

Political Science 122, Section 2
American Government and Politics
MWF 10:00-10:50
Morgan Hall 316

Professor: Kimberly J. Rice, PhD
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Course Description and Goals

This course is a basic introduction to the key themes, concepts and organization of the American system of politics and government. We will cover multiple concepts such as ideology, democracy and liberty while also discussing the more specific role of the major branches and actors in the organization of government. In addition to gaining basic knowledge of the American political process, students will also have the opportunity to improve their writing and exercise analytical skills through the completion of two discussion papers. Moreover, the final topics in the course will be dedicated to examining contemporary policy issues such as the healthcare debate and the war on terrorism. Given that this is an election year, this session of the course will also be marked by election coverage and discussion. Finally, through both the readings and lecture, students will also be exposed to some of the primary theories in political science surrounding topics in American politics. Thus, students should leave the course not only with an understanding of American government, but also with a general knowledge of some of the key theories and practices in the study of American government by political scientists.

Required Text

Kollman, Ken. 2012. *The American Political System*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
ISBN 978-0-393-92696-5

This textbook frames the issues, ideas and concepts of American government around key empirical puzzles from the real world. We will be discussing these puzzles in lecture and much of our discussions will be framed around these puzzles; thus, it is crucial that you purchase and read the text as assigned. An online or electronic copy of the text is perfectly acceptable, so long as it is the version of the text that includes the policy chapters at the end.

Students are also expected to consume a daily news source to keep apprised of important issues in U.S. and global politics.

Expectations

I expect all students to behave as professionals. Any student who is disruptive will be asked to leave. This includes such things as reading the newspaper, talking during lecture or being disrespectful to the instructor or other students. Students are expected to arrive on time, complete all work including readings, and ask early and often if you need additional assistance. *Late work will not be accepted nor*

will make-up exams be given without a legitimate excuse. I reserve the right to impose grade deductions up to 15 points per day for late work if necessary.

Course Requirements and Grading:

All assignments and exams will be graded out of 100 points and individual assignment grades will be posted on Western Online.

Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%
Reaction Papers	20%
Attendance / Participation	5%

Exams

There will be three exams for this course, each worth 25% of your final grade. The exam dates are noted in the course schedule. All exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, true/false, written identification, and short answer. The final exam will be held during our regularly scheduled final exam time, but *is not cumulative* and will be the same length as the other exams. Exam review sheets will be posted on Western Online one week before all exams and time will be made available during lecture for exam review.

Discussion Papers

Each student will also complete two discussion papers. Each paper is worth 10% of your final grade. Papers should be no less than three pages in length and no more than five pages in length and should be in a conventional format (i.e. one inch margins, regular sized text, etc.). Make sure to answer all parts of the prompt questions for each paper. A good discussion paper will incorporate what you have learned from the text and class lecture with your own opinion and will be based on a critical assessment of the issue. Thus, while I am asking for your opinion in these papers, this should be carefully crafted to reflect what you “know” or “think” rather than how you “feel” about an issue. We will discuss these papers more in class and students are welcome to attend office hours to discuss their papers.

Paper 1: Due Friday October 26th at the beginning of class

During this section of the course, we will have learned about how individuals develop political attitudes and opinions and how these opinions translate into actual voting behavior. Using what you now know about political participation, public opinion, and campaigns and elections, write a paper that answers the following: who will win the presidential election this November and why?

Note: The question is not who you want to win, but which candidate you think will win. Be sure to base your answer in the facts and knowledge gained from your readings and lecture. If you use outside sources, be sure to cite within your paper and include a works cited at the end of the paper.

Paper 2: Due Friday November 16th at the beginning of class

During this section of the course, we will have learned about the different powers, responsibilities and limitations on each of the major branches, or institutions, of the federal government. Using what you now know about Congress, the president, the bureaucracy and the judiciary, write a paper that answers the following: which institution is the most powerful in contemporary U.S. politics? What makes this institution the most powerful and how does this institution exert power and influence over the other branches?

Note: Make sure not only to describe the institution that you see as most powerful, but to compare the institutions to enhance your argument. For example, if you think the presidency is the most powerful institution, you would want to describe how the president can exert power over Congress, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. If you use outside sources, be sure to cite within your paper and include a works cited at the end of the paper.

Attendance / Participation

It is your responsibility to attend lecture on a regular basis. Throughout the semester, at random intervals, I will be assigning in-class work that will be used to calculate your attendance / participation grade. Attendance and participation is worth 5% of your overall grade. Each time you complete one of these assignments, you will earn one percentage point and you can earn, over the course of the semester, all 5%. I will be offering these random assignments *at least seven times* over the semester so you can miss two opportunities without suffering a deduction. If you need to miss class for a legitimate reason, it is your responsibility to contact the professor via email. *Students who are present for seven (or more) opportunities will receive one additional percentage point of extra credit added to their final grade. No other extra credit will be offered in this course.*

Grading Scale – again, all paper and exam grades will be out of 100 and then weighted according to the percentages above.

100-93	A	87-83	B	77-73	C	67-63	D
92-90	A-	82-80	B-	72-70	C-	62-60	D-
89-88	B+	79-78	C+	69-68	D+	59 – 0	F

Academic Integrity

I take the possession of “intellectual property” extremely seriously, as does the University. As such, no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. You are expected to acquaint yourself with the university’s Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity Policies, which are available at the following URLs:

<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students/>

<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

Anyone caught cheating or in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to punishment under the guidelines laid out by the policy.

You can also visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml> for more details and an excellent discussion of what constitutes plagiarism. “I didn’t know” will not be a valid excuse. For the

discussion papers, you need only include (author year, page #) when quoting from the textbook - (Kollman 2012, 393) for example. No outside resources should be necessary for this course; however, if you choose to use outside sources while writing your papers, I expect you to fully cite these sources in a consistent manner. This includes listing online sources with links at the end of your paper.

Special Needs

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies me of the need for an accommodation. For me to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center and provide it to me. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact me as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact the Disability Resource Center at 298-2512 for additional services.

Writing Center

The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. It is a great resource for students who need one – on-one assistance with writing. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall 341. Call for an appointment (298-2815).

Course Schedule / Reading Assignments

I reserve the right to make changes to schedule as needed, but no additional work or reading will be assigned. Students will be informed of any changes via email and in class.

Week of 8/20

Monday 8/20 – course introduction

Wednesday 8/22 and Friday 8/24 – Kollman Ch. 1

Week of 8/27

The Constitution – Kollman Ch. 2

Week of 9/3

Federalism – Kollman Ch. 3

Monday 9/3 – *No Class*

Week of 9/10

Civil Rights and Liberties – Kollman Ch. 4

Week of 9/17

Interest Groups – Kollman Ch. 11

Week of 9/24

Political Parties – Kollman Ch. 12

Friday 9/28 – *In class exam review*

Week of 10/1

Monday 10/1 – *First Exam in class*
Political Participation – Kollman Ch. 10

Week of 10/8

Public Opinion – Kollman Ch. 9
Friday 10/12 – *No Class*

Week of 10/15

Elections and Campaigns – Kollman Ch. 13

Week of 10/22

Mass Media and the Press – Kollman Ch. 14
Friday 10/26 – *In class exam review & 1st discussion paper due in class*

Week of 10/29

Monday 10/29 – *Second Exam in Class*
Congress – Kollman Ch. 5

Week of 11/5 – ELECTION 2012

The President and the Bureaucracy – Kollman Ch. 6 and Ch. 7
Parts of this week will also be dedicated to election coverage

Week of 11/12

The Judiciary – Kollman Ch. 8
Friday 11/16 – *2nd discussion paper due in class*

Week of 11/19 – *NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK*

Weeks of 11/26 and 12/3

Economic, Social, and Foreign Policy – Kollman Ch. 15, 16, 17
The last day of class will be dedicated to review for the final exam

Final Exam: Monday, December 10th 10:00-11:50