



Pol Sci 1100 Course Syllabus Sections 601

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

Semester: Spring

Year: 2025

Course Prefix: POLS

Course and Section #: 1100 601

Course Title: American National Government

Credits: 3

Course Description

This is an introductory course that surveys the ideas, institutions, processes, and development of the American political system, including current questions and challenges facing that system.

We will begin with an introduction to political science and what it can teach us about the American regime. We will then focus on the founding of the American national government: both the historical context in which the founding took place and the written U.S. Constitution that it produced.

In the second half of the course, we will study how the major American political institutions have developed over time and how they operate today. As we proceed, we will apply the materials to current political issues and challenges.

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.](#)

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: James R. Moss

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to help you think, discuss and write clearly about the fundamental questions of political science and American politics, including current obstacles and opportunities related to citizen engagement.

Course Materials and Texts

Joseph Bessette and John J. Pitney, Jr., *American Government & Politics: Deliberation, Democracy and Citizenship* second edition (Wadsworth/Cengage, 2014). <https://www.amazon.com/American-Government-Politics-Deliberation-Citizenship/dp/1133587895>Links to an external site.Links to an external site.Links to an external site.

Hyrum Lewis & Verlan Lewis, *The Myth of Left and Right* (Oxford University Press, 2023). <https://www.amazon.com/Myth-Left-Right-Verlan-Lewis/dp/0197680623>Links to an external site.Links to an external site.Links to an external site. ISBN 978-0-19-768092-9

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

To succeed in this course, a student will need to come prepared for class discussion having done the readings ahead of time. To guide your reading, I will post reading questions on Canvas to help you focus on the most important issues. I will also ask you to come to each class with a question for discussion regarding the day's reading or its application to a current political issue.

WEEKLY RESPONSE PAPERS (25%)

Each week, with some exceptions, students will submit in Canvas a **one-page Response Paper on the perspective or position of an author or figure of your choice in the week's readings (for example, Aristotle, Toqueville, John Adams, FDR, Reagan, etc.), which can include an argument or position taken by a figure in the Bessette textbook**. This rewards students for reading the course material, attending discussions, and arriving on time. Attendance will not be taken, but students are required to read the material and complete the weekly paper even if they are absent. The class recording is available to assist your understanding of the concepts in the reading.

Your one-page Response Paper must include:

1. One paragraph *summarizing* the position of the author or figure. Rather than simply restating the position, this means breaking the argument or position down into its parts and underlying principles or assumptions, and explaining how they arrived at their conclusion.
2. One paragraph *analyzing/critiquing* their position. This means analyzing how well they put their argument together – does the logical math add up? Are there internal inconsistencies or gaps, or did they overlook important external argument or evidence on the issue they addressed?
3. One paragraph *applying* their position to a current political issue of your choice. This is the creative part – review the week's news or pick a subject you're interested in (for example - immigration, homelessness, abortion, elections), and use your summary and analysis to explain how (and how well) your author/figure would address your chosen issue.

These will be graded 0-3:

0 for failure to complete

1 for minimal engagement or failure to address all three elements above

2 for thoughtful engagement in each of the three paragraphs

3 for thoughtful substantive engagement *and* good writing

Late submissions will be docked one point.

TERM PAPER – ANALYSIS (25%)

Students will write a five-page analysis paper that expands on your weekly reading responses, but takes a broader view of the author or political figure's approach and logic. You will analyze a political topic chosen by you through the lens of **two or three (you choose) authors or political figures** we have studied and you have written about in the course readings (which authors you choose are up to you, and you can include political figures from the primary Bessette text who presented a policy position). Analysis means crafting the “raw material” of knowledge acquired through mastery of the course reading questions into original interpretation. Expanding on the format of your weekly Response Paper, for this paper you will:

- (1) summarize each author or figure’s approach to political theory and practice: (a) what are their underlying principles and assumptions, (b) how do they address the interplay or tension between those principles and other principles (for example, for COVID prevention measures, (c) how do they build from those principles to their position on the appropriate role of government (and which level / branch of government) in the policy area you've chosen to address (for example, if your topic was Covid regulation, you might explore how they balance promoting health and safety on the one hand and preserving individual freedom on the other, including how/why their analysis of competing principles leads to a specific policy position - such as requiring masks everywhere, not requiring, requiring in certain situations etc).
- (2) analyze the strength of the author/figure’s approach in light of the readings we’ve covered, including their internal logic and how well they addressed / failed to address evidence or argument presented from other perspectives.
- (3) apply the author’s approach to the topic you’ve chosen – how that political issue should be approached in light of the principles underlying their position and their approach to the issues of their day.

Then, explain why one of the authors’ approach is more insightful or productive in addressing your topic than the other(s); compare and contrast the view of the other author(s), and explain why one author/figure’s approach is ultimately more persuasive.

The paper will be five pages double-spaced in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font. The writing should be polished, thoughtful, and error-free. Late papers will be deducted 4% for each day late. you will need to develop an original argument, not merely repeat what we talked about in class. The assigned readings should be your primary source, but do independent research to arrive at an independent conclusion.

You must submit your paper in electronic format (write in MS Word file then submit through Canvas). I encourage you to use the University Writing Center to help you turn in a polished paper. You will receive 5 points extra credit if you discuss your paper with the Writing Center.

Guest Speaker Opportunities

TBA

Attendance with a Response Paper in the same format as the weekly assignments can be used to make up for any missed weekly response.

EXAMS (25/25%)

There will be a midterm and final exam to test your mastery of the course material, covering only the materials listed in the syllabus (not optional texts or supplemental reading materials posted on canvas). The final exam will be comprehensive but will emphasize the second half of the course.

GRADE COMPOSITION:

Weekly Response Papers (25%)

Midterm Exam (25%)

Term Paper (25%)

Final Exam (25%)

Final Exam: April 24-30, TBD

GRADING SCALE:

Grades will be determined based on the following scale:

A	94-100%	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	0-59

A: Excellent

B: Good

C: Satisfactory

D: Minimum Passing

F: Unacceptable

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

SCHEDULE

January 7: Introduction to POLS 1100

January 9: American Political Science

Bessette Chapter 1: "Deliberation and Citizenship in Service of Freedom and Democracy" (1-9)

January 14: Political Forms

Aristotle, selections from *The Politics* (1-4)

Pierre Manent, "The Question of Political Forms" (42-50)

January 16: The American Regime: Christian and Liberal Democratic Origins

John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity" (58-61)

John Locke, selections from *Second Treatise on Civil Government* (1-11)

January 21: Democracy: The Modern Regime Type

Alexis de Tocqueville, Introduction to *Democracy in America*, 1835 (3-13)

Alexis de Tocqueville, "On the Point of Departure," *Democracy in America*, 1835 (32-44)

January 23: The Declaration of Independence

“Slaves’ Petition to Massachusetts Governor Thomas Gage” (52-53)

The *Declaration of Independence* (Bessette Appendix A)

January 28: The American Revolution

Bessette Chapter 1: “Deliberation and Citizenship in Service of Freedom and Democracy” (10-25)

January 30: How to Maintain Liberal Democracy

Bessette Chapter 2: “The American Constitution”

The United States Constitution: Bessette (Appendix B)

February 4: The Federalist Arguments for Ratification

Publius, *Federalist Papers* 10, 51

February 6: The Anti-Federalist Arguments against Ratification

Brutus 1 and Centinel 1, *The Anti-Federalist* (72-77)

February 11: American Citizenship and Civic Culture

Bessette Chapter 4: “American Citizenship and Civic Culture” (92-128)

February 13: Modern Political Orientation

American Liberalism - FDR, “Second Bill of Rights” (83-84)

February 18: Modern Political Orientation

American Conservatism - Reagan, “Time for Choosing” (85-89)

(Write First Draft of Term Papers)

February 20: The Left-Right Political Spectrum

Lewis, “It’s Time to Retire the Political Spectrum”

Levin, “The Great Debate”

February 25: Midterm

February 27: Congressional Structure and Powers

Bessette Chapter 12: “Congress” (345-372)

March 4: American Presidential Development and Selection

Bessette Chapter 13: “The Presidency” (376-407)

Hamilton, *Federalist* 68 (pp. 90-91)

Franck, “Presidential Elections, Party Establishments, and Demagogues” (97-99)

March 6: American Bureaucracy

Bessette Chapter 14: “Bureaucracy and the Administrative State”

(Write Second Draft of Term Papers)

March 18: Judicial Review and the Judiciary

Hamilton, *Federalist* 78 (100-103)

Brutus, “The Problem of Judicial Review” (104-105)

Bessette Chapter 15: “The Judiciary”

March 20: Political Parties

Bessette Chapter 9: “Political Parties”
Party platforms 1856, 1934, 1984, 2016

March 25: Elections

Bessette Chapter 10: “Elections and Campaigns” (289-315)

March 27: Public Opinion and Mass Media

Bessette Chapter 7: “Public Opinion and Political Participation” (212-223)
Bessette Chapter 11: “Mass Media”

April 1: Social Policy and The Welfare State

Bessette Chapter 16: “Social Policy and the Welfare State” (475-503)

April 3: Economic Policy

Bessette Chapter 17: “Economic Policy”

April 8: Foreign Policy

Bessette Chapter 18: “National Security and Foreign Policy”

April 10: Political Participation

Bessette Chapter 7: “Public Opinion and Political Participation” (223-233)
Readings from Bonds of Affection, Matthew S. Holland TBA

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

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January 9: American Political Science

Bessette Chapter 1: “Deliberation and Citizenship in Service of Freedom and Democracy” (1-9)

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The United States Constitution: Bessette (Appendix B)

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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.

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 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

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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*.

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 – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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. 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.