grade. "A" grades are not given out for bare-minimum. If you want to be exceptional or above average then you need to turn in above average or exceptional work.

Every student has the right to contest their grade on an assignment. My door is always open. However, if you wish to contest a grade you need to do it in person within a week of the grade being listed in bright space (depending on vacations and end of the semester). You need to come to my office either during office hours or by appointment. You need to be prepared to explain why you think you earned a better grade. Do not ask me to defend the grade you have earned. Do not complain via email, or ask me for a detailed explanation over email.

This course provides an overview of the political institutions, processes, and cultures in the United States. It also includes an examination of current political, economic, policies and social issues.

Course Objectives:

- 1) Understand the fundamental principles upon which the U. S. government is based.
- 2) Know the structure, responsibilities, and contemporary issues of the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches.
- 3) Be familiar with the civil liberties and civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States.
- 4) Examine the impact on the political system of American political culture and ideology, the political parties, interest groups, public opinion, and the media.

Textbooks and Other Readings:

- 1) **Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, Campbell and Spitzer *We the People* (14th Essentials Edition)** (ISBN 1324034793) This text is available at the UVM books stores and various other retailers. **IT IS THE ESSENTUALS EDITION. DO NOT GET THE BIG, HARD COVERED FULL EDITION.** Please do not ask me about the 13th edition. It is basically the

same as the 13th edition without the updated information from the 2022 elections. The difference to you is about half a letter grade. I can't really explain it any more than that.

- 2) **I reserve the right to assign other readings throughout the semester.** You will have several days to read any assignment made throughout the semester. These readings will be in relation to American Political Systems and the lectures.

Social Science Requirement (S1)

Students completing a course fulfilling the S1: Social Science requirement will:

- Be able to draw on course topics, materials, and activities to *describe* how individuals, groups or institutions affect and interact with each other.
- Be able to *identify and demonstrate understanding of* theories of human behavior, experience, institutions, or social systems addressed in the course.
- *Recognize and evaluate* methods and processes of systematic investigation in one or more applied examples of social science research.

Requirements:

1. **Communications:** I believe most problems can be prevented by effective and clear communication. Expect me to be one of your most communicative professors. Never be afraid to ask me questions or request clarifications.
 - a. Email communications must be via UVM student email. Do not send an email via Google, Yahoo, or other commercial providers. I will not answer emails sent in any medium other than UVM's student email system. Use email for all communication other than face to face.
 - b. Please avail yourself of my office hours. I am here to help you and teach you. I am thrilled by visits from students (honestly) who are seeking to learn and understand. My email address, office location, and office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus.
2. **Attendance:** I am not requiring attendance. Covid has broken me. I will control your participation by only placing a portion of my slides online, and those that I place online will be stripped down. About half the test comes from my slides. If you miss you will need to make arrangements with a fellow student to obtain notes. It will be hard for you to pass the class if you do not regularly attend, but every semester I have students who choose to not come to class and then fail the class. No sympathy. You volunteered to be here. Heck, you are paying to be here.
3. **Tardiness:** I loathe tardiness. Constant tardiness will not be tolerated. It is disrespectful to your fellow students, and much more importantly, it is disrespectful to me. I reserve the right to restrict access to the class if tardiness by any student(s) becomes an issue. If you have extenuating circumstances that will cause you to be consistently tardy, please contact me at the beginning of the semester about the situation. I am willing to make allowances for valid reasons.
4. **Examinations:** There will be four (4) exams, one at the conclusion of each major portion of the course. Exams will consist of 75 multiple choice and true false questions. If you miss an exam, and have a valid reason for doing so, it is your responsibility to contact me to schedule a makeup exam.
 - a. Each exam is worth 150 points, 15% of your final grade.

- b. You have only 72 hours from the end of the testing period to arrange a make-up exam if you have a valid reason for not completing the test in the allotted time.
 - i. No make-up exam will be given later than 3 days from the original exam date.
 - c. Regularly scheduled exams will be conducted via Brightspace. If you have any problems with Brightspace it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible. If you do not contact me within 72 hours of the end of the exam to rectify the problem, you will receive whatever grade Brightspace has assigned you.
 - d. There will be no make-up exam for the 4th (final) exam, and you may not take the 4th exam early or late regardless of reason. Do not make plans to leave the area until you know when the 4th exam is scheduled. The final exam will be open throughout most of finals week.
 - e. The first 3 exams will be conducted over a period of at least 4 days starting at the end of the last class and ending at midnight either on the test day or the day before the next class. You will be allowed 75 minutes for each exam. Once you start the exam you cannot save your work and pause the time. Once you start the exam you will have only 75 minutes to finish. If you do not finish in the allotted time the unanswered questions will be marked with a zero score. When you take your exam make sure you have 75 minutes of undisturbed time. **One class period will be devoted to exam time, meaning that one class period per exam will be used for the testing period. You will not need to come to class for that time period. If you like, you may use that period to complete your exam, but you can take the test at any time in multiday window.**
5. **Homework:** There will be three (4) homework assignments made throughout the semester. Each homework is worth 100 points, 10% of your final grade.
6. **Grading:** Your course grade will be an average of the grades on the four examinations, four homework assignments, and reading quizzes. Each exam will consist of 15% of your final grade. Each homework assignment will consist of 10% of your final grade.
- a. 4 Exams = 60% of final grade
 - b. 4 Homework Assignments = 40% of final grade
 - c. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:
 - i. 100% = A+, 99% - 93% = A, 92.9%-90% = A-; 89.9%-88% = B+, 87.9%-83% = B, 82.9%-80% = B-; 79.9%-78% = C+, 77.9%-72% = C, 71.9% - 70% = C-; 69% - 60% = D; below 60% = F
7. **Check your Grades:** Your test grades will be posted on the class Brightspace site after each exam. If you have a question about your exam, or if the grade is entered incorrectly in Brightspace, you must contact me within 72 hours after the posting of the grade to rectify the issue. **You must check your grades at least once a week.**
8. **Final Grade:** Your final letter grade will be posted in Brightspace within 48 hours of the end of the final. It is your responsibility to review it. If there are any problems let me know and I can rectify it before posting it to UVM. After the grade is posted to UVM it is very hard to change it. I am more likely to make changes over the weekend than after Monday. Problems with the grade are things like “Dr. Bradley you didn’t do the math right,” or “Dr. Bradley, I think you missed an assignment.” You simply not liking your grade is not my problem. Your grade is entirely on you. If you want a good grade decide

to work for it at the start of the semester as opposed to whining about a bad grade at the end of the semester.

- 9. Extra-Credit:** There will be no end-of-semester extra-credit opportunities. I have no sympathy what-so-ever for students who show up at the end of the semester begging for better grades. You are in complete control of your grade. If you want a good grade, then work for it. If you approach me at the end of the semester asking if there is anything you can do to improve your grade, I will tell you that the “anything” you need to do is invent a time machine, go back in time to the start of the class, and tell yourself to pay attention in class and do well on the test. If you want extra credit avail yourself of the opportunities provided throughout the semester.

10.

Classroom Behavior: Every student is entitled to a distraction-free classroom. Students may not behave in any manner that interferes with the learning of another student or my teaching. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. You must arrive and be prepared to begin class on time. I loathe tardiness. If you have a valid reason to be tardy, please inform me at the beginning of the semester. Don't be continually tardy and then try to explain to me at the end of the semester about the reasons. I am willing to be lenient on limited tardiness if there are extenuating circumstances and I am made aware of them before they happen.
2. Cell phones must be turned off and stored out of sight. Texting, accessing the internet, or reading email during class is absolutely prohibited and will result in your being asked to leave.
3. Laptops and tablets are allowed in class ONLY to take notes. You are not to access the internet (unless I request you to do so), check email or perform any other function on your computer that is not class related. I reserve the right to discontinue the use of all or individual electronic devices in class if they disrupt the learning environment.
4. No “side-bar” conversations or passing notes. Ignoring this rule will result in your being asked to leave. I do not tolerate students who are disruptive or inconsiderate of other students.
5. Do not do another class's homework in this class.
6. Recording devices are permitted with permission. Any recording made of the class needs to be converted to an mp3 format or some other easily playable format and emailed to the instructor before the next class.
7. No food or beverages (except water in a sealable container) are allowed in the classroom.
8. Classroom behavior should always be courteous, respectful of others, and consistent with the expectations set forth by the university.

Schedule and Readings: You are responsible for reading all the assigned material for each lecture. You will not pass this class without reading the assigned material. You will not graduate from college without reading copious amounts of boring stuff so you might as well start now.

Section 1

Aug 29: Introduction, Syllabus,

Aug 31: Lecture: The Citizens and the Government

Read: **We the People (WTP)** Ch.1

Sep 5: What do all the labels mean?

Read: Nothing! I will lecture. Take notes.

Sep 7: The operator's manual of the United States of America.

Read: **WTP** Ch.2; **WTP** US Constitution (back of book).

Sep 12 & 14: The way it works: Federalism!

Read: **WTP** Ch.3.

Sep 19: EXAM 1 for SECTION 1: This exam will be conducted on **Brightspace**. It will begin as soon as you leave class on the 14th and end at midnight on the 19th. There is no class on the 19th. That is the exam day, **do not come to class**. The exam will be **75 minutes** long. Make sure you will not be disturbed for the 75 minutes it takes to complete the test. If you have problems taking the exam, contact me as soon as possible. **DO NOT PUT THE EXAM OFF TILL THE LAST MINUTE.**

Section II

Sep 21: The Congress: That would be the House and Senate (Maybe some Executive Branch).

Read: **WTP** Ch.10; Art I, U.S. Constitution.

Sep 26: The Executive and the Bureaucracy: The big cheese and his minions.

Read: **WTP** Ch.11-12; Article II, U.S. Constitution

Sep 28: The men (and women!) in black: The Supremes and the Federal Courts.

Read: **WTP** Ch.13.

Oct 3 & 5: The Fourth Estate: The Media

Read: **WTP** Ch. 7

Oct 10: EXAM 2 for SECTION II: This exam will be conducted on Brightspace. It will begin as soon as you leave class on the 5th and end at midnight on the 10th. **NO CLASS ON THE 10th. That is the exam day, do not come to class.** The exam will be 75 minutes long. Make sure you will not be disturbed for the 75 minutes it takes to complete the test. If you have problems taking the exam, contact me as soon as possible. **DO NOT PUT THE EXAM OFF TILL THE LAST MINUTE.**

Section III

Oct 12 & 17: Civil Liberties. Our rights and liberties.

Read: **WTP** Ch. 4; Amendments 1-10 (Bill of Rights) or the US Constitution.

Oct 19 & 24: Civil Rights: Trust me, you are where you are because of them.

Read: **WTP** Ch. 5; Amendments 13, 14, 15, 19, 24, 26 of the US Constitution.

Oct 26: Public Opinion: What you think matters (not to me, but maybe to politicians).
Read: **WTP** Ch. 6

Oct 31: Participation, Campaigns & Elections: That means you!
Read: WTP Ch 9

Nov 2 & 7: Political Parties & Interest Groups.
Read: WTP Ch. 8

Nov 9: EXAM 3 for SECTION III: This exam will be conducted on Brightspace. It will begin as soon as you leave class on the 7th and end at midnight on the 12th. **There is no class on the 9th. That is the exam day, do not come to class.** The exam will be 75 minutes long. Make sure you will not be disturbed for the 75 minutes it takes to complete the test. If you have problems taking the exam, contact me as soon as possible. **DO NOT PUT THE EXAM OFF TILL THE LAST MINUTE.**

Section IV

Nov 14: Domestic Policy: The Economics of the US.
Read: **WTP** Ch.14

Nov 16: Capitalism in America. Everybody acts like they understand it, but most don't.
Read: No readings

Nov 28 & 30: Domestic Policy: Social Policy in the US.
Read: WTP Ch. 14

Dec 5: Foreign Policy: It matters more as much as it doesn't matter.
Read: **WTP** Ch.15.

Dec 7: Catch-up day

Final Exam Week: Dec 11-14

EXAM 4 for SECTION IV. The Final Exam is not comprehensive. It will only cover the Section IV. The test will be conducted on Brightspace from Monday morning the 11th till 11:59PM Thursday (14 Oct) night. There is no make up for the final. **Remember to review your final letter grade in Brightspace after the final test. You have till Sunday, Oct 17, to contest your final letter grade.**

The Minutia

UVM's Department of Political Science Classroom Protocol:

a) Students are expected to attend and be prepared for ALL regularly scheduled classes.

b) Students are expected to arrive on time and stay in class until the class period ends. If a student knows in advance that the student will need to leave early, the student should notify the instructor before the class period begins.

c) Students are expected to treat faculty and fellow students with respect. For example, students must not disrupt class by leaving and reentering during class, must not distract class by making noise, and must be attentive to comments being made by the instructors and by peers.

Academic Integrity:

Remember the University of Vermont's motto: *Studiis et Rebus Honestis* ("For honorable studies and pursuits").

The University strives to provide an environment that encourages all students (undergraduate, medical, graduate, and continuing education) to learn, create, and share knowledge responsibly. As society entrusts our students and faculty to pursue knowledge and report their discoveries truthfully, any deliberate falsehood or misrepresentation undermines the stature of the University. These standards are also necessary for evaluating the quality of student work in a fair manner.

The policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

<https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/UVM-Policies/policies/acadintegrity.pdf> (PDF link)

Athlete Student & Academic Absences

If you are the member of a UVM recognized sports team and you need to miss class for a University sanctioned event please provide me with the relevant documentation before your absence. A simple "hey, I got a game next Monday" will not cut it. If you need to miss class for a University sanctioned academic event please provide me with the relevant documentation before your absence. A simple "hey, I got a thing next Monday" will not cut it.

Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS)

Phone: (802) 656-3340

If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at <https://www.uvm.edu/deanofstudents>.

Counseling and Psychiatry Services: <https://www.uvm.edu/health/CAPS>

There is honor in seeking help and fools refuse it when they need it. And hopefully you will never need this, but it is better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it: The Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255.

Course Evaluation

All students are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. These evaluations are anonymous and confidential. They are important for faculty to consider when designing and improving courses, and for the annual review and promotion considerations of faculty.

FERPA

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/ferpa.pdf> (PDF link)

Grade Appeals:

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy:

<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf> (PDF link)

Physical Health:

The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community. College is stressful. The professor wants you to pay attention to your physical and mental health. If you feel that either one of them are in jeopardy in any way, please contact the UVM Center for Health & Wellbeing. I encourage you to wear a mask in class for your and my safety. And you are feeling infectious with anything go to the wellness center instead of coming to class. Bring me the doctor's note and I will excuse your absence. <https://www.uvm.edu/health>

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing ADA accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS), the office of Disability Services on campus for students. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly recommended to discuss with their faculty the accommodations they plan to use in each course. Faculty who receive Letters of Accommodation with Disability Related Flexible accommodations will need to fill out the Disability Related Flexibility Agreement. Any questions from faculty or students on the agreement should be directed to the SAS specialist who is indicated on the letter. For more info see: <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/disability.pdf> (PDF link)

Religious Holidays Policy – Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

Tutoring

UVM provides you with a tutoring center.

https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/tutoring_center

However, remember my office hours. If you are needing extra understanding of the material in this course please come to my office hours or make an appointment with me at both our conveniences.

UVM Writing Center

Need some help with your writing? We all do from time to time. UVM provides and undergraduate writing center to help you start, work-on, and complete your writing assignments. Please avail yourself of this service: <https://www.uvm.edu/undergradwriting>

Final Examinations:

The University final exam policy outlines expectations during final exams and explains timing and process of examination period.

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/examsandgrading/>

Statement on Alcohol and Cannabis in the Academic Environment

As a faculty member, I want you to get the most you can out of this course. You play a crucial role in your education and in your readiness to learn and fully engage with the course material. It is important to note that alcohol and cannabis have no place in an academic environment. They can seriously impair your ability to learn and retain information not only in the moment you may be using, but up to 48 hours or more afterwards. In addition, alcohol and cannabis can:

- Cause issues with attention, memory and concentration
- Negatively impact the quality of how information is processed and ultimately stored
- Affect sleep patterns, which interferes with long-term memory formation

It is my expectation that you will do everything you can to optimize your learning and to fully participate in this course.