

Edison State Community College

PLS 121S American National Government

3 CREDIT HOURS

Section 001SS

Instructor: Brian Shuler, Ed.D
Degree: Master of Applied Politics, University of Akron, completed 2006
Email: bshuler2@edisonohio.edu
Office: N/A
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 7:45-8:45 am (room 202) and by appointment face-to-face or in Zoom with 48 hours' notice for Zoom
Tutoring Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 pm (OhioLink); Fridays 8:00-9:00 am (Zoom); Fridays 9:00-11:00 am (OhioLink)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Overview of the American system of government, which examines the impact of public opinions, group interests, and organizations on the Institutions of American government. Particular attention is focused on issues, which relate to the politics of public policy and the decision-making process. The nature of American democracy is examined and critically analyzed.

REQUIRED TEXT

- Bianco, William and David Canon, American Politics Today: 8th Essentials Edition. Pearson, 2025. With inquizitive code

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Computer Speakers, microphone, Webcams and Computer Access**
- High speed internet/Firefox is recommended.** Although these are not required, they may make your experience better and faster. Students should have 2 browsers in case one moves slow. It is the student's responsibility to have access to a reliable computer.
- Email:** Check your ESCC e-mail account frequently for communications about this course. Once a day, Monday through Friday, is the best policy. Emails sent through Blackboard will be located in your Edison email (***all students, faculty, and staff are required to use their Edison email account for ALL college communication.*** Email from personal accounts will not be responded to.

COMMUNICATION

Please contact me at any time during the semester, with any questions or concerns – I am here to help and typically respond within 24 hours, but am allowed up to 48 hours. All students, faculty, and staff are required to use their Edison email account for ALL college communication). Students have **48 hours** to respond to faculty emails per school code. Do not call the instructor as the instructor is on campus one day per week.

EMAIL ETTIQUETTE

This is REQUIRED for all emails as this is a professional environment:

- Subject line... State the course and subject "PLS 121S Inquizitive question"
 - (if you use the "email instructor" through blackboard, just put the subject as the class is automatically added. This method of email is recommended)
- Salutation. Address the recipient by name: "Dear [name]" or "Hello [name]"

- Body text. Explain the main message of the **email**. ...
 - Signature. Your **email** closing should be formal, not informal. (Put your name on it)
- Think before you write.** Unlike a traditional class where we can see and speak to each other, an online course does not allow us to use nonverbal cues (facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures). Remarks that might be humorous when spoken can easily be misconstrued when written. Choose your words with care to lessen the chance that you will be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS

Week	Date	Class Meeting Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	08/24-08/28	Course Introduction Intro to American Politics Constitution (group work)	Ch. 1	Getting Started Assignments due 08/28 Read Chapter 1. Inquizive: Ch. 1 due 08/30 Ch. 1 Quiz Read Chapter 2 (due before class 08/26) Read the documents listed on Slide 9 of Chapter 1. Use the given links.
2	08/31-09/04	Constitution Group work	Ch.2	Inquizive: Ch. 2 due 09/06 Ch. 2 Quiz <u>Quizzes due 09/06 in Blackboard:</u> Declaration of Independence Quiz Articles of Confederation Quiz Constitution Quiz Bill of Rights Quiz Amendments XI-XX Quiz Amendments XXI-XVII Quiz Read Chapter 3 (due before class 09/07)
3	09/07-09/11 (no class 09/07)	Federalism	Ch. 3	Inquizive: Ch. 3 due 09/13 Ch. 3 Quiz Read Chapters 4-5 (due before class 09/13)
4	09/14-09/18	Civil Liberties/Rights Group work	Ch. 4-5	Inquizives: Ch. 4-5 due 09/20 Ch. 4 Quiz Ch. 5 Quiz Topic #1 discussion board post due 09/18 Read Chapter 6 (due before class 09/20)
5	09/21-09/25	Public Opinion Group work	Ch. 6	Inquizive: Ch. 6 due 09/27 Ch. 6 Quiz Opposing Views Paper (due 10/09) Read Chapters 7-8 (due before class 09/27)
6	09/28-10/02	Political Parties/ Elections	Ch.7-8	Inquizives: Ch. 7-8 due 10/04 Ch. 7 Quiz Ch. 8 Quiz

				Read the party platforms for the Democratic, Republican, Socialist, and Green Parties (due before class 10/07)
7	10/05-10/09	Midterm Exam (Chp. 1-8, due 10/05) Group work	Ch. 1-8	Read Chapter 9 (due before class 10/12)
8	10/12-10/16	Interest Groups Group work	Ch. 9	Inquizive: Ch. 9 due 10/18 Chp. 9 Quiz Read Chapter 10 (due before class 10/19)
9	10/19-10/23	Congress Group work	Ch. 10	Inquizive: Ch. 10 due 10/25 Ch. 10 Quiz Topic #2 discussion board post due 10/23 Read Chapter 11 (due before class 10/26)
10	10/26-10/30	Presidency Group work	Ch. 11	Inquizive: Ch. 11 due 11/01 Ch. 11 Quiz Read Chapter 12 (due before class 11/02)
11	11/02-11/06	Bureaucracy Group work	Ch. 12	Inquizive: Ch. 12 due 11/08 Ch. 12 Quiz Read Chapter 13 (due before class 11/09)
12	11/09-11/13 (no class 11/11)	Courts	Ch. 13	Inquizive: Ch. 13 due 11/15 Ch. 13 Quiz
13	11/16-11/20	Courts (group work) Argument presentations		Read Chapter 14 (due before class 11/18)
14	11/23-11/27	Economic and Social Policy Group work	Ch. 14	Inquizive: Ch. 14 due 11/29 Ch. 14 Quiz Read Chapter 15 (due before class 11/25)
15	11/30-12/04	Foreign Policy Group work	Ch. 15	Inquizive: Ch. 15 due 12/04 Ch. 15 Quiz Policy Paper (due 12/09) Topic #3 discussion board post(s) due 12/04
16	12/07-12/11	Final Exam (Ch. 9-15, due 12/07)		

EVALUATION METHODS

GETTING STARTED ASSIGNMENTS

Before students can complete any work in this class, they must watch the introduction to the course video. This assignment will go over the basics of online class expectations, the syllabus, plagiarism, what you need to complete the class, as well as an introduction discussion board where students will be required to introduce themselves to the course and professor.

INQUIZITIVES: CHAPTERS

Students will complete inquisitive assignments online each week over the chapters. Each assignment has a target goal to be met. Students can work to a 100% score on each assignment until the due date. To complete them, students must read the chapters first. Then, go through the questions and answer them. The book can be used as the assignment is completed. Information on how up and complete these assignments is in the Getting Started Folder.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Students must make three (3) discussion board posts, using critical thinking and respectfully and constructively reply to two (2) classmate's posts. Each discussion board has at least two options. You are required to respond to one of them. Posts must be at least two paragraphs of three sentences each. Posts and replies must use correct grammar, including punctuation. Do not reply with such comments as "I agree" or "Nice post." These show no constructiveness or critical thinking. Completing more than three posts will not get you extra credit.

GROUP WORK

Students will engage in classroom group activities that last more than half of the length of one class session. The topics will be relevant to the topics in the related chapters.

QUIZZES

Students will have 19 short quizzes throughout the term. All of them will be over the information from the slides. Some will be classroom quizzes, while others will be Blackboard quizzes. The classroom quizzes will be seven minutes. The Blackboard quizzes will be 20 minutes. All quizzes will be open-book, open-notes. Resources on the internet will be allowable for the Blackboard quizzes. No make-up quizzes will be given for any reason.

EXAMS

There are two (2) exams in the course.

Midterm Exam will cover chapters 1-8, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the U.S. Constitution, and all Constitutional Amendments.

Final Exam will cover chapters 9-15.

These will be open book multiple choice questions over the materials covered. No make-up exams will be given.

PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS

There are two papers and one presentation for four topics in this course.

Opposing Viewpoints Paper

Students read over articles for both sides of the discussion concerning an issue for "Opposing Viewpoints" in Civil Rights/Liberties. Using the information, write a paper explaining both sides of the issue. This is not an opinion paper; all arguments must be supported with information from the "viewpoint articles." This paper must 800+ words and will use APA formatting. More information will be available on Blackboard.

Oral Argument

Give a 3-5 minute argument on four topics. The topics will be related to those discussed during lecture. You may use note cards to help you in your presentation.

Policy Paper

The purpose of this paper is to develop your thought and analytical processes by choosing one of the following policy issues that the CURRENT President of the United States and Congress have been discussing to analyze. Students will present an analysis comparing and contrasting the ideas and approaches of the two bodies. This paper must 800+ words and will use APA formatting. More information will be available on Blackboard.

FINAL GRADE STANDARDS

The final grade for the course will represent your instructor's assessment of the overall quality with which you met all the requirements of the course.

Assignment	Points Possible	% of Grade	Grading Scale	
Getting Started Assignments	30	1.7%	90-100%	A
Group Work	240	13.5%	80-89%	B
Discussion Topics (3)	60	3.4%	70-79%	C
Quizzes (19)	190	10.7%	60-69%	D
Chapter Inquizitives (15)	255	14.4%	Below 60%	F
Exams (2)	500	33.8%		
Opposing Views Paper	100	5.6%		
Argument Assignments (4)	200	11.3%		
Policy Paper	100	5.6%		
Total	1675	100%		-

POLICY STATEMENTS

SUBMITTING YOUR PAPERS

To submit papers, click the link "View/Complete Assignment," at the bottom of the assignment. Follow the directions for attaching your paper. When you are ready to submit your work, you must click the "submit" button. Be careful that you do not click on "submit" until you're ready for your paper to be sent. This is an irrevocable step: once you have clicked "submit" you cannot get back the submission

TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK:

1. First, click on the "View/Complete"
2. Browse and Upload the assignment in WORD .doc, or .docx only. **NO GOOGLE. HEIC, ETC. DOCS ARE ALLOWED!!** (see getting started for how to download a doc from google docs or how to get your free download of Microsoft Office)
3. Look at what it uploaded. If it is the right assignment, click SUBMIT

No late work will be accepted for not following this guideline and checking to ensure they completed the full process. It is the student's responsibility to double check all submissions and be sure they are at a reliable computer with reliable internet. If there is no assignment or submission of the receipt, the assignment will be a zero.

No emailed work will be accepted!! All assignments must be submitted through blackboard. Anyone who emails the assignment will not receive credit for not following directions. If help is needed, the student must email the teacher. Please review the response time required as waiting till the last minute may cause severe damage to your grade.

READINGS

Students are expected to have all chapters read prior to the class starting the topics. It is important to remember this is COLLEGE and expecting to be taught the book rather than reading it is not college level behavior. Lectures are supplemental to the book and will cover aspects not in the book. Students are responsible for any information in the book and can expect it to be on the exams.

NOTETAKING

This is a college class. Therefore, students must take notes. The instructor will not give the notes to students, they are all accountable for all material in the class.

LATE WORK POLICY

This is a professional classroom; therefore, everyone will be treated like responsible adults with the capability of meeting deadlines. Each week requires 9 hours of class time for regular activities as stated in the course catalog. That means, students have 168 hours to complete 9 hours of class time work. Students must plan ahead as this is plenty of time to complete the course work.

Therefore, no late work is accepted except for extreme circumstances with proper validating documentation, which is based on a case-by-case evaluation. Contact over late work must be at least 24 hours before the due date/time unless the professor deems this contact impossible. It is very important to stay in touch with the professor and discuss issues the moment they arise. This means back and forth conversation is required prior to the due date. This is only for legitimate reasons and may require documentation.

Any make-up of the midterm **must** be the during the office hour before the next class. ***This time is 60 minutes, 15 minutes less than the class time for the exams, so make-up exams will have less time allotted than class-time exams.***

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic Honesty Because engaging in dishonest practices undermines the trust that is essential in any social relationship, honesty is expected in all matters. Academic honesty requires that you never submit another's work as your own. You will not plagiarize from a printed source, an electronic source, or another student's work, nor will you have someone else do your work. You will not copy from another student's examination or use an assignment from a previous class for this class. You will not avoid the timely completion of work by misrepresenting the conditions that cause you to miss a deadline. You will not assist another student in any dishonest practice. If you engage in academic dishonesty, you can receive a failing grade for the assignment or for the course, and can face other disciplinary action. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate college administrator. It is the policy of Edison State Community College that students respect ethical standards and exhibit academic honesty in carrying out their academic assignments. Edison State is committed to promoting ethical behavior by educating students about academic honesty and creating conditions that foster academic honesty and other ethical behavior. For the purpose of this policy, academic dishonesty shall include, but is not limited to, the following: 1. Conduct with Respect to and/or During a Quiz, Examination, or Any Evaluation or Assignment, Written or Otherwise. 1. accessing, referring to, or using open textbooks or notes or other devices not authorized by the instructor. 2. Looking at another person's work (Examples include a paper or a computer monitor) 3. Communicating with, providing assistance to, or receiving assistance from another person in a manner not authorized by the instructor. 4. Obtaining or attempting to obtain or using or attempting to use a copy of any unauthorized materials intended to be used as, or in the preparation of, a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation. 5. Taking a quiz or examination or similar evaluation in the place of another person 6. Utilizing another person to take a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation in place of one-self 7. Violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation. 8. Changing material on a graded examination and then requesting a revised grading of the examination. 9. Submitting an assignment purporting to be the student's original work that has been wholly or partly created by any other source (Examples include a person, the Internet, and printed material.) 10. Presenting as one's own work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without

customary and proper acknowledgment of sources. Sources include the Internet. 11. Knowingly permitting one's work to be submitted by another person as if it were the submitter's original work. 12. Violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of the assignment. 13. Avoiding the timely completion of work by misrepresenting the conditions that cause the student to miss a deadline or an examination. 2. Unauthorized Alteration or Transmission of any Academic Information or Records 3. Cooperation with another Person in Academic Dishonesty, either Directly or as an Intermediary. 4. Students cannot use AI tools such as ChatGPT or Grammar tools that utilize A.I. on assignments in this course. All assignments should be prepared entirely by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are prohibited and will be treated as academic misconduct.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Failure to submit assignments does not constitute an official withdrawal. The responsibility for withdrawal prior to the published withdrawal deadline always lies with the students. Students are financially responsible for costs associated with classes that they have withdrawn from after the published Add/Drop date. *New federal mandates for students receiving financial aid state that attendance is to be calculated based on "academic-engagement," which means that coming unprepared for class just to be present and not doing any homework will not equal attendance.*

You know the beginning and ending dates of the semester. Therefore, absence because of vacation is not acceptable. All missed assessments due during class time as a result of vacation will have a grade of zero (0).

TESTING YOUR FAITH ACT POLICY

Edison State Community College is committed to providing an environment respectful of students' beliefs. Students are permitted to be absent for up to 3 days each semester based on their faith, religion, or spiritual belief system with no academic penalty. Students must complete the Testing Your Faith Act Accommodations Form, <https://www.edisonohio.edu/services/support/registration-records>, located in "Forms" and provide a copy to their individual faculty within 14 days from the start of the course. The entire policy can be found in the student handbook at <https://www.edisonohio.edu/services-support/student-resources>.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Topic #1

Name one right that a criminal defendant has that shouldn't exist or one right that a criminal defendant doesn't have that should exist. Keep in mind that this applies to all criminal defendants and not only for select defendants. Respond to two other posts.

OR

What do you think changing from federalism to a confederation would be? What powers would the states have that the national government currently has? Respond to two other posts.

Topic #2

What do you think the impact of a significant Third Party in Congress would be? Respond to two other posts.

OR

What do you think the impact of three presidents would be? How would you divide up the power among the three? Respond to two other posts.

OR

What do you think the impact of electing Supreme Court justices for 12-year terms would be? Respond to two other posts.

Topic #3

You are drafting a Constitutional Amendment to create a fourth branch of government. Give the name of the branch and its powers. You may take existing powers of one or more of the three existing branches. Tie into your essay what the checks and balances of this branch on the other branches and of the other branches on this branch. Respond to two other posts.

OR

What power would you give to the Supreme Court to give is more power over foreign policy? How do you think this new power would alter the power of the United States' power in the world? Respond to two other posts.

ARGUMENT TOPICS

Topic #1

Read the first ten Amendments to the United States Constitution. Pick one to eliminate in its entirety, and replace it with your own. The one that you propose has to relate to personal freedoms but may not relate to abortion or sexuality. Explain why you wish to eliminate the Amendment that you chose and why you support the one that you support.

Topic #2

Option 1: Pick one power that one of the three branches of the national government has that you think one of the other branches should have instead. Refer to Articles I through III of the United States Constitution if necessary. Explain why.

OR

Option 2: Pick one additional power that one of the three branches of the national government should have. Refer to Articles I through III of the United States Constitution if necessary. Explain why.

OR

Option 3: Pick one power that one of the three branches of the national government has that you think it should not have. Understand that this is strictly an elimination of a government power and not a swapping of power, as the *Option 1* has. Refer to Articles I through III of the United States Constitution if necessary. Explain why.

Topic #3

Investigate the various ways to distribute Electoral College votes and pick one that you think is most representative (including winner-take-all). If you don't like any of them, develop your own. Explain why you think that your choice is most representative.

Topic #4

Is "court-packing" of the Supreme Court a legitimate practice? Explain why or why not. Keep in mind that if you support the practice, you support the practice to pack the court with justices who disagree with you, too, and that if you support a Supreme Court with 15 justices, you also support a Supreme Court with 33 or more justices.