

# CASPER COLLEGE COURSE SYLLABUS

## **POLS 1000: US and Wyoming Government**

**Semester/Year: Fall 2015**

**Lecture Hours: 3**

**Lab Hours: 0**

**Credit Hours: 3**

**Class Time:**

**Days: TUES/THURS**

**Room:**

**Instructor's Name: Sam Weaver**

**Contact Information:** Email is the best way to get a hold of me. I check my email at least once a day and will get back to you within 24 hours.

**Office Phone:**  
268-2629

**Email:**  
[sweaver@caspercollege.edu](mailto:sweaver@caspercollege.edu)

**Note:** This is the only email address that you should contact me at.

**Office Hours:** MWF 10:00-11:00; 12:00-12:50 LH 191

**Course Description:** This course explores the organization and nature of the American national government and Wyoming state government and their constitutional development. This course meets the statutory requirement for instruction in the constitutions of the United States and Wyoming.

**Statement of Prerequisites:** None, however students are expected to read and write at a college level.

**Goals:** The goal of this class is to provide students with a functional knowledge of both the Federal and Wyoming governments as well as an appreciation for the competing values and ideas that motivate political actors and how those actors interact with government. Analysis of Wyoming's government will demonstrate to students both how state government functions and how it interacts with the national government. Students will also develop their critical thinking skills through class discussion and writing projects. Much of what you learn in this class will depend on your participation. Your effort in reading the materials assigned, completing assigned research projects, and engaging in class room discussion will make this class more fruitful for everyone involved.

**Specific Objectives (Outcomes): It is expected that completion of this course will assist each student in becoming:**

1. more knowledgeable of the historic and constitutional bases, organization, functions, and policies of the American and Wyoming political systems;
2. better able to understand political affairs and their implications;
3. better able to understand the bases and issues associated with current events, especially political, in the local, state, national, and international realms;
4. better able to meet the reading, writing, researching, and speaking demands essential for a college experience (this corresponds with the college's outcomes #1 "Demonstrate effective oral and written communication" and #6 "Use appropriate technology and information to conduct research");

5. better able to identify the differences between major political philosophies and points of view;

6. more knowledgeable of what it means to be a responsible citizen in a democratic system (this corresponds with the college's outcome #7 "Describe the value of personal, civic, and social responsibilities").

\*Casper College may collect samples of student work demonstrating achievement of the above college outcomes. Any personal identifying information will be removed from student work.

**Methodology:** This course will consist of a combination of lectures related to the material presented in the assigned book chapters and class discussion related to questions brought up in the reading or through other media presented in class. As a result it is very important that you come to class prepared and ready to participate. Keep in mind that during discussion every opinion and viewpoint is valid and that you should not feel intimidated if you have a point to bring up.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Grades in this class will be based on attendance, participation, the three exams, and three writing assignments. A breakdown of the assignments and exams in this course is provided below in the Course Policies Section.

A – 100%-90%

B – 89%-80%

C – 79%-70%

D – 69%-60%

F – 59% and Below

**Required Text, Readings, and Materials:**

*The Struggle for Democracy.* Edward S. Greenberg and Benjamin I Page. 2012 Election Edition. Pearson Publishing 2014.

The United States Constitution <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/>

The Wyoming Constitution <http://sos.wy.state.wy.us/Forms/Publications/09WYConstitution.pdf>

*Optional*

Register for MyPoliSciLab.

MyPoliSciLab is not required for this course but does include some useful resources. It is up to you whether you would like to register for it. Let me know if you would like to do so as I will need to set it up.

**Class Policies: Last Date to Change to Audit Status or to Withdraw with a W Grade:**

The last date to Withdraw from the course with a grade of W or to decide to audit the course is November 12, 2015. If you decide to stop attending this class you must withdraw. I will not perform faculty initiated withdraws. If you do not withdraw and stop attending class you will get an F in the course.

Please note that the percentages below are estimations and the total percentage of each group of assignments may fluctuate slightly.

Attendance for this course is mandatory and a sign in sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class to document attendance. Attendance will make up 5% of your total grade, so be here. If you will not be able to make it to class on a given date for a school related activity let me know as soon as possible so that I can take appropriate measures.

There will be three exams in this course covering the three sections of material presented. These will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions that will test your knowledge of the information presented in class. Each of these exams will count for 20% of your grade, for a total of 60%.

There will also be three writing assignments over the course of the semester that will be designed to encourage you to think critically about the section we are working through. These will not be long papers but it will be important for you to work diligently on these to produce the highest quality work that you can. These assignments will account for 15% of your total grade.

Finally, this class is not only a lecture course, but also a discussion course. As such your participation in class is required and will account for 20% of your grade. I understand that talking in class can be an intimidating prospect; however it is an important component of developing critical thinking skills. We will also do several activities over the course of the semester that require your participation to work. Remember, everyone in class has valid opinions and the rest of us will not judge you based on your comments in class. The intent is to get everyone to start thinking deeply about the material presented so that we can engage in rich discussions. If you are having issues with participation please feel free to see me during my office hours or make an appointment to come in and talk about it.

**Student Rights and Responsibilities:** Please refer to the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code for information concerning your rights and responsibilities as a Casper College Student.

**Chain of Command:** If you have any problems with this class, you should first contact me, the instructor, to attempt to solve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the solution offered by the instructor, you should then take the matter through the appropriate chain of command starting with Department Head Erich Frankland, then Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences Dr. Brandon Kosine, and lastly the Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Shawn Powell.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Casper College demands intellectual honesty. Proven plagiarism or any form of dishonesty associated with the academic process can result in the offender failing the course in which the offense was committed or expulsion from school. See the Casper College Student Code of Conduct for more information on this topic. In short, don't cheat and don't plagiarize. It is not worth your time and could ruin your academic career. If you have any doubts as to whether a passage of your paper might be plagiarized, come talk to me and I will help you work out how to cite it.

**Official Means of Communication:** Casper College faculty and staff will employ the student's assigned Casper College email account as a primary method of communication. Students are responsible for checking their account regularly. Make sure you do this as you could miss important communications from me or from the college. You should also use my email address as your primary means of communication with me outside of class or office hours. It is the best way to get a hold of

me and helps create a record of our conversations.

**ADA Accommodations Policy:** If you need academic accommodations because of a disability, please inform me as soon as possible. To request academic accommodations, students must first consult with the college's Disability Services Counselor, Brent Heuer, located in the Gateway Building, Room 344, (307) 268-2557, [bheuer@caspercollege.edu](mailto:bheuer@caspercollege.edu). The Disability Services Counselor is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting accommodations, determining eligibility for accommodations, and helping students request and use appropriate accommodations. If the Disability Services Counselor determines that you need accommodations and provides you with a letter detailing those accommodations please see me privately after class or during my office hours so we can make sure you are taken care of.

**Course Schedule:** Note that the schedule is subject to change. In the event of a change I will provide a revised syllabus to the class.

## **PART I: The Foundations of American Government**

### Week 1

Syllabus Overview  
Introduction and the Nature of Democracy  
What is Democracy and why do we Struggle for it?  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 1: Democracy and American Politics

### Week 2

The Constitution: History and Development of American Government  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 2: The Constitution  
The United States Constitution: All  
The Wyoming Constitution: All

### Week 3

The Nature of American Government: Federalism and Power Delegation  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 3: Federalism: States and Nation

### Week 4

Structuralism as a Means of Studying Politics  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 4: The Structural Foundations of American Government and Politics

## **Exam 1**

## **PART II: The Institutions of American Government**

### Weeks 5 and 6

The Legislative Branch: The House and Senate

Read Greenberg and Page CH 11: Congress  
Read the United States Constitution Article 1  
Read the Wyoming Constitution Article 3

### **First Writing Assignment Due**

Weeks 7 and 8

The Executive Branch: The Presidency and Government Agencies  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 12: The Presidency and CH 13: The Executive Branch  
Read the United States Constitution Article 2  
Read the Wyoming Constitution Article 4

Week 9

The Judicial Branch: The Courts and Justice System  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 14: The Judicial Branch  
Read the United States Constitution Article 3  
Read the Wyoming Constitution Article 5  
Read Marbury v. Madison Case Brief Summary <http://www.lawnix.com/cases/marbury-madison.html>

### **Exam 2**

### **PART III Political Linkages and Participation**

Week 10

Public Opinion  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 5: Public Opinion

### **Second Writing Assignment Due**

Week 11

Political Parties: Political Organization in a Two Party State  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 9: Political Parties

Week 12

Elections: The Freedom of Choice  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 10: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Week 13

The Media  
Read Greenberg and Page CH 6: The News Media

Week 14

Social Movements

Read Greenberg and Page CH 8: Social Movements

Week 15

TBA (Flex Week if we get behind)

**Third Writing Assignment Due**

**Exam 3: During finals week.**