

COURSE CODE: POL 200
COURSE TITLE: Introduction to United States Government
SEMESTER: Fall 2005
PLACE/TIME: Tues & Fri, 9:15 am – 10:35 am, room 202
PROFESSOR: Bruce Sabin

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TEXTBOOK: Volkomer, W.E. (2004). *American Government* (10th Ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Additional readings available on website and/or campus intranet



“Government is not reason, it is not eloquence, it is force; like fire, a troublesome servant and a fearful master. Never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action.”
~ George Washington

WEBBER INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT:

Webber International University educates students in preparation for careers in the worldwide business environment. Emphasis is placed on the development of skills in administration and strategic planning, oral and written communication, applied modern business practices, personal growth, entrepreneurship and professional development. The University offers educational programs at the associate, bachelor and master levels exclusively in areas of business.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

A survey of the theory, principles, and institutions of United States Government from the national to the local level. Emphasis is placed on the government’s relationship to the private sector, especially in business.

EDUCATIONAL AND COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Education, in general, should seek to achieve three primary goals. Education should lead students toward and provide resources for:

1. self-actualization, so that students become more developed individuals.
2. productive citizenship, so that students positively impact their communities.
3. critical thinking, so that students can make better life decisions.

This course is designed to achieve educational goals within the framework of political science scholarship. After succeeding in this course, each student will be able to:

1. explain ways the government as a whole, and through its individual branches, affects individuals, society, businesses and the economy.
2. describe several of the basic civil liberties and rights enumerated in the US *Constitution*, and provide an overview of the development of civil rights.
3. discuss the tension between majority rule and minority rights built into the American Constitutional system.

4. give examples of Supreme Court decisions that have affected public policy and how the Court's interpretation of the *Constitution* changes over time.
5. express ways people and institutions can participate in and influence government.
6. explain how "checks and balances" works within the government.
7. critically analyze and make rational decisions about political proposals and media information.

REQUIREMENTS AND RUBRIC:

Note: Course requirements are subject to modification; students may negotiate alternative requirements based on individual educational needs.

Assignment	Quantity	Weight Each	Total Value
Tests	4	10%	40%
Topic responses	4	5%	20%
Letters	3	4%	12%
Participation	N/A	10%	10%
Group project	1	15%	20%

GRADING SCALE:

A	90.0% - 102%
B	80.0% - 89.9%
C	70.0% - 79.9%
D	60.0% - 69.9%
F	00.0% - 59.9%

Grades will be rounded to nearest tenth. An upward curve may be applied to final grades.

ERUDITIO ET INTEGRITAS:

Webber's motto, *eruditio et integritas*, may be translated as *scholarship and integrity*. As a university—a society of learners—Webber depends upon the scholarship of its faculty and students. We continually work to develop knowledge. Trust is a foundation for all societies, and is absolutely essential in scholarly communities. Because scholars share knowledge, we must have confidence in each other. Acts that damage academic trust, such as cheating on tests or plagiarizing papers, damage the ability of scholars to share and build upon knowledge, thereby threatening the university itself. Both scholarship and integrity are critical standards and must be fervently defended by all members of the university.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Academic grades, as measurements, are designed to discriminate according to criteria. Therefore, grades will reflect the degree to which the student's work met the criteria included in assignment rubrics. Good work will receive good grades and poor work will receive poor grades. Grades will not be awarded based upon the student's race, age, religion, nationality or similarly capricious cause.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Each unexcused absence will result in a 3% reduction in the final grade. In case of extracurricular activities conflicting with class, the student must personally email the professor about the situation prior to the day of the absence. In case of illness, the professor should be notified as soon as possible. Absences will only be excused after the day of the absence if earlier notification was not possible. The student is personally responsible for determining what information was missed due to absences.

INCOMPLETE WORK:

Work completed more than five days late, without being excused, may not be accepted. Acceptance of late work may be contingent upon the completion of additional assignments. Any work not completed by the last day of regular classes will not be accepted without approval from the Dean of Student Development and/or the Dean of Academics.

PROFESSIONALISM AND PERSONAL CONDUCT:

This is a business university preparing professionals. Students are expected to act professionally. Cell phones should not ring or be used in the classroom. Students should treat others with appropriate respect.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In accordance with federal regulations, students with diagnosed disabilities will be provided appropriate accommodations. It is the individual student's responsibility to register his or her disability with the Dean of Student Development and inform professors at the beginning of the semester. Accommodations cannot be provided if the disability is not registered with the Dean. Informing the Dean and professors after experiencing problems is not acceptable.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY:

Extra credit may be offered to compensate students for taking advantage of additional learning opportunities unexpectedly available during the semester. Any extra credit opportunity will be made available to all students. Extra credit will not be offered to raise low grades for individual students.

CLASS SCHEDULE: The schedule may change if needed.

Day	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Tues	8/30	Introduction	
Fri	9/2		
Read: <i>Common Sense</i> ; <i>Declaration of Independence</i> ; chapters 1 and 2			
Tues	9/6	American Revolution	
Fri	9/9		
Read: “Give Me Liberty”; <i>Constitution</i> ; <i>Federalist 10</i> ; chapter 3			
Tues	9/13	Constitution and Federalism	
Fri	9/16		
Read: <i>Federalist 28</i> ; chapter 7			
Tues	9/20	The Congress	Test 1
Fri	9/23		
Read: FDR speech; JFK speech; chapters 8 and 9			
Tues	9/27	The President	Topic 1
Fri	9/30		
Read: Commerce Clause papers; <i>Federalist 76</i> ; chapter 10			
Tues	10/4	The Courts	
Fri	10/7		
Read: <i>Newsweek</i> story; chapter 4			
Tues	10/11	Public Opinion and Media	Test 2
Fri	10/14		Self-Evaluation 1
Read: chapter 5			
Tues	10/18	Interest Groups	
Fri	10/21		Letter 1
Read: <i>Bill of Rights</i> ; Public Use cases; chapter 11			
Tues	10/25	Civil Liberties	Topic 2
Fri	10/28		
Read: “Alabama Clergymen”; “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”; “Why Jesus Called a Man a Fool”; chapter 12			
Tues	11/1	Civil Rights	
Fri	11/4		Letter 2
Read: chapter 13			
Tues	11/8	Public Policy	Test 3
Fri	11/11		Topic 3
Tues	11/15	Public Policy	
Fri	11/18		Letter 3
Tues	11/22		Test 4, Topic 4
Fri	11/25	No Class – Thanksgiving	
Tues	11/29	Group Presentations	Self-Evaluation 2
Fri	12/2	Group Presentations	

Reading Report

POL 200: US Government (Fall 2005)

Name: _____ Assignment: _____

Directions: This report must be turned in at the first class meeting of each week.

1. Please indicate how well you completed the assignment.

- ☐ I did not read the assignment.
- ☐ I skimmed or partially read the assignment.
- ☐ I read the assignment closely, but did not take notes.
- ☐ I read and took notes, but do not fully understand the text.
- ☐ I read, took notes, and believe I understand the text well.

2. What do you think is the most important idea or concept in the text?

3. What questions do you have about the text?

4. Please indicate how well you think the text contributed to the course.

- ☐ The text was essential to the course.
- ☐ The text was beneficial to the course.
- ☐ The text had some slight benefit to the course.
- ☐ The text added no value to the course.

Please feel free to make additional comments on the back.

Topic Responses

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Directions: For each of the following questions, write an essay of at least 600 words. The due dates for each essay are on the syllabus. Be sure to address the questions in accordance with the evaluation rubric.

Topic 1

After reading *Common Sense*, the *Declaration of Independence* and *Federalist 28*, explain how the American founders viewed the moral principles involved in armed revolution against one's government and what rationale(s) they used for revolution. Explain your own moral thoughts on when it may be acceptable to break the law.

Objectives: This assignment may address aspects of Course Objectives 2 and 5.

Topic 2

Explain the concept of political socialization with particular attention to your own personal experience and how that process has affected you today, including your concept of what it means to be a good citizen.

Objectives: This assignment may address aspects of Course Objectives 5 and 7.

Topic 3

Martin Luther King was well-educated, had a family and earned a middle-class income. Why do you think he was willing to risk his life by his leadership in the Civil Rights movement? What were his goals? What do you think of his goals? Under what circumstances would you be willing to put your own life at significant risk?

Objectives: This assignment may address aspects of Course Objectives 2, 3, 5 and 7.

Topic 4

Explain the policy making process and give examples of each branch of the federal government creating and implementing public policy. Provide examples for each branch's involvement in the policy process. Give examples of ways federal public policy currently affects your life and how it will affect your future business career. Finally, explain how you would evaluate a policy proposal to determine your position on the issue.

Objectives: This assignment may address aspects of Course Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Topic Response Rubric

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Directions: Topic Responses will be given the lowest grade for which they meet an identified criterion.

A (100%)

All areas of the question are answered thoroughly. Writing is succinct, accurate, articulate, and insightful. Thesis demonstrates comprehension, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information from class meetings and course readings. Grammar and spelling meet professional expectations.

A- (90%)

All areas of the question are answered thoroughly. Writing is succinct, accurate and articulate, but may lack significant insight. Thesis demonstrates comprehension, analysis and synthesis of concepts, but may lack compelling evaluation.

B (85%)

Grammar and spelling are below professional standards (e.g., obvious spelling errors, use of homonyms, etc.)

C (75%)

Areas of the question are answered superficially. Writing has a few notable problems by lacking clarity, brevity and/or accuracy. Thesis demonstrates acceptable comprehension and analysis of concepts, but demonstrates inadequate synthesis of ideas. Grammar and spelling fail to demonstrate careful editing (e.g., sentence fragment, confusing structure, run-on sentence, etc.).

D (60%)

Part of the question remains unanswered. Writing demonstrates lack of editing. Thesis demonstrates minimally acceptable (i.e., trivial) comprehension of basic concepts.

F (no credit)

Essay does not meet the standards for any of the above grades. Assignment must be revised and resubmitted to receive a D.

Grade



PASS Learning Center approval:

Reviewed by: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Topic Response Rubric Guidelines

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These guidelines are intended to expound upon key concepts for the Topic Responses Rubric. These guidelines are not all-inclusive, but should aid in understanding the expectations for an A paper, as defined on the Rubric.

Thoroughness

- Organization is logical.
- Introduction includes clear thesis.
- Conclusion is connected to thesis.
- Thesis is well supported throughout essay.
- Thesis incorporates information from outside of particular readings (e.g., other classes, personal experience, etc.).
- Clear examples are provided from readings.

Professional writing

- Writing is in third-person.
- Writing is persuasive.
- Writing is clear and consistent.
- Style uses varied structure to maintain interest.
- Paragraphs are linked by connecting ideas.
- Paper has been proofread and edited to remove problems.

Reflection

- Writer identifies relationship between source material and his or her self.
- Writer compares and contrasts original source material to his or her own experience, values, and knowledge.

Comprehension

- Writer demonstrates clear understanding of facts and ideas of original source(s) and is able to accurately describe the source(s).

Application

- Writer applies the specific original information to new situations, with consideration to similarities and differences between original context and new situations.

Analysis

- Writer identifies presuppositions, main ideas, contexts, and strengths and weaknesses of original sources.

Synthesis

- Writer combines various data to create comprehensive ideas and concepts.
- Information is combined to create a broad and predictable system or philosophy for the source(s).

Evaluation

- Writer demonstrates informed, documented and well-defended conclusions based upon analysis and synthesis of information. Conflicting ideas and data are disclosed and explained in relation to conclusions.

Letter

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Write a letter to a government official concerning a topic of importance. Be sure to address your letter to someone relevant to your issue. In other words, do not write to Governor Jeb Bush about the Iraq War, or to President George Bush about your neighbor's barking dog. Governors are not responsible for foreign policy, and presidents are not responsible for zoning ordinances.

Your letter should meet standards for a professional business letter, both in style and content. In general, letters to government officials should be direct and address only one issue. Be clear about your position on the issue and what action you expect from the official.

In general, one may contact government through email. This assignment, however, requires a typed letter, which will be sent by mail. To facilitate both grading and mailing, you are required to submit two copies of your letter. One copy will be graded. The additional copy must be submitted to me in a sealed, stamped, addressed envelope, ready to be placed in the mail.

For more information on writing letters to government officials, see the following links:

<http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/branches/spc/udall/rgtwrite.pdf>

<http://www.aclu.org/TakeAction/TakeAction.cfm?ID=12011&c=242>

http://www.bread.org/issues/rise_to_the_challenge/sample_letter.html

http://www.glendale.edu/polsci/how_to_write.htm

<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/documents/bletter/index.cfm>

<http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/business.html>

Letter Rubric

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	Excellent (30)	Good (25)	Mediocre (20)	Deficient (15)	Unacceptable (0)	Score
Formatting	Proper business letter format. Salutation appropriate to addressee. No longer than 1 page. Appropriate signature. Signed in blue ink.	Very minor errors that do not diminish the effectiveness of the letter.	Not signed in blue ink. Number of errors below B level.	Informal appearance. Does not warrant higher grade.	No contact data for sender. Inappropriate salutation or addressee information. Longer than 1 page.	
Content	Provides well-written introduction, body and conclusion. Remains on 1 topic. Factual and includes necessary and valuable details. Absolutely professional.	Minor errors in details or otherwise weak presentation of argument. Sufficient details for purpose.	Lacks important detail in some area.	Deviates from topic. Lacks multiple important details.	Unclear topic. Significantly inaccurate facts or details. Lacks call for action.	
Style	No syntax mistakes. Visually attractive. Structure is objective, succinct, varied, fluid and persuasively targeted to audience.	Visually cluttered or bare. Simple sentence structure. Few minor syntax errors. Some lack of objectivity.	Monotonous structure. Several minor, or one major syntax error. Lacks objectivity.	Multiple major syntax errors. Tedious structure.	Handwritten. Derogatory. Unintelligible structure.	
Rough Score						

Deduct 50% if addressee is inappropriate to purpose of letter.

Late deduction

Add 10% if addresses on envelope are computer printed.

Objectives: This assignment addresses Course Objectives 5 and 7.

Final Score

PASS Learning Center approval: Signed _____ Date _____

Student Performance Self-Evaluation Form

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Directions: Please complete this form, front and back, during the week before it is due. Be sure to reflect critically on your performance for each standard.

	Exemplary	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Detrimental
1. Professionalism The student is on-time and prepared for class. Work is completed on-time and is a professional manner. Class behavior positively contributes to the learning environment. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Quality of work Completed work is of a quality indicative of a successful college student and meets objective standards of assignment rubrics. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Course knowledge The student demonstrates expected intellectual growth through both graded work and class discussions. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Collegiality The student is respectful of others and productively works as part of the learning community. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Distinction The student provides distinct contributions to the class deserving of special recognition. Rationale:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Rating Definitions:

Exemplary – Consistently outstanding performance and sets the standard for others.

Exceeds Expectations – Regularly exceeds requirements and reliably performs well.

Meets Expectations – Performs according to all standards with little need for direct supervision.

Needs Improvement – Performance is unreliable or fails to meet standards.

Detrimental – Performance requires immediately and significant improvement.

Directions: Please provide responses to the following questions. Note that responses to open-ended questions may be objective (e.g., test grades), subjective (e.g., critical thinking), personal (e.g., attitude) and/or external (e.g., participation).

6. What is your greatest accomplishment during this course?

7. What do you most need to improve in this course?

8. What grade do you think you deserve in this course?

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ F

9. Why do you deserve that grade?

Group Project

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Groups will be assigned by the professor early in the semester. Each group will develop a proposal for a new program (e.g., campus organization, event, class, or activity) intended to increase political awareness and/or involvement among Webber students and/or the local community.

Prepare a written proposal and create a group presentation. The proposals will be graded as follows: the professor's evaluation of the written proposal (30%), the reviewers' blind evaluations of the written proposal (40%), and the professor's evaluation of the group presentation (30%). Refer to the grading rubric for evaluation criteria.

The cover page of your proposal should not include the names of any group members. Only the group number should be identified.

Written proposals are due on Nov. 29. Presentations will occur on Nov. 29 and Dec. 2. In general, proposals should address the following:

Executive Summary

Purpose

- Who is the program target?
- How is this related to University mission, values and goals?
- What are your broad objectives?
- What are your specific goals?
- How is this unique?
- Is this one-time or on-going?

Need

- Why is this needed?
- How can the need be further assessed?
- Are there currently resources (on or off campus) that could meet the need?

Interest

- Is the campus community interested?
- How could this be marketed?
- What degree of participation is expected?

Requirements

- What University requirements must be met?
- What resources are required (e.g., staff, finances, facilities)?

Implementation

- How will it be organized (structured and managed)?
- What is the planned timeline/calendar?
- How will it be funded?

Appendices (supporting documents as necessary)

Program Proposal Rubric

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This rubric is designed for evaluation of the program proposal. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Once you have responded to the 12 statements, you have completed the evaluation. You may choose to add written comments on the back. Thank you for your time and helpfulness.

This evaluation is for group # _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The executive summary provides a clear introduction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The program purpose is effectively explained.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The need for the program is effectively explained.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Community interest in the program is explained effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Program requirements are explained effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The implementation plan is explained effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The proposal is well thought-out.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The visual appearance of the proposal gives a professional impression.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The group's writing style gives a professional impression.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The ideas presented give a professional impression.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Overall, the proposal gives a professional impression.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The program would add value to Webber.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Optional Reviewer Comments:

Note to students: Grades will be calculated as follows: For each of the first 11 items, each “strongly agree” is worth 10 points, “agree” is worth 8 points, “neither agree nor disagree” is worth 5 points, “disagree” is worth 3 points, and “strongly disagree” is worth 1 point. The points allocated for the final item are four times the weight for other items. The highest possible score is 150. The grade will be 1/3 less than the final score, so that 150 points becomes 100%.

Grade:

Extra Credit
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Fall 2005

During the semester, you may earn extra credit for writing articles for submission to the *Warrior* student newspaper. Extra credit may be earned for up to three (3) articles accepted for publication in the *Warrior*. Article topics must be current and substantially related to the United States government *and* business (e.g., regulation, taxation, etc.), or the United States government *and* college students (e.g., student visas, financial aid, etc.).

Submissions to the *Warrior* should be e-mailed to me as an RTF attachment, and uploaded to turnitin.com. I will then forward the article, as a blind submission, to the *Warrior* Advisor. If the article is accepted for publication, 10 points will be added to your next test grade.

Resources:

AP writing: <http://www.usu.edu/communic/faculty/sweeney/resources/ap.htm>

Student Press Law Center: <http://www.splc.org/>

Ethics: <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/weblines/491.html>

Program Proposal Presentation Rubric

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Presenters' Names: _____

Presentation Topic: _____

	Points Possible	Points Earned
1. A good introduction was presented.	10	
2. Program purpose was clearly explained.	5	
3. Need for the program was clearly explained.	5	
4. Community interest was clearly explained	10	
5. Program requirements are explained effectively.	5	
6. Implementation plan is explained effectively.	5	
7. Presentation was professional.	5	
8. Presenters used visual aids well.	10	
9. Presenters encouraged questions.	5	
10. Presentation was creative.	10	
11. The program would add value to Webber.	5	

Total Score _____

Comments: