

**COURSE CODE:** POL 230  
**COURSE TITLE:** Current Events  
**SEMESTER:** Spring 2006  
**PLACE/TIME:** Room MC 205, Tues & Fri, 10:45 - 12:05 pm  
**PROFESSOR:** Bruce Sabin

e-mail: bruce@brucesabin.com  
website: www.brucesabin.com  
office: Academic Affairs  
phone: 863.638.2988



**TEXTBOOK:** There is no required textbook for this course.

**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:**

This course is a comparative study of major current political events with past and present political, social and economic principles.

**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 current event issues. After succeeding in this course, each student will be able to:

1. think critically about current events.
2. apply business principles to political issues.
3. perform academic, social science research.
4. write well-formed, justified and persuasive arguments.
5. determine the credibility and value of information sources.
6. explain the process by which issues become politically salient.
7. create and critique strategies for political and policy advocacy.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

|                         |         |                    |         |
|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| Leadership presentation | 5%      | Research Project 1 | 10%     |
| Group presentation      | 10%     | Research Project 2 | 10%     |
| 5 News Articles         | 2% each | Participation      | 20%     |
| 3 Opinion Articles      | 5% each | 4 Letters          | 5% each |

**GRADING SCALE:**

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| A | 90.0% - 100%  |
| B | 80.0% - 89.9% |
| C | 70.0% - 79.9% |
| D | 60.0% - 69.9% |
| F | 00.0% - 59.9% |

*Grades are calculated by rounding to the nearest tenth. An upward curve may be applied to final grades. Check [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) for your current grade status.*

**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.

**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.

**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.

Syllabus is subject to change

**1.10** Lecture

**1.13** Lecture “what is critical thinking?”

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**1.17** Lecture “social, economic and political”

**1.20** Lecture “how to write”

Assign group 1 topic

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**1.24** No class – outside research

**1.27** Lecture “Project 1”

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**1.31** Discussion

**Article 1**

**2.3**

Assign group 2 topic

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**2.7** Discussion

**Article 2**

**2.10** Group 1

**Op-ed 1**

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**2.14**

**Letter 1**

**2.17**

Assign group 3 topic

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**2.21** Discussion

**Article 3**

**2.24** Group 2

**Op-ed 2**

Assign group 4 topic

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**2.28** Project

**Project 1**

**3.3** Project

**Letter 2**

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**3.7** Discussion

**Article 4**

**3.10** Group 3

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**3.14** **Spring Break – No Classes**

**3.17** **Spring Break – No Classes**

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**3.21** Discussion

**Article 5**

**3.24**

**Op-ed 3**

Assign group 5 topic

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**3.28** Group 4

**Letter 3**

**3.31**

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**4.4**

**Project 2**

**4.7**

*4.7 is last day to withdraw from classes*

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**4.11**

**4.14** **Good Friday – No Classes**

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**4.18** Group 5

**Letter 4**

**4.21** **Bruce at IACBE – No Class**

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**FINAL EXAM**

## **Letter**

### **POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)**

Write a letter to a government official concerning a topic of social, political, and/or economic 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 sales tax. Governors are not responsible for foreign policy, and presidents are not responsible for local taxes.

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. Also explain why the reader should invest resources in this issue

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.bread.org/issues/rise_to_the_challenge/sample_letter.html)

[http://www.glendale.edu/polsci/how\\_to\\_write.htm](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

## POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

|                                                                | Excellent (30)                                                                                                                                             | Good (25)                                                                                                 | Mediocre (20)                                                                      | Deficient (15)                                         | Unacceptable (0)                                                                                   | Score |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Formatting</b>                                              | 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.                                   | No contact data for sender. Inappropriate salutation or addressee information. Longer than 1 page. |       |
| <b>Content</b>                                                 | 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.                   |       |
| <b>Style</b>                                                   | 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.                                                 |       |
|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                                                        | <b>Rough Score</b>                                                                                 |       |
| Deduct 50% if addressee is inappropriate to purpose of letter. |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                                                        |                                                                                                    |       |
| Late deduction                                                 |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                                                        |                                                                                                    |       |
| Add 10% if addresses on envelope are computer printed.         |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                                                        |                                                                                                    |       |
|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                                                        | <b>Final Score</b>                                                                                 |       |

*Objectives:* This assignment addresses Course Objectives 5 and 7.

## Op-ed Writing

POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

You will write 6 op-ed articles during the semester. An op-ed is an opinion/editorial style of journalistic writing. The purpose of an op-ed is for the writer to convince readers of a certain point of view. Unlike traditional newspaper writing, an op-ed is not presented as unbiased news. Instead, an op-ed clearly expresses and supports a particular opinion. In many other ways, an op-ed is similar to newspaper reporting. Op-ed writers must use clear and concise writing that the audience will understand.

Op-ed writing should meet the same basic writing standards of other professional writing. For example, an op-ed should only deal with one topic and should include an introduction, body and conclusion. Newspaper writing should conform to the writing style of the Associated Press (AP).

For this assignment, your op-ed must focus on a current, politically salient issue. Further, a clear relationship must be made between the issue and business. Your writing should include 500-600 words (not including title, your name, etc.).

Each op-ed will be uploaded to turnitin.com and turned in during class. Each Op-ed will be graded by the professor and submitted to the *Warrior* Advisor to be considered for publication. If your op-ed is selected for publication, you will receive 2 points of extra credit toward your final course grade.

The following sites offer more information on writing an op-ed.

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>

# Op-ed Rubric

## POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

|                                           | Excellent (30)                                                                                                                                             | Good (25)                                                                                         | Mediocre (20)                                                                         | Deficient (15)                                                    | Unacceptable (0)                                                                 | Score |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Persuasion</b>                         | Op-ed persuasively demonstrates critical thinking, significant support, depth and breadth of focus.                                                        | Ideas seem worthy of consideration, but lack of depth, breadth or support leaves lingering doubt. | Few new ideas are presented, superficial support or thought are demonstrated.         | Ideas are inconsistent, unsupported, or otherwise poorly conveyed | Does not warrant higher grade.                                                   |       |
| <b>Content</b>                            | 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 topic. Sufficient content 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. |       |
| <b>Style</b>                              | No syntax mistakes. Structure is intentional, succinct, varied, fluid and persuasively targeted to audience.                                               | Simple sentence structure. Few minor syntax errors. Some lack of sophistication.                  | Monotonous structure. Several minor, or one major syntax error. Lacks sophistication. | Multiple major syntax errors. Tedious structure. Boorish.         | Inappropriately derogatory. Unintelligible structure.                            |       |
|                                           |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                   | <b>Rough Score</b>                                                               |       |
| Deduct 20% if not 500-600 words in length |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                   |                                                                                  |       |
| Late deduction                            |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                   |                                                                                  |       |
|                                           |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                   | <b>Final Score</b>                                                               |       |

*Objectives:* This assignment addresses Course Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

## **News Article Assignment**

### **POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)**

Several times during the semester, you will be required to find an article on a relevant topic in a periodical. You will read the article and bring it to class, along with a completed News Article Report form.

**News Article Form**  
POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Article Title and Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Article Source (incl. date): \_\_\_\_\_

**Who:**

**What:**

**When:**

**Where:**

**Why:**

**How:**

**Business Connection:**

**Main Issues:**

**Questions:**

## **Leadership Presentation**

### **POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)**

Students will be divided into groups with 2 (or possibly 3) members for these presentations. Each group will give a class presentation based upon an assigned chapter from a leadership text. Generally, one group will present at the first class meeting of each week. A schedule will be provided, as groups are assigned.

The presentation should serve to inform the class about the content of the chapter. Each presentation should be 5-10 minutes in length. Groups are expected to conduct high-quality presentations. In particular, the presentations should describe the leadership concepts and explain how those concepts are applicable to the study of Current Events, which has been defined for this course as “a comparative study of major current political events with past and present political, social and economic principles.”

The provided rubric outlines the grading standards.

For information on giving presentations, see the following:

[http://neeley.tcu.edu/upload/Files/PDF/CPC\\_7HINTS.pdf](http://neeley.tcu.edu/upload/Files/PDF/CPC_7HINTS.pdf)

[http://neeley.tcu.edu/upload/Files/PDF/CPC\\_GROUPOP.pdf](http://neeley.tcu.edu/upload/Files/PDF/CPC_GROUPOP.pdf)

<http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/cc/assets/How%20to%20give%20a%20great%20presentation.pdf>

[http://home.sandiego.edu/~kaufmann/envi\\_mars195/handout.html](http://home.sandiego.edu/~kaufmann/envi_mars195/handout.html)

And there are plenty of books in the library.

# Leadership Presentation Rubric

## POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

Presenters' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

|           |                                                                                                                             | Points Possible | Points Earned |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Presenters introduced the topic well.</b>                                                                                | 15              |               |
|           | The introduction gained audience attention.<br>The introduction clearly identified the topic.                               |                 |               |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Presenters were professional.</b>                                                                                        | 15              |               |
|           | Presenters seemed well prepared.<br>Presenters conveyed credibility.<br>Presenters worked within the allotted time.         |                 |               |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>All information was explained well.</b>                                                                                  | 15              |               |
|           | Good nonverbal communication techniques were used.<br>Presenters spoke clearly.                                             |                 |               |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Presenters concluded the presentation well.</b>                                                                          | 15              |               |
|           | Presenters encouraged questions.<br>Presenters clearly identified the conclusion.                                           |                 |               |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Presenters demonstrated good presentation skills.</b>                                                                    | 15              |               |
|           | The presentation was visually interesting.<br>The presentation was creative.                                                |                 |               |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>The presentation was successful.</b>                                                                                     | 25              |               |
|           | Presenters effectively explained the leadership concepts.<br>Presenters explained applicability of concepts to this course. |                 |               |

**Total Points**

**Comments:**

## **Group Project**

POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

Your group will research an assigned topic in Current Events and develop a class presentation/discussion to inform your classmates about the topic. Your presentation should clearly describe the “past and present political, social and economic principles” involved with the issue.

# Group Project Presentation Rubric

## POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

Presenters' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

|           |                                                                                                                     | Points Possible | Points Earned |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Presenters introduced the topic well.</b>                                                                        | 15              |               |
|           | The introduction gained audience attention.<br>The introduction clearly identified the topic.                       |                 |               |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Presenters were professional.</b>                                                                                | 15              |               |
|           | Presenters seemed well prepared.<br>Presenters conveyed credibility.<br>Presenters worked within the allotted time. |                 |               |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>All information was explained well.</b>                                                                          | 15              |               |
|           | Good nonverbal communication techniques were used.<br>Presenters spoke clearly.                                     |                 |               |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Presenters concluded the presentation well.</b>                                                                  | 15              |               |
|           | Presenters encouraged questions.<br>Presenters clearly identified the conclusion.                                   |                 |               |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Presenters demonstrated good presentation skills.</b>                                                            | 15              |               |
|           | The presentation was visually interesting.<br>The presentation was creative.                                        |                 |               |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>The presentation was successful.</b>                                                                             | 25              |               |
|           | Presenters effectively explained the topic.<br>Presenters explained applicability of concepts to this course.       |                 |               |

**Total Points**

**Comments:**

## **Research Project**

POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

Students will be assigned to groups for this project. Each group will develop a phenomenological research project to learn about Webber students' experience with a Current Event issue. The project will be described in greater detail in class.

## Research Project Presentation Rubric

### POL 230: Current Events (Spring 2006)

Presenters' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

|           |                                                                                                                                   | Points Possible | Points Earned |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Presenters introduced the topic well.</b>                                                                                      | 10              |               |
|           | The introduction gained audience attention.<br>The introduction clearly identified the topic and saliency.                        |                 |               |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Presenters were professional.</b>                                                                                              | 10              |               |
|           | Presenters seemed well prepared.<br>Presenters conveyed credibility.                                                              |                 |               |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Research methodology was explained well</b>                                                                                    | 15              |               |
|           | Research question was well-defined.<br>Sample population and rationale was well-defined.                                          |                 |               |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Research data and conclusions were clearly explained.</b>                                                                      | 15              |               |
|           | Responses were clearly categorized and described.<br>Quotes were used to justify categories.<br>Follow-up research was suggested. |                 |               |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>All information was explained well.</b>                                                                                        | 10              |               |
|           | Good nonverbal communication techniques were used.<br>Presenters spoke clearly.                                                   |                 |               |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>Presenters concluded the presentation well.</b>                                                                                | 10              |               |
|           | Presenters encouraged questions.<br>Presenters clearly identified the conclusion.                                                 |                 |               |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>Presenters demonstrated good presentation skills.</b>                                                                          | 10              |               |
|           | The presentation was visually interesting.<br>The presentation was creative.                                                      |                 |               |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>The presentation was successful.</b>                                                                                           | 20              |               |
|           | Presenters effectively explained the leadership concepts.<br>Presenters explained applicability of concepts to this course.       |                 |               |

**Total Points**

**Comments:**