

POLS& 202: American Government

Bellevue College, Winter 2020

Course Details

Class Sessions:	Online
Instructor:	Clifford Cawthon, MA
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Phone:	425.564.6159
Office Location:	A200F
Office Hours:	Daily- 8:00am-9:00am.

Course Description

Analyzes constitutional government in America in terms of the theory and practices of democracy. Students investigate issues of individual rights, popular representation, and responsible leadership.

Course Learning Outcomes

After completing this class, students should be able to:

- Evaluate the basic nature of Constitutional government in America.
- Understand concepts such as separation of power and checks and balances as outlined in the constitution.
- Recall and define problems of individual rights, popular representation and responsible leadership.
- Identify roles of the Executive department, the Congress, and the Judicial branch.
- Understand the public policy making process in the U.S.
- Have the skills and knowledge necessary for analyzing American politics according to the ideals of American democracy.

Books and Required Materials

The textbook for the course is [2018's American Government in Black and White ed. McClain, Tauber.](#) The book is available in the campus bookstore and you can purchase it used online as well. I will make the first week's textbook readings available as a PDF file on Canvas but you need a copy of the textbook by the second week of class.

We will be reading extensive supplemental materials, which will be available on our Canvas website or in-class.

Each assigned reading is to be completed before the class session for which it is scheduled.

I can understand that printing can be expensive and that you have a printing quota each quarter based upon technology fees. This quota is not likely to be sufficient for you to print all the materials and assignments for every course. I suggest that you visit any of the libraries within the [King County library system](#), which provides library users with 75 ‘units’ of free printing per week. Also, strategically time when you print certain passages.

Suggested materials

In addition to the required materials, I may also add reading materials that are mandatory and relevant to the course OR that are not mandatory but, will add context to the lesson. Any of the suggested materials may be used to complete assignments and projects during this course.

For information on who represents you in the State Legislature and Congress are located [here](#). For county and local representatives, please speak with me and I’ll refer you to the proper resources.

Please note, that I only receive assignments (except tests) through canvas. I will not accept assignments through email or on paper, unless the situation meets the guidelines under my attendance policy.

Course Goals (broader, long-range intended objectives)

Cognitive objectives:

- Develop a basic understanding of the scientific study of politics as the study of social conflicts and resolutions;
- Understand the role, power, and functions of government. This includes developing an ability to identify the role of elite control of American Government;
- Understand the role and power of citizens (individually and in collective action) in the political environment.

Affective Objectives:

- Understand the effects of political ignorance and understand and care deeply about political knowledge;
- Understand how power and various “social forces” work in the political process;
- Care about systems of domination and understand the nature of resistance in the U.S. political system.

Behavioral Objectives:

- Be able to identify weak arguments and respond with informed knowledge and critical analysis;
- Be able to reflect upon political socialization in order to communicate and act based upon informed knowledge and critical analysis;

- Be able to efficiently find strong sources of information in an oversaturated information environment;
- Be able to act effectively in the world based upon political knowledge.

Grading

Course Assessments	Percentage
Discussions	5%
General Assignments	15%
Civic Engagement Assignment	15%
Weekly Responses	25%
Midterm Essay	20%
Final "Policy Prescription" Project	20%
Total	100%

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	92 - 100%
A-	90 - <92%
B+	88 - <90%
B	82 - <88%
B-	80 - <82%
C+	78 - <80%
C	72 - <78%
C-	70 - <72%
D+	68 - <70%
D	60 - <68%
F	<60%

Assignment Submission Policy (per the Attendance Policy)

In this course, I only accept assignments via the assignment page submission platform in canvas. On the ASSIGNMENT page on the left side of your class canvas page, you can find the assignment and on the specific page, the description of the work is featured. In addition to that, on the specific page there will be a SUBMIT button. Please click it and submit your assignment via the platform.

I will not accept assignments via email or in paper form, unless specified otherwise.

Apropos to submitting assignments, please submit files in doc (98/2003, X), rtf, or PDF form. Anything else isn't supported. Any links submitted will result in a zero grade if it is not replaced a week after the submission deadline. If you need Microsoft Office suite, you can receive it FOR FREE through the Bellevue College's Library Media Center.

Discussion Boards :

5% of grade

Students will be expected to participate in class discussions respectfully, reasonably and focused on the subject/ issue in the class discussions.

Students who participate meaningfully will receive full credit in the discussion threads. See the threads for specifics.

General Assignments:

15% of grade

On occasion, a short homework assignment will be given in line with the material from class. This will be reflected on canvas in the *General Assignments* category and these assignments will usually be due within 48 hours of them being assigned.

Civic Engagement Challenge:

15% of grade

It's not just enough to learn about politics from a book or a lesson, to get a holistic education you should experience politics. During this course, I will ask you to attend public events and participate in political events on a non-partisan basis.

This assignment will require students to go out and **COMPLETE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TASKS:**

- A. Attend the 2020 MLK Day Rally in Seattle on January 20th 2020 and complete a report and provide photo or video evidence that you attended the event. See the event details [here](#).
- B. Volunteer for at least three hours with one of the listed non-profit organizations below. Complete a write-up of your experience: *what did you do, what did you learn, and the how does the organization's work connect or reflect upon something that you've learned in class.*
- C. Start a petition to address a local issue of social importance. Students will be required to gather at least seventy-five signatures on the petition. Students must submit this petition to the relevant decision-makers in whichever jurisdiction the issue affects.

Weekly Responses

25% of grade

At the end of each week- excluding week #1- you will be asked to write a short reflection piece on what you learned, and you will also be asked different a series of questions each week.

These pieces are not expected to be more than 400 words (i.e. a very small essay or a bigger short answer response). These will be graded on a pass/ fail- complete/ incomplete basis and the criteria will be given ahead of time.

Midterm Essay:

20% of grade

During week 6 of the quarter there will be midterm essay, in which, you will address one question based on current events and the material in class. This exercise will cover the content from the first six weeks of the class and will be an essay-based assessment. In contrast to the quizzes (which will assess your knowledge of governmental structures), the midterm will assess your conceptual understanding of the course material.

Final "Policy Prescription" Project

20% of grade

During the course you will be required to do research based on a prompt asking you to resolve a policy issue. This presentation must last at least 10 minutes in length, critically analyze and assess the problem or event that is the focus on the prompt and come up with a feasible solution.

This will be a group-based assignment. Your groups will be selected at the end of week #1 so you can have time to network with each other and work together. These groups will be chosen at random.

Note that you will still have to provide a bibliography that lists your sources for this assignment.

This will be in lieu of a final exam. These will be presented in person, only the bibliography is subject to the submission policy.

Changing the syllabus?

Yes, I reserve the right to change the assignment structure or grading structure at any time during the course. If it's the former then you will have 48 hours' notice at the very least; if it's the latter then you will have 72 hours' notice at the very most.

Grading Dispute Policy

How do I deal with an issue about the class, a classmate or the professor???

It happens! Things sometimes happen and people don't always feel comfortable with the subject material, other students or even their instructor. Though keep this in mind: you have a voice and we're here for you.

If you have an issue *Please come to me (the instructor) first, always. I listen, I'm fair and moreover, we're here for you.*

If you feel that you cannot resolve (or I cannot resolve) your issue, there's a chain of communication within the department that I can help you navigate. I'll help you with the process if we cannot resolve your concern and you email me or provide me with a written request.

Historically, I have been able to work things out with students. On the rare occasion there's a real problem *the grade dispute system is here to give you a voice.*

Not everything is perfect, especially people. I want you to be satisfied with your experience with the course, so please do your level best (and I will do mine) to work things out together.

Community Expectations

REMEMBER: How, Why and Wonder!

This is a college course so we're all adults here, or emerging adults. We all have a role in your learning process. The motto for this class is *how (learning how things really work), why (breaking apart fallacies, misconceptions and dichotomies) and wonder (dream! What can you do to change things)*.

As a member of our learning community, you have a responsibility to your own education and I have a responsibility to support your education as fairly and thoroughly as I can. Though, that relationship is reciprocal, it's not transactional.

This means that while I expect you to complete assignments and readings on-time, I will never withdraw my support from you.

My interest is in making sure that you succeed regardless of background, beliefs, opinions or past attitudes. I want this to be a supportive place for you to develop and grow.

Taking responsibility for your education also requires you to reach out when you need assistance. Many students often ignore this part of the syllabus, even though they are thoroughly disinterested in politics, or find my lectures boring (it's okay, I can be boring) or outright don't put in the effort; and find themselves in trouble when, regardless of the circumstance my *office hours are always open*.

During my office hours, I can explain things to you and provide you with extra context aside from the main lecture or seminar in class. I will do my best to accommodate your schedule and make myself available for questions.

There are no "dumb" questions in this course. If you are confused about something, please ask, or take the time to find the answer by either: a) flexing your research muscles; b) forming a study group for long-term support; c) email me or post a question to the "Ask the Professor" discussion board.

Common Community Agreements

Bellevue College has a [Code of Conduct and Regulations](#) that, as a student, you are bound to follow. Though, there are some basic agreements that we've made as a class historically to get us by:

1. Respect: This is fundamental to our success. Everyone comes into this classroom with a valid viewpoint. Each of us deserves to be seen as worthwhile and each of us must give that respect to the other. This means that this classroom is a ***no shame zone. You will not be judged by myself or anyone else in class for the way you look, the way you ask a question, for asking a question, for having trouble with the coursework, for who you are and for being yourself. In fact, on the last point, you'll be applauded for being yourself!***

2. Disagree but, don't be disagreeable: If someone makes a point that you disagree with or find downright distasteful, don't make it personal. Just disagree and move on- or come up with a good argument.

3. Integrity: Take responsibility for what you have done.
4. Don't Plagiarize! Don't copy others work and submit it as your own. We will find out.
5. Step up, step back: If you like to contribute to classroom conversations, contribute to the learning of your fellow students who may be a bit more shy and create space for them to speak up. It's not a bad thing to contribute but, sometimes one can take up more space and marginalize others without intending to.
6. Everyone is everyone: this is a space for all races, classes, genders, sexualities, nationalities, and persons. Racism or any other oppressive slurs or behavior **will not be tolerated and result in your immediate exit from the course.** That goes for harassment as well (see point #1).

Late work and Classroom Policies

Late work: Assignments are due on the date listed on the course' assignment page. You will have a period of two weeks after the assignment due date to turn in late work for 85% of the grade. This means that if you turn in work during this two-week period, I will multiply your final score by 85/100. If you go past this date, then your grade will be multiplied by 70%. If it goes past six weeks after it's due, it will be multiplied by 68%.

You do not need to ask me to turn in work during this period; all you need to do is turn it in. Late work may lead to delays in grading and delays in instructor feedback, as I will prioritize work that is turned in on time. In-class quizzes and tests do not qualify for this policy.

If your work is more than two weeks late or you are falling behind due to emergency/unforeseen circumstances, you can work with me to create an individualized plan. Please do not make requests for extensions in person at the beginning or end of a class period because it is difficult for me to properly keep track of agreements made hastily. Instead, email me at clifford.cawthon@bellevuecollege.edu or please schedule a time to meet with me or come to my office hours.

Test or examinations do not fall under this policy. If you miss an exam or test under the criteria for an acceptable absence then we can make arrangements for you to re-take the examination with a personalized plan.

English Second (or more) Language Students: If English is your second language, you can use a translation dictionary during in-class assessments (quizzes and exams). The dictionary must be a book not an electronic dictionary, and it must be the type of translation dictionary that only includes the translation, not the definition. If English is a second (or third or fourth) language, I encourage you to talk with me directly so that we can make sure the learning environment works for you.

Electronics Policy: At the beginning of class please turn your phone and/ or put your laptop away. Unless you have a particular accommodation through the DRC or I state otherwise.

When laptops are allowed, they may only be used for note-taking only. Students who use their laptops for notes due to a special accommodation must, have an accommodation note from the *Disability Resource Center*.

If at any point you feel that you need to use your device(s) for communications, please quietly get up and do so outside.

To respect the wishes of others, by default there is no recording of any audio or video allowed in the classroom; unless you have my explicit consent to do so. Nevertheless, if any of these policies prohibit you from being able to learn in the fullest possible way, please meet with me to work out an individualized solution.

Email and Canvas Inbox: Canvas provides many different places to communicate with me (replies to my feedback/grading, etc.), which can sometimes make communicating more challenging than it needs to be. The best ways to communicate with me are: in person during office hours (or by appointment); through my BC email; or the Canvas 'inbox'.

Please note, that I only receive assignments (except tests) through canvas. I will not accept assignments, regardless of circumstances through email or on paper, unless specified otherwise.

On my end I will be answering your messages swiftly. However, if I do not answer your inquiry in about a day, you should feel comfortable to follow up. I may check these locations at odd hours, such as at night or over the weekend. But please do not expect me to reply outside of regular business hours. Respect the dynamic that teaching this class is my workplace.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College.

Such behavior will result in a zero grade for the assignment/exam in question. Please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct:

<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050p/>.

Plagiarism is expressly forbidden in my class, though I do understand that sometimes people will not understand how to cite a source correctly or offer a bibliography. To learn more about how to cite a source in an exercise and create a bibliography please look at the [APA Purdue Owl Formatting and Style guide](#).

In the case of plagiarism, there is a three-tiered process to addressing this issue:

1. An informal warning including counseling on the details of citation.
2. A formal warning that will include documentation of the incident.
3. Reporting the behavior to the school.

Institutional Commitments and Policies

Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from

harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Religious Holidays

Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance will be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities.

It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments will be offered an opportunity to make up the work without penalty (if they have previously arranged to be absent), unless it can be demonstrated that a makeup opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on a member of the faculty. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable burden or any element of this policy, parties involved should consult the department chair, or Dean.

ADDENDUM:

If a student has a concern that the observance of their faith may impact their performance then they will be reasonably accommodated in order to allow them to continue their work unhindered by the standard course schedule.

College Anti-Discrimination Statement (Title IX)

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; color; creed; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion; genetic information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; gender identity or veteran status in educational programs and activities which it operates.

Important Resources/Services

Disability Resource Center – B132

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact [Autism Spectrum Navigators](#). Email and phone number is on the web page. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125.

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call the reception desk at (425) 564.2498. Deaf students can reach the DRC by Skype: the address is **DRCatBC** (NOTE: There is no @ sign...it is actually **DRCatBC**). Please visit the website at [Disability Resource Center](#) for application information and other helpful links.

Multicultural Services – 2nd Floor of B building (above the bookstore)

Multicultural Services (MCS) is a student-centered service program on campus that is designed to support all students in general, and diverse student populations in particular. MCS is a broad program that can assist students with tutoring in Math and English as well as help students locate community resources such as food and housing assistance. Please familiarize yourself with MCS by stopping by or visiting: bellevuecollege.edu/mcs/

Counseling Center – 2nd Floor of B building (above the bookstore)

The Counseling Center provides personal, career, and academic counseling for all registered BC students. The Counseling Center can be a helpful place for locating community resources (referrals) as well as free counseling appointments with the center's staff of licensed mental health counselors. Please familiarize yourself with the services offered by the counseling center by stopping by or visiting: bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/

Course Calendar

How to do the reading: students will be required to read the relevant chapters from the textbook that relate to the topic for the course discussion.

[Short] Week 1- Introductions & Fundamentals of Higher Education- NO TEXTBOOK REQ.

Week 2 – Understanding American Politics, Race/ Identity and our Founding- TEXTBOOK Ch. 1-2

Week 3 – Federalism and Constitutional Civil Liberties and Civil Rights- TEXTBOOK Ch. 3-5

Week 4 – Congress and the Legislative Process (State and Local) - TEXTBOOK Ch. 6

Week 5- Public Opinion, Voting and Elections- TEXTBOOK Ch. 10 and 15

Week 6 – Interest Groups- TEXTBOOK Ch. 13

Week 7 – The Presidency and Domestic and Foreign policy-making- TEXTBOOK Ch. 7

- Online module: The New Jim Crow and the Prison-Industrial Complex

Week 8 – HYBRID WEEK: Social Movements pt. 1/ The Bureaucracy- TEXTBOOK Ch. 12 and 8

Week 9 – The Media & Media Literacy- TEXTBOOK Ch. 11

- Online module: The rise of nationalism, populism and contemporary hate movements in a polarized America.

Week 10— The Judiciary- TEXTBOOK Ch. 9

Week 11 – Beginning of Final Presentations

Week 12 – Final Exam week, no class

IMPORTANT HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY - College closed	Jan. 20th
PD DAY, NO CLASS- OFFICES OPEN - College closed	Feb. 17th
STUDENT SUCCESS DAY, NO CLASS- OFFICES OPEN - College closed	Mar. 17th

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