



**POLITICAL SCIENCE 100 Online:
American Government & Politics
FALL 2020**

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This course fulfills the Common Curriculum Requirements for College Learning Outcome One (COL1) for Social Sciences (S).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What better way to understand American government than to take this course during a presidential election year during a pandemic? Are you are confused or frustrated by the U.S. response to COVID? This course will explore why the Framers designed our government how they did, the pros and cons of how federalism and the separation of branches operate today, and what might need to be reformed.

How does wearing a face mask become politicized? We will also explore how people become Republicans, Democrats, or Independents (and what the differences are) and the impact of increased polarization. We will take a close look at the role the media play, particularly the growing influence of “fake news” and social media. And as we follow the 2020 election, we will explore why and how people vote (or don’t), and how to measure and analyze public opinion accurately.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through readings, research, writing, assignments, and discussion students will develop skills that will increase:

1. the critical examination of the source and content of one's politically relevant values and attitudes
2. the formulation of factually sound conclusions about American politics using political science research methods
3. the ability to think critically and to argue effectively
4. engagement in contemporary politics

REQUIRED READINGS

Karen O'Connor and Larry Sabato, Revel for American Government: Roots and Reform, Access Card, 14th Edition. (Note: this is an online book to be published August, 2020 – ISBN/ordering information will be emailed to you directly.)

Current Events (please follow current events in the news from contrasting sources)

Canvas: Canvas is used to post all course documents including the course syllabus, quizzes, class notes, assignments, and review questions. Please check Canvas and your MBU email on a regular basis.

Readings and Class Notes: I recommend that you break up each chapter into small increments of reading and take handwritten notes with a list of concepts and questions. Class notes complimenting the reading for each module are also posted on Canvas. Class notes are annotated, but you may have questions. Take notes to prevent rushing through the content and follow up with questions.

Online Office Hours & Class Discussion: There will be an optional online Q&A discussion session weekly, recorded and posted on Canvas for those who cannot attend.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EVALUATION

Grades for each assignment are posted in the gradebook on Canvas. Regardless of how Canvas displays your grade online, your final grade is based on this **weighted formula**:

Quizzes	10%
Research and Reflection Assignments	25%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam (cumulative)	25%

COVID: The schedule is set to keep students on track towards successful completion of this course. We are, however, in the midst of a global pandemic and cannot predict how the virus will have an effect on our daily lives. Due dates embedded on Canvas, therefore, are flexible provided students coordinate with me.

Quizzes: Each Module includes an online quiz covering the readings and class notes assigned in that Module. Quizzes are posted on Canvas and assess comprehension of core concepts. They are open book/notes and should be completed at the end of each module, before moving on to the next module. You can only take a quiz once, so make sure that you do not rush through each quiz. Take advantage of your notes and books.

In addition to the online quizzes, there are optional review questions for each module posted on Canvas. As you complete each module, draft responses to the review

questions and ask for help if needed (these are not turned in). This slow and steady review process provides excellent preparation for exams.

Research & Reflection Assignments: Each module will have a hands-on research and writing assignment (1-3 pages) designed to infuse current events (particularly the 2020 presidential election politics) into the course content. Guidelines for each assignment will be posted on Canvas.

Grading Rubric for Research and Reflection Assignments:

100 points	Complete & submitted on time
75 points	Late, incomplete, or does not meet expectations
0 points	No submission

Exams: Exams include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Exams are OPEN COURSE MATERIALS (this means that you may use the textbook and class notes, but **NOT** the internet). Please note that the exams require more critical thinking and analysis than the quizzes. You will need to understand the significance of concepts and how they apply to current events. Do not rush through the exams -- particularly the essay portion. I will be looking for thorough comprehension of the topics, clearly explained using examples to support your answer. You are tested on the course materials presented in this class. Do not be tempted to Google answers – use your course materials.

In preparing for exams, focus on the required materials in this course:

- Have you finished all assigned readings for the exam?
- Did you take notes on your assigned readings and class materials?
- Did you finish the quiz for each module?
- Did you read the introduction for each Module on Canvas?
- Have you reviewed the class notes for each Module?
- Have you looked over the review questions for each Module?
- Can you answer the review questions posted on Canvas and provide examples to show that you really understand the question? Have you practiced writing answers?
- Did you make a list of concepts for each of the Modules covered on the exam?
- Do you have any questions? Have you asked for assistance?

Honor Code: The policy of Mary Baldwin University concerning cheating and plagiarism is strictly followed in this course.

Pledge of Inclusivity

We, the community of Mary Baldwin University, strive to celebrate humanity in all its wondrous and complex variation. Because we value diversity, it is our mission to sustain a community where all may flourish. We are safe to embrace our shared experiences and our differences. To this end, we treat all with respect and compassion.

COURSE SCHEDULE		
Week # (Begins)	Module	Assignments
Week 1 (8/24)	Introduction	O'Connor Chapter 1 Introduce Yourself to the Class
Week 2 (8/31)	Module 1: Constitution	O'Connor Chapter 2 Quiz Module 1 Research & Reflection Module 1
Week 3 (9/7)	Module 2: Federalism	O'Connor Chapter 3 Quiz Module 2 Research & Reflection Module 2
Week 4 (9/14)	Module 3: Public Opinion	O'Connor Chapter 10 Quiz Module 3 Research & Reflection Module 3
Week 5 (9/21)	Module 4: Political Parties	O'Connor Chapter 11 Quiz Module 4 Research & Reflection Module 4
EXAM 1		
Week 6 (9/28)	Module 5: Elections	O'Connor Chapter 12 Quiz Module 5 Research & Reflection Module 5
Week 7 (10/5)	Module 6: Media	O'Connor Chapter 13 Quiz Module 6 Research & Reflection Module 6
Week 8 (10/12)	Module 7: Interest Groups	O'Connor Chapter 14 Quiz Module 7 Research & Reflection Module 7
Week 9 (10/19)	Module 8: Congress	O'Connor Chapter 6 Quiz Module 8 Research & Reflection Module 8
EXAM 2		
Week 10 (10/26)	Module 9: Presidency	O'Connor Chapters 7 & 8 Quiz Module 9 Research & Reflection Module 9
Week 11 (11/2)	Module 10: Judiciary	O'Connor Chapter 9 Quiz Module 10 Research & Reflection Module 10
Week 12 (11/9)	Module 11: Civil Liberties	O'Connor Chapter 4 Quiz Module 11 Research & Reflection Module 11
Week 13 (11/16)	Module 12: Civil Rights	O'Connor Chapter 5 Quiz Module 12 Research & Reflection Module 12
Week 14 (11/23)	Reading Days 11/23-11/24; Thanksgiving Break 11/25-11/29	
Reading Period and Final Exam Period 11/30-12/4		

