

BGSU Firelands College Credit Plus American Government Syllabus

Course Information

BGSU Firelands Political Science 1100-American Government
Credit: .50 / one semester of Huron High School Credit
3 semester hours of BGSU credit

Teacher Contact Information

Mrs. Heather Merckens
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Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

Prerequisites: Students must fulfill all requirements necessary to enroll in BGSU Firelands Dual Enrollment course(s). Please review the Huron HS Program Planning Guide and contact the Huron HS guidance office for details.

Course Description

Political Science 1100 is the introductory course in American Government and Politics at Bowling Green State University. It is a prerequisite for upper level courses in American Government, one of six fields of study in political science (the other fields are: Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory, Public Administration, and Public Law). Political Science 1100 will provide the engaged student with a solid foundation of the Constitutional underpinnings and principles of the American system as well as a working knowledge of American governmental institutions and political processes.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will both fulfill the basic learning objectives for American Government of the Ohio Department of Education and satisfy the more rigorous and analytical Political Science course expectations of BGSU Firelands.

Basic Ohio Department of Education Standards may be found at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. There will be disciplinary action against any student suspected of dishonesty. Academic dishonesty can include cheating in class on exams or quizzes and plagiarizing/copying answers or information from anyone else's materials (including from Internet sources). All offenders will be subject to disciplinary action through Huron HS. From *the Huron HS Student Handbook*:

1st offense by class----- Parent contacted, Zero (0) points on work and TWO detentions

2nd offense by class----- Failure for semester

Students may also be subject to the "Code of Academic Conduct" section of the *BGSU Student Handbook*: <http://bgsu.edu/downloads/sa/file15768.pdf>

Required (and provided) Textbooks and Materials

Henschen, Beth and Edward I. Sidlow. GOVT 4. Boston: Wadsworth Publishing, 2012.
(Print with Political Science CourseMate and eBook Printed Access Card)

Rourke, John T. You Decide! UConn: Pearson, 2012.

Disability:

In addition to services received at HHS, students with a verified disability may also request additional services at the BGSU Firelands Office of Disability Services for Students, located in the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) Room 230, North Building.

Academic Calendar

Mrs. Merckens will provide updated and specific assignments in class, but this is an outline of chapters, topics, and major due dates.

	<u>GOVT 4 Chapter & Topic</u>	<u>You Decide! Reader Chapter</u>
Week 1	Ch. 1, America in the 21st Century	
	With Video, Discussion and References to <u>All the King's Men</u>	
	<i>Learning Objectives:</i>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain what is meant by the terms politics and government.2. Identify the various types of government systems.3. Summarize some of the basic principles of American democracy and the basic American political values.4. Define common American ideological positions, such as "conservatism" and "liberalism."	
Week 2	Ch. 2, The Constitution & Federalist No. 10 & No. 51	Ch. 1, The Health Insurance Mandate
	<i>Learning Objectives:</i>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Point out some of the influences on the American political tradition in the colonial years.2. Explain why the American colonies rebelled against Britain.3. Describe the structure of government established by the Articles of Confederation and some of the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles.4. List some of the major compromises made by the delegates at the Constitutional Convention, and discuss the Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions on ratifying the Constitution.5. Summarize the Constitution's major principles of government, and describe how the Constitution can be amended.	
Week 3	Ch. 3, Federalism	Ch. 2, Arizona's Immigration Law
	<i>Learning Objectives:</i>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain what federalism means, how federalism differs from other systems of government, and why it exists in the United States.2. Indicate how the Constitution divides governing powers in our federal system.3. Summarize the evolution of federal-state relationships in the United States over time.4. Describe developments in federalism in recent years.5. Explain what is meant by the term fiscal federalism.	

Week 4 Ch. 4, Civil Liberties**Ch. 3, "Under God" in the Pledge***Learning Objectives:*

1. Define the term civil liberties, explain how civil liberties differ from civil rights, and state the constitutional basis for our civil liberties.
2. List and describe the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment and explain how the courts have interpreted and applied these freedoms.
3. Discuss why Americans are increasingly concerned about privacy rights.
4. Summarize how the Constitution and the Bill of Rights protect the rights of accused persons.

Week 5 Ch. 5, Civil Rights**Ch. 4, California's Proposition 8***Learning Objectives:*

1. Explain the constitutional basis for our civil rights and for laws prohibiting discrimination.
2. Discuss the reasons for the civil rights movement and the changes it caused in American politics and government.
3. Describe the political and economic achievements of women in this country over time and identify some obstacles to equality that women continue to face.
4. Summarize the struggles for equality that other groups in America have experienced.
5. Explain what affirmative action is and why it has been so controversial.

1st Exam on Wednesday, Sept. 23, over Chapters 1-5 and Corresponding Readings**Week 6 Ch. 6, Interest Groups****Ch. 8, Corporations in Elections***Learning Objectives:*

1. Explain what an interest group is, why interest groups form, and how interest groups function in American politics.
2. Identify the various types of interest groups.
3. Discuss how the activities of interest groups help to shape government policymaking.
4. Describe how interest groups are regulated by government.

Week 7 Ch. 7, Political Parties**Ch. 9, Two Views of the Tea Partiers***Learning Objectives:*

1. Summarize the origins and development of the two-party system in the United States.
2. Describe the current status of the two major parties.
3. Explain how political parties function in our democratic system.
4. Discuss the structure of American political parties.
5. Describe the different types of third parties and how they function in the American political system.

Week 8 Ch. 8, Public Opinion & Voting**Ch.5, Melting Pot Broken?***Learning Objectives:*

1. Explain how public opinion polls are conducted, problems with polls, and how they are used in the political process.
2. Describe the political socialization process.
3. Discuss the different factors that affect voter choices.
4. Indicate some of the factors that affect voter turnout, and discuss what has been done to improve voter turnout and voting procedures.

Week 9 Ch. 9, Campaigns & Elections**Ch. 6, Photo ID to Vote? &****Ch. 10, The Electoral College***Learning Objectives:*

1. Explain how elections are held and how the electoral college functions in presidential elections.
2. Discuss how candidates are nominated.
3. Indicate what is involved in launching a political campaign today, and describe the structure and functions of a campaign organization.
4. Describe how the Internet has transformed political campaigns.
5. Summarize the laws that regulate campaign financing and the role of money in modern political campaigns.

2nd Exam on Wednesday, October 21, over Chapters 6-9 and Corresponding Readings

Week 10 Ch. 10, Politics & the Media/Elections Ch. 7, Quality Journalism

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the role of the media in a democracy.
2. Summarize how television influences the conduct of political campaigns.
3. Explain why talk radio has been described as the Wild West of the media.
4. Describe types of media bias and explain how such bias affects the political process.
5. Indicate the extent to which the Internet is reshaping news and political campaigns.

Week 11 Ch. 11, Congress Ch. 11, Senate Filibusters

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain how seats in the House of Representatives are apportioned among the states.
2. Describe the power of incumbency.
3. Identify the key leadership positions in Congress, describe the committee system, and indicate some important differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate.
4. Summarize the specific steps in the lawmaking process.
5. Identify Congress's oversight functions and explain how Congress fulfills them.
6. Indicate what is involved in the congressional budgeting process.

Week 12 Ch. 12, The Presidency Ch. 12, Use of War Powers Excessive?

Learning Objectives:

1. List the constitutional requirements for becoming president.
2. Explain the roles that a president adopts while in office.
3. Indicate the scope of presidential powers.
4. Describe advantages enjoyed by Congress and by the president in their institutional relationship.
5. Discuss the organization of the executive branch and the role of cabinet members in presidential administrations.

Week 13 Ch. 13, The Bureaucracy Ch. 13, Financial Protection Dangerous?

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the size and functions of the U.S. bureaucracy.
2. Discuss the structure and basic components of the federal bureaucracy.
3. Say when the federal civil service was established, and explain how bureaucrats get their jobs.
4. Explain how regulatory agencies make rules and how issue networks affect policymaking in government.
5. Identify some of the ways in which the government has attempted to curb waste and improve efficiency in the bureaucracy.

Papers Due by Tuesday, November 24—Before Thanksgiving Break!
Please see the end of the syllabus for the paper topic.

Week 14 Ch. 14, The Judiciary Ch. 14, Interpreting the Constitution

Learning Objectives:

1. Summarize the origins of the American legal system and the basic sources of American law.
2. Delineate the structure of the federal court system.
3. Say how federal judges are appointed.
4. Explain how the federal courts make policy.
5. Describe the role of ideology and judicial philosophies in judicial decision making.
6. Identify some of the criticisms of the federal courts and some of the checks on the power of the courts.

Week 15 Ch. 15, Domestic Policy

Ch. 16, Balanced Budget Amendment?

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain what domestic policy is, and summarize the steps in the policymaking process.
2. Discuss the issue of health-care funding and recent legislation on universal health insurance.
3. Summarize the issues of energy independence, global warming, and alternative energy sources.
4. Describe the two major areas of economic policymaking.

Week 16 Ch. 16, Foreign Policy

Ch. 17, Civilian Courts or Military Commissions for Terror Suspects

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss how foreign policy is made, and identify the key players in this process.
2. Summarize the history of American foreign policy through the years.
3. Identify the foreign policy challenges presented by terrorism.
4. Explain the principal issues dividing the Israelis and the Palestinians and the solutions proposed by the international community.
5. Outline some of the actions taken by the United States to curb the threat of nuclear weapons.
6. Describe China's emerging role as a world power.

3rd Exam on Thursday, Dec. 17, over Chapters 10-16 and Corresponding Readings

Week 17 NW Ordinance/Ohio Constitution/
State & Local Political Issues

*Ch. 15, Should States Collect Sales Tax
for Online Purchases?*

Week 18 Review and Comprehensive Final Exam

Grading Policy

Final Course Grades:

The first nine weeks grade will consist of:

- 60% Exams
- 20% Assessment of BGSU Canvas Posts about "America at Odds" Debate Topics per Chapter
- 20% Reader Discussion and Presentation

The second nine weeks grade will consist of:

- 30% Exam
- 30% Paper Assignment
- 20% Assessment of BGSU Canvas Posts about "America at Odds" Debate Topics per Chapter
- 20% Reader Discussion and Presentation

Your semester grade will consist of:

- 40% First Quarter
- 40% Second Quarter
- 20% Comprehensive Final Exam

Exams:

These will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer exams over the assigned chapters. Please remember that this is a college course. You will need to complete your readings and homework when they are assigned in order to progress through the materials and prepare for the exams. I have set one date for each exam on the course outline, but our class periods are shorter than in a college setting. As a result, the exams will begin on the date noted, but we will usually have a second part of the exam on the following day.

Presentations and Discussion out of our Reader, *You Decide! 2012*:

Students will read all assigned selections out of *You Decide! 2012*. However, students will also be responsible for outlining specific readings throughout the semester and presenting them with a counterpart to the class in an opposing viewpoints format. This will encourage students to understand both sides of the debated issues and foster deeper discussions.

America at Odds Canvas Posts:

Students will read the “America at Odds” debate in our textbook for each chapter through BGSU Firelands’ Canvas system. There will be a specific driving question, and each student must respond in a well-written and thoughtful 5-sentence paragraph for complete credit.

Course & Instructor Policies

Make-up exams, tests and homework must be completed according to school policy (in as many days as the student was absent). Students are responsible for their own make-up work.

Extra credit opportunities are offered infrequently, so students should take advantage of them if and when they arise.

Paper topic and rubric:

You will each select one major candidate for political office (incumbent or challenger) and analyze his or her beliefs and policy objectives regarding one policy issue from the list below. You will write an 8-10 paged, double-spaced paper with 1-inch margins and traditional (Arial, Times, Times New Roman) font. Only one student may research each policy. If you have another policy topic in mind, please discuss it with Mrs. Merckens for approval.

You will likely consider the following questions when choosing and describing your candidate:

- What is the general biographical background and political outlook of the candidate? Liberal? Conservative? Reasons for their beliefs?
- Are there any “pet” projects or issues in which the candidate is especially interested?
- Are there any issues to which he/she is especially vulnerable politically?
- What is the candidate’s voting record, if any?
- What kind of legislative role has he/she chosen? Delegate/trustee?
- If a legislator, what are his/her committee assignments? How do they reflect the legislator’s background?

- What are the economic and social characteristics of the constituency (voters here in Ohio)? How do they affect the political actions of the candidate?
- Have there been any significant changes in the district makeup or boundaries in past years? If so, what effect has there been on the district politically and on the candidate's actions?

Also select one policy issue from the following choices (or have one of your own approved):

Economic Policy:

Trade Barriers vs. Free Trade with China
 The US and the World Trade Organization
 Federal Reserve Policy
 Tax Reform

Continuation in NAFTA
 The role and future of Public Employee Unions
 Federal Debt and Deficit Spending
 Internet Access and Regulation

Social Policy:

Agricultural Subsidies
 Race Relations in America
 Merit Pay for Teachers
 Use of Drones over U.S. territory
 Drug Policy

Gun Policy
 Keeping or Repealing PPACA (Obamacare)
 Prison Reform
 Social Security Reform
 Capital Punishment

Environmental Policy:

Global Warming
 Oil Drilling in ANWR
 The Keystone Pipeline

Subsidizing "Green" Industries
 Oil Drilling in the Gulf of Mexico
 Auto Gas Mileage and Emissions

Foreign Policy:

The US and the United Nations
 Afghanistan Policy
 Policy toward Israel and Palestine
 North Korea Policy
 Syria Policy
 Iraq Policy

The Nuclear Agreement with Iran
 The "War on Terrorism"
 China Policy
 Russia/Ukraine Policy
 Mexico Policy
 Yemen Policy

A successful paper will complete the following rubric:

- Is 8-10 paged, double-spaced paper with 1-inch margins and traditional (Arial, Times, Times New Roman) font (10%);
- Explains the candidate's biographical background and general political views (20%);
- Describes the current and salient details of the selected policy issue (20%);
- Distinguishes how Democrat and Republican views generally differ about the policy issue and what the candidate in question believes should be done about the issue (20%);
- Describes how opinions regarding your policy issue have changed/stayed the same as a result of the 2012 General Election and/or 2014 Midterm Election and how they may/may not change in the 2015-2016, with an explanation as to why you believe as you do. (20%)
- Utilizes our text and at least four other sources and properly cites referenced ideas and materials in MLA style and is coherent and grammatically correct. (10%)

Academic Honesty:

To ensure all students are thinking and learning about the world of American Politics, you will be submitting your paper digitally so that I may use Turn-it-In.com to verify there is no plagiarism from the Internet or others' papers. This is your warning! This assignment acts as your exam and is worth 30% of your quarter grade. Don't risk your grade, academic record or reputation by making bad choices!