This is a sample syllabus for POS1041. Students should reference the section syllabus provided at the beginning of the semester for specifics regarding assignments and grade assignments.
Government and politics touches every aspect of our lives. Yet many—indeed most—Americans lack even the most basic knowledge of how our national government operates. The goal of this course is to provide you with an understanding of the fundamental of American government and politics as well as some of the analytical tools that you will need to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of political institutions and behavior. This course is designed to introduce the student to the contemporary study of the institutions and processes of American national government. Students will be expected to develop an understanding of American government and convey this understanding through class discussions, written assignments, and four examinations. In order to stimulate class discussion and learning, you will be expected to complete the assigned readings before class sessions.

This section of POS 1041 has been reserved for political science majors and members of the Political Science Freshman Interest Group. The course has been developed to provide students with foundational information and analytical skills needed for success in advanced course work in political science.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

First, students will acquire a factual understanding of American national government. Students will be expanding their vocabulary regarding, and their knowledge of, American politics. An information base provides the foundation for intelligent discussion and critical thinking about American politics. The course covers, and subsequently assesses via examinations, students’ knowledge of the following subjects:

- the basic principles and practices of American representative democracy and their application in its republican form of government
- the U.S. Constitution and its application
- the Founding documents and their shaping of the nature and functions of the institutions of self-governance in the United States
- landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on American law and society

Throughout the course, students will also consider the political trade-offs among the competing values of liberty, equality, and order. Doing so facilitates understanding of the Founding Period, the U.S. Constitution, ideology, civil liberties, and civil rights, among other subjects. Recognition of these inherent trade-offs provides a frame for understanding many of the conflicts and controversies in American politics—both contemporary and historical.

Second, expanding on this base, students will engage both longstanding debates about the roles of a nation’s government and contemporary scholarship on American political behavior, voting and elections, and the institutions of national government. Drawing from social choice theory, the course will introduce students to analytical concepts that will enable them to assess various behaviors that pose dilemmas for American representative democracy. Among the most important of these concepts are free riding, the
prisoner’s dilemma, and the tragedy of commons. As they engage these concepts, students will also review arguments that suggest that political institutions and practices, as well as social capital, provide possible solutions (albeit imperfect ones) to problems that citizens face when they need to act collectively. Again, examinations will assess students’ knowledge of these various subjects.

Third, the course provides students with multiple opportunities to engage synchronously with fellow classmates in political discussion and civil debate on important questions in American politics. By taking part in synchronous forums, students will enhance their ability to synthesize information that informs civic decision making on issues with multiple points of view.

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize that the U.S. Constitution was a product of the Framers’ attempts to resolve values trade-offs, as well as address pressing political concerns.
- Articulate how differing preferences regarding values’ trade-offs produce the ideological conflict(s) in contemporary American politics.
- Discuss landmark Supreme Court cases; landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions.
- Recognize the causes of the political polarization and frequent gridlock in contemporary national politics and apply a simple game theory model to explain and predict the outcomes of the lawmaking process.
- Recognize that citizens confront inherent problems when they need to act collectively, and apply the concepts of free riding, the prisoner’s dilemma, and the tragedy of the commons both to identify the form of a specific collective action problem and to advance plausible policy responses.
- Engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics issues that are associated with multiple points of view.

Moreover, this course has been approved as meeting the Liberal Studies Social Science requirement and is designed to help students become critical appraiser of political theories and the facts that support them. Emerging from the course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the role of social factors in contemporary problems or personal experiences.
- Analyze claims about social phenomena.

Finally, this course has been approved as counting toward the Civic Literacy requirement, as outlined by the Florida State Legislature.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Texts:** The following text has been ordered through the FSU Bookstore and is required for this course:


Selected readings will be placed and can be downloaded from the class Canvas site. These additional readings are also required.
Assignments and Grading:

1) Students are to read all required material before the class session for which they are assigned.
2) Examinations: Three section exams (20% each) and final exam (25%)
3) Participation: Class discussions and 11 Canvas Writing Assignments (15%)

Your final grade will be determined by the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 – 93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86 – 83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76 – 73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66 – 63</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>82 – 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72 – 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62 – 60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Examinations
Examinations are closed book and may consist of some combination of objective, short answer, or analytical questions. The unit examinations will cover all the material from lectures, class discussions, and readings on the unit being tested. The final exam, which will be given during the examination period scheduled by the university, will be cumulative (covering lectures, class discussions, and readings from the entire semester).

Class Discussions
In fulfillment of the State of Florida’s Civic Literacy Requirements, students in this class will be provided regular opportunities for political discussion and civil debate with fellow classmates on important issues in American politics. Students will be asked to make (and recognize) strong arguments on both sides of a political debate. Students will also be asked if they see opportunities for compromise between the alternative sides.

Canvas Writing Assignments
There will be 11 section assignments over the course of the semester. Each of these assignments corresponds to a chapter in your textbook (chapters 2-14, omitting chapters 8 and 13), and each is due no later than two (2) days after we conclude our discussion of the corresponding chapter. For example, if we conclude our discussion of Congress on a Tuesday, you have until Thursday evening at 11:59 p.m. to complete the assignment. Late assignments will NOT be accepted! Each of the section assignments can be found and completed in Canvas. For each topic, visit a few (or all) of the Internet sites that I have provided, look at some of the information on these websites, and learn more about how that theory, political group, or governmental agency works. A well written (and original) single paragraph answer to each of the questions will suffice.

The section assignments will count toward your class participation grade, which is 15% of your final class grade. Each assignment is worthy one percentage point of your final grade! The remaining participation grade points (4 percentage points) are a function the quality and frequency of your participation in class discussions.

Late Assignments and Missed Exams
Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student is explicitly granted permission prior to the completion date. Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if you find it necessary to turn in an assignment late.
Missed exams will receive a grade of zero except in cases of demonstrated, appropriate, and verifiable emergencies or tragedies or where the student has prior approval from the instructor. In cases of missed exams excused by the instructor, a makeup exam will be rescheduled at the convenience of the instructor.

**LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

The Liberal Studies Program at Florida State University has been designed to provide a perspective on the qualities, accomplishments, and aspirations of human beings, the past and present civilizations we have created, and the natural and technological world we inhabit. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for **Liberal Studies Area III, History and Social Science**, and in combination with your other Liberal Studies courses, provides an important foundation for your lifelong quest for knowledge.

**OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY**

Undoubtedly, some of you will find the material covered in this class difficult to grasp. The readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments have been compiled to make understanding American politics an easier (and interesting) task. However, if at any time you feel confused by the material, please feel free to seek my help during office hours or by appointment.

**Required Readings**

(The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.)

**Foundations**

23 Aug  What is Politics? What is Science?

25  The Logic of Collective Action and Political Institutions
    • LOGIC, Chapter 1
    • Watch “A Primer on the Scientific Method” (Canvas)

30  The Logic of Collective Action and Political Institutions, cont.
    • LOGIC, Chapter 1

01 Sep   The Logic of Collective Action and Political Institutions, cont.
    • LOGIC, Chapter 1

06  “We Hold these Truths to be Self-Evident” – Ideology and the Founding of the Democratic Republic
    • Lecture (Notes will be provided in Canvas Library)

08  “We Hold these Truths to be Self-Evident” – Ideology and the Founding of the Democratic Republic, cont.
    • Lecture (Notes will be provided in Canvas Library)
13  “In Order to Form a More Perfect Union” – The United States Constitution
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 2
   •  The Articles of Confederation (see Canvas Library)
   •  The United States Constitution (Appendix of LOGIC)
   •  The Federalist Papers # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of LOGIC)

15  **NO CLASS. ONLINE LECTURE**
   “In Order to Form a More Perfect Union” – The United States Constitution, cont.
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 2
   •  The Articles of Confederation (see Canvas Library)
   •  The United States Constitution (Appendix of LOGIC)
   •  The Federalist Papers # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of LOGIC)

20  “In Order to Form a More Perfect Union” – The United States Constitution, cont.
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 2
   •  The United States Constitution (Appendix of LOGIC)
   •  The Federalist Papers # 10 and # 51 (Appendix of LOGIC)

22  Federalism.
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 3

27  “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” – Civil Liberties
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 5

29  “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” – Civil Liberties, cont.
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 5

**Institutions**

04 Oct  Free at Last? – Civil Rights
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 4

06  Free at Last? – Civil Rights, cont.
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 4

10  **UNIT EXAM 1: FOUNDATIONS**
   (The exam will be given on Canvas using Honor Lock. Students have 75 minutes to finish the exam. The exam will be available from 3:00-9:00pm on Monday, October 10, 2022, and students are free to begin the exam at a time convenient to them.)

11  Congress: Examining the Electoral Connection
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 6 (pp. 231-252)
   •  Mayhew, (Canvas Library)

13  Congress: Decision-making and Legislative Organization, cont.
   •  LOGIC, Chapter 6 (pp. 253-295)
18  **NO CLASS. ONLINE LECTURE**  
The American Presidency  
  • LOGIC, Ch. 7

20  The American Presidency, cont.  
  • LOGIC, Ch. 7

25  “And Justice for All” – The Federal Judiciary  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 9
  • Video on *Marbury v. Madison, 1803*

27  “And Justice for All” – The Federal Judiciary, cont.  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 9

31  **UNIT EXAM 2: INSTITUTIONS**

*(The exam will be given on Canvas using Honor Lock. Students have 75 minutes to finish the exam. The exam will be available from 3:00-9:00pm on Monday, October 31, 2022, and students are free to begin the exam at a time convenient to them.)*

**Democracy at Work**

01 Nov  Public Opinion  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 10

03  Public Opinion, cont.  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 10

08  Voting, Campaigns, and Elections  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 11

10  Voting, Campaigns, and Elections, cont.  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 11

15  American Political Parties  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 12

17  American Political Parties, cont.  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 12

22  American Political Parties, cont.  
  • LOGIC, Chapter 12

24  **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING!!!**
SECTION EXAM 3: DEMOCRACY AT WORK (In Class)

01 Dec  The Fourth Estate: The News Media (Last Day of Class)
• LOGIC, Chapter 14

**FINAL EXAMINATION** – Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

**APPENDIX**

**ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES**

**UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY**
Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY**
The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at [http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy](http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy))

**ACADEMIC SUCCESS**
Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Dean of Students office to learn more.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**
Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

To receive academic accommodations, a student:

1. must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
2. must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
3. should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.
Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the

Office of Accessibility Services
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
oas@fsu.edu
https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas

**CONFIDENTIAL CAMPUS RESOURCES**
Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

- **Victim Advocate Program**
  University Center A, Rm. 4100
  (850) 644-7161
  Available 24/7/365
  Office Hours: M-F 8-5
  [https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap](https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap)

- **Counseling and Psychological Services**
  Askew Student Life Center, 2nd floor
  942 Learning Way
  (850) 644-8255
  [https://counseling.fsu.edu/](https://counseling.fsu.edu/)

- **University Health Services**
  Health and Wellness Center
  (850) 644-6230
  [https://uhs.fsu.edu/](https://uhs.fsu.edu/)

**CLASS RECORDING**
In this class, consistent with state law and university policy, students are permitted to make recordings of class lectures for personal use only. As noted, sharing, posting, or publishing classroom recordings may subject you to honor code violations and legal penalties (up to $200,000 and legal fees) associated with theft of intellectual property and violations of other state law. Moreover, students and educators have expressed concern that recording classroom activities may negatively impact the learning experience for others, especially in classes that involve questions, discussion, or participation. To protect a learning environment in which everyone feels free to experiment with ideas, we ask you refrain from recording in ways that could make others feel reluctant to ask questions, explore new ideas, or otherwise participate in class. Students must monitor their recording so that they do not include participation by other students without permission. Students with disabilities will continue to have appropriate accommodations for recordings as established by the Office of Accessibility Services.