



## Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

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**Semester:** Spring 2025

**Year:** 2025

**Course Prefix:** POLS

**Course and Section #:** 1100 Sec 6

**Course Title:** American National Government

**Credits:** Three

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### ***Course Description***

We will study the history and structure of the American national government. We will also study its political institutions, processes, governmental policies and citizens' rights and responsibilities.

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### ***Course Attributes***

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

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### ***Instructor Information***

**Instructor Name:** Brandon Dabling

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### ***Student Learning Outcomes***

- Develop a strong understanding of the Constitution and how it has shaped our American democracy
  - Learn about the structure of the American political system
  - Explore the ways in which public opinion impacts political outcomes
  - Become educated consumers of political communication
  - Apply traditional theories and concepts to the current political environment in the United States
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### ***Course Materials and Texts***

Joseph M. Bessette and John Pitney, Jr. American Government and Politics: Deliberation, Democracy, and Citizenship (Second Edition).

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### ***Course Requirements***

## Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

### Grading

#### **Memos: 10 points per assignment**

You will turn in a memo assignment every Monday and Wednesday that we do not have an exam or exam review. These assignments will consist of summarizing a news article about American politics and saying why it matters. These should be a full paragraph or half of a page. I will drop your lowest two scores at the end of the semester.

#### **Friday Presentations: 10 points each**

On Fridays, I will randomly call on 2–3 students to present something from that week’s news and how it relates to something we’ve studied in the class. These should be informal and last no more than two minutes. You can use a notecard, but you cannot use your phone or computer during the presentation. My goal is to help you become comfortable speaking about the news and American government. Don’t worry if you don’t have all the minor details. I’m more interested in the big ideas.

You will automatically receive a zero if you are not present when I call your name to present. You will not be able to make this up, but I will allow all students to do one extra credit assignment for 10 points later in the semester. The only exception is if you have a university-excused assignment.

#### **Legislative Exercise (40 Points)**

We will have our own legislative exercise in February. You will work in groups to debate bills currently before the U.S. House of Representatives. You will be graded on your legislative memo and your participation during the legislative session.

#### **Attendance: 3 points per day**

You will receive two points for coming to class every day. I will automatically excuse three classes at the end of the semester.

#### **Exams 1 and 2: 50 and 100, respectively**

Your exams will consist of a multiple choice and short response section. Exam 1 will be worth 50 points and Exam 2 will be worth 100 points.

#### **Final Exam: 150 points**

Your final exam will follow the same format as your other exams. It will cover all material from the class with a focus on Units 4 – 6.

#### **Quizzes and Other Participation: (No more than 100 points)**

I will administer quizzes from time to time on the day’s readings. I may also grade in-class activities.

### Grading Scale

90 — A-  
87 — B+  
83 — B  
80 — B-  
77 — C+  
73 — C  
70 — C-  
67 — D+  
63 — D  
60 — D-  
0 — E

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## Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

1/6 **Introduction**

### Part I: The Meaning and Purpose of the Constitution

1/8 **What Does Good Government Do?**

All course readings from anything but our textbook are on Canvas.

Aristotle's *Politics* (Will compare to John Locke in class)

Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Roger Weightman"

Optional: Abraham Lincoln, "Fragment on the Constitution and Union"

1/10 **The Meaning of the Founding**

The Declaration of Independence

Martin Diamond, "The Revolution of Sober Expectations"

1/13 **America's Competing Goals: Liberalism v. Democracy v. Self-Government**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 2 – 18

1/15 **Ratification and The Problem of American Democracy**

*Federalist*, No. 10

*Federalist*, No. 51

1/17 **Federalism at the Founding**

*Federalist*, No. 9

*Federalist*, No. 39

*Federalist*, No. 48

Optional: *Federalist*, Nos. 15, 47, and 23

1/20 **No Class**

1/22 **Federalism Through Time**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 64 – 77; 87 – 89

1/24 **Citizenship in America**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 91 – 107

1/27 **How Can We Be One When We're Different?**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 108 – 110; 114 – 128

(Will talk about President Donald Trump's view of citizenship in class)

Optional: Michael Anton, "Citizenship Shouldn't be a Birthright"

1/29 **In-Class Review Game**

1/31 **Exam**

## Part II: Branches of Government

2/3 **The Structure of Congress**

John Adams, "The Role of the Rich and the Poor in the Legislature"

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 344 – 350

Optional: *Federalist*, No. 52

**Form Groups for Legislative Activity**

2/5 **What Congress Does**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 350 – 363

George Washington, "On the Character of the Legislator"

Optional: *Federalist*, No. 57, 60 and 63

2/7 **Congress Today**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 363 – 373

Yuval Levin, "Congress is Weak, Because it Wants to Be"

**Legislative Memo Due on Canvas before Midnight**

2/10 **Legislative Branch Exercise**

Get Ready to Debate!

**2/12 The Presidency's Origins**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 375 – 380

*Federalist*, No. 70

*Federalist*, No. 74

Optional: *Federalist*, No. 73

**2/14 The Rise of the Modern Presidency**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 381 – 390; pp. 395 – 404

**2/17 No Class**

**2/19 The Independent Judiciary**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 436 – 442

*Federalist*, No. 78

**2/21 The Modern Courts**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 446 – 448; pp. 451 – 470

**Part III: Civil Liberties, Rights, and Political Science**

**2/24 Civil Liberties and the Original U.S. Constitution**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 132 – 148

Optional: James Madison, "On Property"

**2/26 Civil Liberties in the Modern Era**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 149 – 155; pp. 161 – 171

**2/28 Civil Rights for African Americans**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 174 – 186

**3/3 Civil Rights for all Americans**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 187 – 199; pp. 203 – 207

3/5 **In-Class Review Game**  
Review all material Parts II and III

3/7 **Exam**  
Cover units II and III

### **Spring Break**

## **Part IV: The Progressive Constitution**

3/17 **The Philosophical Origins of the Progressive Constitution**

Frank Goodnow, "The American Conception of Liberty"  
Woodrow Wilson, "The President of the United States"

3/19 **Government through Administration**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 410 – 428

3/21 **Administration and Democracy**

Theodore Roosevelt, "The Right of the People to Rule"  
Calvin Coolidge, "The Inspiration of the Declaration"

3/24 **Administration and Democracy cont.**

John Dewey "Liberalism and Social Action"  
Woodrow Wilson, "What is Progress"

## **Part V: Who Shapes Our Politics?**

3/26 **Public Opinion**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 211 – 225; pp. 228 – 233

3/28 **Interest Groups**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 235 – 246; pp. 250 – 251; pp. 253 – 256

3/31 **Political Parties**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 259 – 270  
James Madison, "A Candid State of Parties"

4/2 **Modern Political Parties and Partisanship**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 270 – 285

4/4 **Elections and Campaigns**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 288 – 295; pp. 302 – 308  
Guest Lecturer

4/7 **Elections and Campaigns pt. 2**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 295 – 301; pp. 309 – 315

4/9 **Mass Media**

Bessette and Pitney, pp. 318 – 336

**Part VI: Our Divided Politics**

4/11 **The Fight for Democracy**

Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized* (selections)

4/14 **The Fight for Liberalism**

Robert Kagan, *Rebellion* (selections)

4/16 **The Fight for Republicanism and Self-Government**

Charles Kesler, *Crisis of the Two Constitutions* (selections)

4/18 **Making Sense of Today's Politics**

TBD

4/21 **Review Game**

Review material from section IV – VI

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**General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion**

See above

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***Required Course Syllabus Statements***

## Generative AI

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### Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

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## *Required University Syllabus Statements*

### Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](mailto:DHHservices@uvu.edu)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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### Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

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## **Equity and Title IX**

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – [TitleIX@uvu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@uvu.edu) – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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## **Religious Accommodation**

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu). If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.