

POS 110: American Government and Politics
(iCourse and ASU Online)
Professor James Strickland
James.Strickland@asu.edu
Fall 2023 (session A) Syllabus
Teaching Assistant: Andrea Borbon
AiBorbon@asu.edu

1. Course Description

Welcome to POS 110: American Government and Politics. In this course, we will explore the workings of American government. We will use theories of politics, as well as historical and current events, to develop an understanding of the institutions and processes of our government, and how Americans behave politically. This course is designed to help students approach the study of politics with a critical eye and analytical frame of mind.

Politics is hugely important to everyone, regardless of whether they pay much attention to politics or understand much about the political system. As we meet, governments at all levels will continue to face economic, social, and public-health challenges. The political parties will be locked in intense competition for policy influence, and the federal government will acquire more debt than ever before. Currently, the policies of the federal and state governments affect college students just like you by affecting how much you pay for college.

The theme of the **textbook** is that the ability to think critically is essential for being a responsible citizen. Such thinking includes the ability to form an opinion after weighing relevant facts and understand how one's interests and values are affected by different choices or policies. Politics has all the elements of drama plus the added feature of affecting the everyday lives of real people. The textbook is designed to be readable, focusing on narratives that weave together theory, information, and examples to bring out key facts and ideas. Anyone reading this text and taking this course is not only a student, but a citizen. For this reason, you are encouraged to think critically and learn to apply reason and information to reach a thoughtful conclusion. Do not overlook the boxes in each chapter that ask you to consider "How the U.S. Differs" from other countries and within our own borders. There is also content on Party Polarization and an opportunity to consider "Fake or Fact." Improving your ability to think critically is a primary goal of this text and the foundation of every responsible citizen.

The online course **lectures** incorporate an additional theme: that political institutions are designed to overcome collective dilemmas of various kinds, and that the nature of those institutions shapes policies and the allocation of resources (e.g., public funding, infrastructure). That is, who gets what in American society depends a great deal on how governmental institutions are designed. To help foster critical, analytical thinking, students will learn about the collective dilemmas that are present in all societies and how American political institutions are designed to address the dilemmas.

Collective dilemma (also known as collective action problem): when two or more individuals can benefit from cooperating with each other, but do not cooperate because of conflicting (usually short-term) interests.

2. Learning Outcomes

There are three layers of knowledge students will be expected to acquire by the end of this course. First, they should know the basic facts about the American political system. Second, students should understand how experts analyze the political system. This includes becoming familiar with research questions that political scientists ask, and how scientific methods are applied to answer those questions. Third, students should (in principle) be able to think about conducting their own analyses. The preparation and study strategy for students taking this course is simple: students should read assigned text closely and pay attention to all lecture content. Students will be tested on content from both the readings and lectures.

The textbook has a strong analytical bent. It does not simply describe political processes and institutions. It provides the conceptual tools students need to analyze politics for themselves. The foundational concepts are laid out in the first several chapters of the textbook and in the first several lectures. It is important that students comprehend them clearly and quickly since the concepts will appear in subsequent chapters and lectures. Pay very close attention to the beginning of the course, as the early material will lay the basis for the remainder of the semester.

As an instructor, I aim to present information in a politically non-partisan tone that both facilitates civic participation and encourages respectful dialogue among students.

3. Technology Requirements

This course is entirely online. There are no in-person lectures or meetings, and all communication is online. **Students are responsible for resolving any personal, technological issues that may arise during the course, other than Connect outages.** Since internet issues may occur for anyone, you should complete your assignments well in advance. Deadline extensions cannot be granted due to faulty internet connections. All communication will be sent to your asu.edu email.

If you are unable to afford the equipment you need to watch lectures or complete assignments (or if your laptop breaks), ASU has a laptop and WiFi hotspot checkout program available through the ASU Library. Any currently enrolled ASU student is eligible to checkout a laptop. The current availability of laptops can be found [here](#). Laptops are lent on a first-come, first-serve basis, and cannot be reserved in advance. They can be returned at any time but will be due at the conclusion of the semester. Rentals are limited to one laptop per student. Laptops are available for checkout at the Hayden and Noble Libraries, as well as libraries on other ASU campuses. Return laptops to any ASU Library Information Desk. Users are responsible for any damage to the equipment.

4. Course Time Commitment

This three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 18 hours each week reading and studying for this course. There is a strong correlation with how much time you dedicate to this class and how well you score on the exams. Moreover, you must be able to complete assignments in a self-paced manner. All online assignments, quizzes, and exams will be made available to you immediately, and are all due at 11:59PM (Phoenix time) on September 1, September 15, or October 6 (see back page).

5. Textbook

Thomas E. Patterson. 2024. *We the People: An Introduction to American Government* (15th edition). New York City: McGraw-Hill.

The required materials for this course will be integrated into Canvas and made available to you at a special discounted price of \$67.25, plus tax. You have the option to opt out of this program by clicking this link: <https://includedcp.follett.com/1230>, but please be advised that access to McGraw-Hill's **Connect** is required to take this course, and if you do opt out you will need to purchase access elsewhere at current market rates, which will be more expensive. The charge for the materials will appear on your student account under the item type BKSTR PUBLISHER NEGOTIATE RATE after drop/add. While the Connect code is required, if you'd like to purchase a discounted print copy of the textbook to assist your studies, you can do so by searching for this ISBN on the Bookstore website (<https://bookstore.asu.edu>): 9781265026684.

If you opt-out, remember to purchase the required access to Connect at your desired venue as soon as possible so it arrives by the first day of class. **Warning! You will not be able to access assignments with eBook-only access, you will need the full Connect licensing.**

6. Contact Information and Office Hours

Email (**James.Strickland@asu.edu**) works best. I respond to emails within 24 hours except on weekends or holidays. Office hours are by online appointment only. Email me to schedule a time to chat. Our teaching assistant is also happy to talk. You can email her at **AiBorbon@asu.edu**

7. Late or Missing Work

All assignments are due at 11:59PM (Phoenix time) on the due dates. Late submissions, including for exams, are accepted past each deadline with a **1-percent-per-hour** grade penalty, beginning immediately. Late assignments are accepted without penalty only in the case of documented medical emergencies requiring hospitalization (i.e., not pre-scheduled visits or procedures) or family emergencies. For family emergencies, extensions are granted only with a letter from the Dean of Students. To report a family emergency, fill out the "Absence Request Form" here: <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/student-advocacy-and-assistance>. **No late assignments will be accepted after October 8, 2023, at 11:59PM (Phoenix time).**

8. Letters of Recommendation and Honors Contracts

No letters of recommendation will be provided for students who complete this course and have no interactions with the instructor. No honors contracts are offered for this course.

9. Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services

All written and spoken material distributed as part of this course are under copyright protection and may not be sold in the form of notes.

10. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services office should contact SAILS immediately. The SAILS Tempe office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. SAILS staff can also be reached at (480) 965-1234 (V) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc.

11. Academic Honesty

Students are expected to abide by the Student Academic Integrity Policy. Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>. Students who violate the Integrity Policy will automatically receive a failing grade.

12. Accommodation for Religious Practices

The university community should, in all its activities, be sensitive to the religious practices of the various religious faiths represented in its student body and employees. Faculty are asked to recognize the obligations of their students who may be participating in the observance of religious holidays. Students should notify faculty at the beginning of the semester about the need to be absent from class due to religious observances. For more information, visit <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-04.html>.

13. Policy Against Threatening Behavior

In the classroom and out, students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes an environment that is safe and conducive to learning and conducting other university-related business. All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student will be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. Such incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the policies and procedures described in Section 104-02 of the Student Services Manual: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html>.

14. Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

15. Copyrighted materials

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement. For more information, see the Computer, Internet, & Electronic Communications Policy at: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>

16. Academic Integrity and Anti-Plagiarism Policy

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, and laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity>.

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Students must take the exams independently without assistance from other students. Students may not submit papers written by persons other than themselves. Students must submit original work for this course and may not submit papers previously submitted to (an) other class (es). The ASU student academic integrity policy lists violations in detail. These violations fall into five broad areas that include but are not limited to: (1) Cheating on an academic evaluation or assignment; (2) Plagiarizing; (3) Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information; (4) Aiding academic integrity policy violations and inappropriately collaborating; (5) Falsifying academic records. See <https://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity>.

17. Assignments and Grading

In total, each student may receive up to **5,800** points for the course. Letter grades are assigned based on the total points received (see grading scale below). No rounding will occur.

5626 - 5800 A+	5394 - 5627 A
5220 - 5393 A-	5046 - 5219 B+
4814 - 5045 B	4640 - 4813 B-
4466 - 4659 C+	4060 - 4465 C
3480 - 4059 D	0 - 3479 E

- Watch the “Connect Orientation Video” and answer a question (**5 points extra credit**).
- Read each chapter that is part of the online textbook. (These are labeled as “Smart Book” chapters.) Points are awarded for answering questions that review 20 to 30 concepts per chapter, taking roughly 45 minutes to complete. **100 points x 17 chapters = 1700 points.**
- Watch brief lectures (10 to 15 minutes each) produced by Professor Strickland and provided on Canvas (not on Connect). Exam content will include subjects from both textbook readings and lectures.
- Listen to all Podcasts for each chapter (8 total) and respond to related questions. **40 points x 8 podcasts = 320 points.**
- Watch all “Concept Clips” (brief introductory videos to course concepts) and respond to related questions (17 total). **20 points x 17 clips = 340 points.**
- Complete all “Applied Critical Thinking” activities (9 total) and respond to related questions. These assignments involve the use of historical documents, news stories, or data for answering questions about American government or politics. **40 points x 9 activities = 360 points.**
- Complete the assessment for each chapter (no time limit). These short quizzes consist of multiple-choice questions. Students have three attempts to achieve a high score. **100 points x 17 quizzes = 1700 points**
- Three exams consisting of multiple-choice questions, to be administered online, on **Canvas** (not on Connect) using the Respondus Lockdown browser. The exams will each consist of 50 questions. You will have one hour to complete each exam. Notes and the textbook may not be consulted, and you may not communicate with any other person. Each exam will include content from the preceding readings (60 percent) and lectures (40 percent). **300 points x 3 exams = 900 points**
- Research Study Participation: see item 18 for more information. **200 points**
- Optional online discussions: see item 19 for more information. **Up to 100 points (extra credit).**

18. Research Study Participation

As part of this course, you are required to complete a research assignment that includes **one hour** of research study participation. The study will be completed online. You will learn how research studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the semester describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. If you prefer not to participate in research as a subject, then you may opt for an alternative that entails finding an article using the experimental method published in a scholarly journal and writing a short summary and critique of the article. It will take approximately one hour to complete this alternative assignment. Early in the semester, you will receive an email asking whether you prefer study participation or completing the alternative assignment. The email will also include details on how to complete either requirement.

Note: if you are enrolled in multiple A session classes that require participation, you will only need to satisfy the requirement one time for all your A session classes. The email will direct you to the SPGS Experimental Lab website where you can register for an experimental session. <https://thorstin.wixsite.com/spgsexperimentallab/for-students>.

19. Optional Class Dialogue

Throughout the semester, I will post discussions onto Canvas that allow you to engage more fully with the course materials and each other. These discussions will appear on Canvas under "Discussions" (on the left-hand menu), and the class will be divided into groups of roughly 30 students each for participation in discussions. These discussions will ask you to share opinions, examine a chart or document and answer questions, or speculate about why political actors choose particular strategies for achieving change in the past. There will be at least six discussions. To receive up to 100 points of extra credit, you should do the following for four discussions:

- First, respond to the original discussion post with at least 100 words (up to 12.5 points). You must respond to the post before seeing any classmates' responses.
- Then, respond to another student's post with at least 100 words (up to 12.5 points).
- A total of 100 points may be awarded for responding and replying to posts.

Please keep a few rules in mind for these:

- All dialogue must be respectful (i.e., no name-calling or threatening behavior). All dialogue will be read by the professor and teaching assistant.
- Do not be afraid to defend your point of view and try to persuade others: all students may respond to all others in their group, including by "liking" responses or replies.
- For awarding points, all responses and replies are due during the deadline immediately following the original post (i.e., September 1, September 15, or October 6).

20. Schedule of Topics and Due Dates

Unit 1: all assignments due September 1 at 11:59PM (Phoenix time).

Textbook, chapter 1: Critical Thinking and Political Culture
Textbook, chapter 2: The Constitution
Textbook, chapter 3: Federalism
Textbook, chapter 4: Civil Liberties
Textbook, chapter 5: Civil Rights

*****Mid-term exam on chapters 1 to 5 – due September 1 at 11:59PM*****

Unit 2: all assignments due September 15 at 11:59PM (Phoenix time).

Textbook, chapter 6: Public Opinion
Textbook, chapter 7: Political Participation
Textbook, chapter 8: Political Parties
Textbook, chapter 9: Interest Groups
Textbook, chapter 10: News Media and Internet

*****Mid-term exam on chapters 6 to 10 – due September 15 at 11:59PM*****

Unit 3: all assignments due October 6 at 11:59PM (Phoenix time).

Textbook, chapter 11: Congress
Textbook, chapter 12: The Presidency
Textbook, chapter 13: The Bureaucracy
Textbook, chapter 14: The Judiciary
Textbook, chapter 15: Economic and Environmental Policy
Textbook, chapter 16: Income, Welfare, and Education Policy
Textbook, chapter 17: Foreign Policy

*****Final exam on chapters 11 to 17 – due October 6 at 11:59PM*****

All online assignments, quizzes, and exams are due at 11:59PM (Phoenix time).

21. Troubleshooting: Call 1-855-423-9041 for the ASU Team.

For technical support, please contact our **Customer Experience Group (CXG)**:

- Phone: 1-800-331-5094; Live chat/email: <https://mhedu.force.com/CXG/s/ContactUs>
- Mon-Thu: 24 Hours, Fri: 12 AM-9 PM, Sat: 10 AM-8 PM, Sun: 12 PM-12 AM (All Times Eastern USA)

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