PSCI 1101: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT
Fall 2021 Continuing Education

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Office Hours: Fridays 9:30 – 11:30 AM Mountain Time at [ZoomLink];
or by appointment at https://professorpavel.youcanbook.me/

SYLLABUS

This syllabus represents a general plan for the course, including a detailed outline of the course material. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus and to the course outline as necessary. Students will be given advance notification of any changes to the course plan via email and Canvas LMS announcement system. Students are responsible for the contents outlined within this syllabus and any changes made thereafter.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the U.S. system of government and politics and political science research on American politics. We will emphasize interrelations among levels and branches of government, formal and informal institutions, processes, and political behavior. We will also focus on how each individual can affect the political process, and the importance of information and media literacy in a representative democracy. Each student will choose a political issue to follow throughout the course as course project, learning how the U.S. political system addresses the issue in government, elections, extra-governmental institutions and media. This course meets MAPS requirement for social science: general or U.S. history and is approved for the old arts and sciences core curriculum: contemporary societies or United States context. Please see your advisor for additional information on how this course meets degree requirements.

The course is designed so that by completing the readings and preparing for class, watching lectures and participating in discussion boards, and completing the course assignments and exams, students are able to achieve the course objectives. It is imperative that students are engaged in all of these aspects of the course in order to be successful.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Foster an understanding of the U.S. political system enabling students to operate as fully participating citizens and providing foundation for additional political science coursework.
2. Learn about the changes in the U.S. political system over time.
3. Evaluate the current status of the U.S. political system and identify areas for improvement.
4. Examine the importance of information and information literacy in the functioning of a representative democracy.
5. Provide an opportunity for students to gain an in-depth understanding of an issue of individual importance through the course project.
6. Improve writing, researching and critical thinking skills through the semester project.

Bianco, William T., and David T. Cannon. 2020. *American Politics Today*. Full 7th edition. Norton.
ISBN 978-0-393-53958-5.

Canon, David T., et al. 2018. *The Enduring Debate*. 8th edition. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-28365-5.

OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL PROTOCOL

Office hours for this course will be held on Zoom on Fridays from 9:30 to 11:30 am Mountain Time. The Zoom Meeting ID and passcode are posted at the top of the syllabus, and should remain consistent for the duration of the course. If there is any change to that information, I will send an email and Canvas LMS announcement. You can also meet with me by appointment, and you can book a meeting using the link: https://professorpavel.youcanbook.me/.

Outside of office hours, I am best reached by email. I respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday. I recommend you do not attempt to email me with time-sensitive questions on Friday after 5 PM as I do not guarantee I will get to them over the weekend.

Emails constitute professional correspondence. They should be formatted as a letter, with a greeting and a sign-off. You should tell me in the subject line the reason for the email. I will not respond to emails that read like text messages or are missing key grammar components such as punctuation marks.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Your final grade will be based on the following four graded items:

- Three Unit Exams (50%),
- Course Project (30%), and
- Discussion Board Participation (20%).

Three Unit Exams (50%)

There will be three exams in this course, one after each of the course units, covering only the material from that unit. You will have a 24-hour window to start and finish the exam. Within that period, you will have 60 minutes from opening the exam to submit your answers to Canvas LMS. You will have only one attempt to complete the exam. I will deduct 20 points from the exam grade for every hour that the exam is late. The exams are open note and open book, but you are not allowed to work together or use outside help. Exams will be administered via Canvas LMS. Consult Canvas for exam due dates. You must take all three exams to receive a passing grade in the course.

Course Project (30%)

Each student will choose a political issue of interest to follow throughout the semester, and complete one benchmark assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to assist students in learning about their chosen issue. This assignment is designed to prepare students to write the project capstone paper. Consult Canvas for the benchmark assignment handout and due date.

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[1] Prior editions of the *APT* textbook are acceptable as long as you do not go earlier than 5th edition. Note that page numbers and exercises may differ and so your mileage with the earlier editions will vary. Due to the substantial changes between 7th and 8th edition of *The Enduring Debate*, you need to obtain the most recent one.

The resulting capstone paper should be 5 pages typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in a 12-point font. Paper length does not include title, title pages, bibliography, graphs, pictures, or other non-text materials. You should use the benchmark assignment as the source of your research for this paper. You must submit this paper to receive a passing grade in this class. Consult Canvas for specific paper handout and for the due date.

Discussion Board Participation (20%)
For each topic covered, you will be assigned to read a chapter from *The Enduring Debate*. You will then discuss the contents of the chapter in the relevant canvas discussion board. You will be given discussion questions to which you will be required to write a short (100 – 150 words) reply. You will be also required to post at least two replies to your peers' responses, as well as to respond to any comments left on your post. Posts and replies must be meaningful and backed up by material from the relevant course readings and lectures. Simple "I agree" or "this is a good post" reactions will not cut it. You may bring in sources from outside the class but this is not required.

Your final grade will be determined based on the following scale:

		B+	89.9 – 87	C+	79.9 – 77	D+	69.9 – 67		
A	100 – 94	B	86.9 – 83	C	76.9 – 73	D	66.9 – 63	F	< 59.9
A-	93.9 – 90	B-	82.9 – 80	C-	72.9 – 70	D-	62.9 – 60		

COURSE OUTLINE

LECTURE	CONTENT	ASSIGNMENT
Unit 1	**Foundations of the American Political System**	
Topic 1.1	Introduction to American Politics and Government	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 1
Topic 1.2	The Constitution, Political Culture, and the Founding	*American Politics Today,* Chapter 2 and *The Declaration of Independence* *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 1
Topic 1.3	Federalism	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 3, *The Articles of the Confederation,* and *The Constitution and Amendments* *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 2
Topic 1.4	Civil Liberties	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 4 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapters 3
Topic 1.5	Civil Rights	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 5 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 4
Unit 2	**American Politics and Extra-Governmental Institutions**	
Topic 2.1	Public Opinion	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 6
Topic 2.2	Media	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 7 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 9

Topic 2.3	Political Parties	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 8 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 11
Topic 2.4	Elections	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 9 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 10
Topic 2.5	Interest Groups	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 10 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 12
Unit 3	**American Political Institutions**	
Topic 3.1	The Legislative Branch	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 11 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 5
Topic 3.2	The Executive Branch, Part 1: The Presidency	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 12 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 6
Topic 3.3	The Executive Branch, Part 2: The Bureaucracy	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 13 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 7
Topic 3.4	The Judicial Branch	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 14 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 8
Unit 4	**Public Policy**	
Topic 4.1	Domestic Policy, Part 1: Economic Policy	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 15 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 13
Topic 4.2	Domestic Policy, Part 2: Social Policy	*American Politics Today,* Chapter 16 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 14
Topic 4.3	Foreign Policy	*American Politics Today*, Chapter 17 *The Enduring Debate*, Chapter 15

GENERAL COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Course Plagiarism Policy

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

Netiquette

All students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. I hope that we will all strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and will be courteous to fellow students and your instructor. Due to the nature of the online environment, there are some things to remember:

1. Always think before you write. In other words, without the use of nonverbals with your message, your message can be misinterpreted. So please think twice before you hit submit.
2. Keep it relevant. There are places to chat and post for fun everyday stuff. Do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Never use all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling in the online world. It is not fun to read. Only use capital letters when appropriate.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar and structure. In other words, I don't want to see anyone writing "R U" instead of "are you". There are people in the class that may not understand this type of abbreviation, not to mention it does nothing to help expand your writing and vocabulary skills. Emoticons are fine as long as they are appropriate. A smile 😊 is welcome, anything offensive is not.
5. Treat people the same as you would face-to-face. In other words, it is easy to hide behind the computer. In some cases, it empowers people to treat others in ways they would not in person. Remember there is a person behind the name on your screen. Treat all with dignity and respect and you can expect that in return.

University Policies

[Most up to date general university policies go here.]