



Independent Study | in Idaho

POLS101
American National
Government

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Course Guide

Independent
Study | in Idaho

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Political Science 101 American National Government

University of Idaho
3 Semester-Hour Credits

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4-POLS 101: American National Government

3 Semester-Hour Credits: U of I

Welcome!

Whether you are a new or returning student, welcome to the Independent Study in Idaho (ISI) program. Below, you will find information pertinent to your course including the course description, course materials, course objectives, as well as information about assignments, exams, and grading. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ISI office for clarification before beginning your course.

Policies and Procedures

Refer to the ISI website at www.uidaho.edu/isi and select *Students* for the most current policies and procedures, including information on setting up accounts, student confidentiality, exams, proctors, transcripts, course exchanges, refunds, academic integrity, library resources, and disability support and other services.

Course Description

Introduction to the study of politics focusing on basic concepts, processes, and institutions; emphasis on government and politics of the U.S. examined in comparative perspective; probable topics include nature of constitutional democracy, ideology, parties and elections, and formation of public policy. UI students: general education credit Social Science, American Diversity.

14 graded assignments, 14 non-graded self-study assignments, 3 proctored exams.

Students may submit up to 3 assignments at a time/6 per week. Before taking exams, students MUST wait for grades and feedback on assignments, which may take up to three weeks after date of receipt by the instructor.

ALL assignments and exams must be submitted to receive a final grade for the course.

Course Materials

Required Course Materials

- Marone, James A. and Rogan Kersh. "By the People; Debating American Government." 2ND ed. New York; Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-021673-3
If purchasing textbooks from another source, refer to the ISBN(s) for the textbook(s) listed for this course to ensure that you obtain the correct edition(s).

Course Delivery

All ISI courses are delivered through BbLearn, an online management system that hosts the course lessons and assignments and other items that are essential to the course. Upon registration, the student will receive a *Registration Confirmation Email* with information on how to access ISI courses online.

Course Introduction

As stated above, POLS 101 is the "Introduction to the study of politics focusing on basic concepts, processes, and institutions; emphasis on government and politics of the U.S. examined in comparative perspective; probable topics include nature of constitutional democracy, ideology, parties and elections, and formation of public policy."

In summary, the American political process is often over-simplified in the modern 24/7 news cycle. The reason for this is simply to promote the agenda of the corporate ownership, whether it is CNN, MSNBC, FOX, etc. American politics is, however, anything but simple. The American political landscape is composed of institutional, non-governmental, and individual actors. For this reason, this course will concentrate primarily on the main constitutional actors: the legislative, executive, and judicial actors and how these actors are relevant to society and, most importantly, to you the voter; i.e. the “Iron Triangle of US intergovernmental relations. The two overarching questions that you, as a novice student of politics, should ask throughout this course are these: how can I affect the political process at Federal, state, or local levels, and what effect does my participation have on me?

Course Objectives

For political science majors/minors, this course is meant as an initial stepping stone in your political science studies. By the end of this semester, you should have the ability to correctly express yourselves, in writing, as to your political views and affiliations. You will be able to write a sufficient essay that covers the governmental branches, their exact functions, the electoral process, and reasonably comprehend and excel in upper-level political science coursework.

For future education studies majors, this course is meant to give you a basic grounding in the American political process and its actors: how it works, actor function in government; the Lasswellian concept of “when, where, and how much,” societal control/reciprocity that the individual in society is “due.”

General Studies majors and other disciplines, this course will not only fulfill coursework requirements but enhance your knowledge of the American political process and your rights/obligations within that process.

Lessons

Overview

Each lesson includes lesson objectives, an introductory lecture, and a reading and writing assignment. The written assignments consist of term descriptions (three complete sentences each) and essays. All answers to essays are to be written in essay form using complete sentences. Students should write in their own words when referencing authorities and all quotations must include complete citations of the work from which they are taken. *Do not copy from the textbook or any other book.*

Study Hints:

- Keep a copy of every assignment submitted.
- Complete all reading assignments.
- Set a schedule allowing for course completion one month before your personal deadline. An *Assignment Submission Log* is provided for this purpose.
- Web pages and URL links on the World Wide Web are continuously changing. Contact your instructor if you find a broken Web page or URL.
- Introduce and explain any terms that are essential to understanding the course.

Refer to the **Course Rules** in BbLearn for further details on assignment requirements and submission.

Exams

- You must wait for grades and comments on assignments before taking initial and subsequent exams.
- For your instructor's exam guidelines, refer to the **Course Rules** in BbLearn.

Refer to *Grading* for specific information on assignment/exam points and percentages.

Proctor Selection/Scheduling Exams

All exams require a proctor.

To submit your *Proctor Information Form* online, visit the ISI website and select *Forms, Proctor Information Form*. Submit this form at least two weeks before your first exam. Refer to *Students, Assignments and Exams* on the ISI website for information on acceptable and unacceptable proctors.

Grading

The course grade will be based upon the following considerations: the written lesson assignments will be worth a total 20 possible points. The key term questions are worth 1 point each and the two or three essay questions are worth 5 to 7 points each (unless noted otherwise).

The grading scale is as follows:

A = 90% and above, B = 80% – 89%, C = 70% – 79%, D = 61% – 69%, F = 60% and below.

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Assignment 1	20	7.14%
Assignment 2	20	7.14%
Assignment 3	20	7.14%
Assignment 4	20	7.14%
Assignment 5	20	7.14%
Assignment 6	20	7.14%
Assignment 7	20	7.14%
Assignment 8	20	7.14%
Assignment 9	20	7.14%
Assignment 10	20	7.14%
Assignment 11	20	7.14%
Assignment 12	20	7.14%
Assignment 13	20	7.14%
Assignment 14	20	7.14%
Total	280	100%

Exam	Points	Percentage
Exam 1	90	33.33%
Exam 2	90	33.33%
Exam 3	90	33.33%
Total	270	100%

Self-Study Assignments

The final course grade is issued after all assignments and exams have been graded. Your self-study assignments can help in raising your course grade. While self-study assignments are not graded, consider them as an extra credit assignment. Even a few paragraphs of comment you have on the self-

study questions, inserted into your study lessons as notes, should improve lesson and exam performance, ergo grade average.

Your lesson's essay sections will always contain two questions. The self-study questions can help connect the information treated in the chapter. Please set aside a bit of time each day to just ponder the self-study assignment.

Acts of Academic Dishonesty

Acts of academic dishonesty include cheating or plagiarism are considered a very serious transgression that may result in a grade of F for the course. Because of the nature of Independent Study instruction, the main academic honesty issue is not cheating, but plagiarism. At the introductory course level, it is understandable that during the course students should grow in the discipline; growth often includes mistakes. To avoid plagiarism issues, please understand how to cite the written word correctly as expressed in books, newspapers, the internet, journals, personal interviews, reference works, legal documents, etc. While blatant plagiarism will not be tolerated, obvious "soft" issues such as punctuation, integration of quotes/author intent, and citation style requirements, will be addressed in a more informal manner.

About the Course Developer

Your course developer has had the sincere pleasure of instructing this course for ISI since 2009. In this class, you will be learning about the formation and function of the US government; in your assignments you will be sharing what you have learned through term definition and essays.

It is my pedagogical view that this sharing continues with your instructor guiding you through work product formulation and the sharing of knowledge regarding American governance. Each lesson will serve as a building block towards that section's exams. Your final exam is not cumulative.

Contacting Your Instructor

Instructor contact information is posted on BbLearn under *Course Rules*.

Assignment Submission Log

Lesson	Chapter	Date Submitted	Grade
1	<u>By the People</u> , CH 1 & 2		
2	<u>By the People</u> , CH 3		
3	<u>By the People</u> , CH 4		
4	<u>By the People</u> , CH 5		
It is time to make arrangements with your proctor to take Exam 1.			
5	<u>By the People</u> , CH 6		
6	<u>By the People</u> , CH 7		
7	<u>By the People</u> , CH 9 & Appendix III		
8	<u>By the People</u> , CH 12		
It is time to make arrangements with your proctor to take Exam 2.			
9	Outline of Final Paper (Lesson 14)		
10	<u>By the People</u> , CH 10		
11	<u>By the People</u> , CH 11		
12	<u>By the People</u> , CH 13 & "Our Government"		
13	<u>By the People</u> , CH 114		
It is time to make arrangements with your proctor to take Exam 2.			
14	Final Public Policy Term Paper		
		Final Course Grade	

Lesson 1

The Formation of the American Political Landscape

Lesson Objectives

- To understand the beginnings of American style politics.
- To understand the concepts of freedom, liberty, equality, in juxtaposition with the American sociopolitical forces present at the founding of the United States of America.
- To understand the influence of institution on the American political landscape.
- Effectively explain all terms listed in the lesson.

Reading Assignment

By the People, Chapter 1, "Ideas That Shape American Politics," Pgs. 10-31

By the People, Chapter 2, "The Constitution," Pgs. 27-63

Introductory Lecture

- In the initial readings, three sectors of society are listed and explained.
- The main purpose of the readings is to understand the interaction/purpose of these sectors in American life and politics.
- Freedom, rights, and equality of American's culture of individuality are the cornerstones of societal structure.

Written Assignment

Before beginning the first written assignment, refer to the *Course Rules* in BbLearn for your instructor's assignment requirements. Upload your assignments in MS Word or PDF format directly into BbLearn for grading.

Tips for uploading assignments into BbLearn are available at

www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bblearnhelp/student-help/assignments/submit-assignment.html.

Terms: (one point each) define ten of the following terms (50% of lesson grade).

Democracy	Economic Equality	Equality
Freedom	Individualism	Negative Liberty
New Jersey Plan	Originalism	Political Culture
Political Equality	Positive Liberty	Republic
Social Equality	Virginia Plan	Unicameral

Essay Questions:

Each essay question is worth five points, or 50% of the lesson grade. Define any relevant concepts and incorporate specific examples to illustrate the main points. Answer each section of both questions completely, in essay form. Each question will be at least four hundred (400) words in length.

1. Define freedom in terms of negative and positive liberty. List and categorize each of Roosevelt's "four freedoms (positive/negative)." How do positive freedoms affect the idea of freedom from "to" and "from" perspectives with examples?

2. The text lists two types of equality. First define equality, then list each type and explain its meaning. Next discuss how each type has/has not changed over time in the U.S. Incorporating the ideas of equal opportunity and outcome and Figures 2.4, does the United States, as a nation, have economic equality for its citizens? Why or why not? Does the United States, as a nation, have economic equality for its citizens? Why or why not?

Self-study assignments can aid in raising your overall course grade by helping you draw connections and retain information as you work through new ideas and concepts in the course. While self-study assignments are not graded or submitted. Answering the Self-Study Assignment in your personal notes, should improve overall lesson and exam performance.

Please set aside a bit of time each day to ponder and answer the self-study assignment.

Self-Study Assignment (do not submit)

The By the People, "The Constitution," Chapter 2, conclusion poses the question "does the Constitution still work?" What is your preferred method of interpreting the US Constitution (Hint: see pg. 81)?