

**POLS 1100—Introduction to American Government
Fall 2021**

Professor: Robert A. Cropf, Ph.D.

Days and time: TR, 2:15-3:30 McGannon Hall Rm 260

Office hours: Tuesday noon-2:00

Course Credits: 3

Ways of Thinking: Social and Behavioral Sciences

This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school or campus. The Core offers all SLU students the same unified approach to Jesuit education guided by SLU's institutional mission and identity and our nine undergraduate [Core Student Learning Outcomes](#) (SLOs).

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| Ways of Thinking: Social and Behavioral Sciences is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below: |
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| University Core Student Learning Outcomes |
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| The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are: |
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| SLO 2: Integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines to address complex questions |
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| SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions |
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| Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below: |
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| Component-level Student Learning Outcomes |
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| Students who complete this course will be able to: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand a range of social or behavioral theories and principles• Use these theories and principles to acquire knowledge about individual, cultural, political, economic, or social events/processes• Describe competing paradigms of knowledge (from the dominant discipline or field)• Draw reasoned conclusions through the use of evidence and theories• Apply social and behavioral knowledge to better understand contemporary issues and challenges |
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I. Course Description:

The 2016 and 2020 presidential elections were pivotal and will go down among the most debated and controversial elections in all of American history. The 2018 midterm election was no less significant in shaping the country's future. This year's presidential race is already among the most controversial and hotly contested elections in U.S.

history, both because of events leading up to the vote and the events after that culminated in the failed insurrection in the U.S. Capitol on January 6th. This course will help you make sense about what is happening in the United States during this incredibly volatile period in our history and will help you understand American political institutions and the political system. Knowledge of the dynamics of and interactions among political institutions, including the presidency, congress, the judiciary, public opinion, the media, and political parties is absolutely essential to gain a full comprehension of what all is at stake not only for the United States but the rest of the world.

We will focus on the institutional rules and structures and human behaviors shaping government, the operation of elections, the development of parties and interest groups, social movements, public opinion, as well as the functioning of Congress, the presidency, and the courts. We begin with an historic overview of the topics that will examine how the current system has evolved because to understand the way government in the U.S. works today we have to trace its development over the last 230 years. The foundation of the U.S. political system and the rules and norms evolving over several centuries continue to exert a tremendous influence on how the government performs, what policies it produces, and how its citizens engage with it. This course fulfills the social science core requirement.

II. Ways of Thinking: Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement of the Saint Louis University Core

This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school or campus. The Core offers all SLU students the same unified approach to Jesuit education guided by SLU's institutional mission and identity and our nine undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

III. Format and Assignments:

Because the course covers substantial material in a concentrated time period, each module will be broken into segments that involve different kinds of learning activities: lectures, in-class and on-line discussions, etc. We will often refer to current events in American politics. Students are encouraged to follow American current events by reading the news online or in a print newspaper. I especially encourage students to read reputable newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, or the *Wall Street Journal*. We will occasionally use articles from different news venues in class. Students should be current with reading assignments to participate regularly in class discussions.

IV. Canvas Assignments

Class Discussion Board. Every week you will compose a brief (approximately 200 words) response to a prompt and 2 replies to classmates' responses (around 50 words). Typically, the 1st Discussion Board posting will be due by Thursday at 11:59 pm and the replies by Sunday 11:59 pm. Please refer to the rubric in Canvas for more information about how I will grade the discussion board.

Online Quizzes. These will be assigned on a regular basis. Their format will be multiple choice and you will have 2 attempts with a half-hour allotted for each attempt. The highest score will be counted.

V. Exams

There will be a midterm and final exam. In all likelihood, they will be online. Both exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and short-answer responses. See rubric on Canvas for more information on grading.

VI. Grading:

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| Class Attendance..... | 5%* |
| Online Discussion Bd Assignments..... | 15% |
| Online Quizzes..... | 20% |
| Midterm Exam (Due October 21)..... | 30% |
| Final Exam (December | 30% |

All students are required to fill out the online course evaluation at the end of the semester.

* All unexcused absences will lower your class attendance grade by 2 points for each absence. Excused absences will not result in a lower grade. I prefer that you contact me before you miss class but I understand that isn't always realistic. Inform of the reason for an unexcused absence as soon as possible after class.

VII. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

American Government: Stories of a nation 2nd Edition by Scott F. Abernathy, CQ Press, 2020. (Hereafter A)

VIII. CLASS OUTLINE:

Week/Module Reading Assignments and due dates

- I. (A) Chapter 1: August 31 and September 2.
- II. (A) Chapter 2: September 7 and 9.
- III. (A) Chapter 3: September 14 and 16.
- IV. (A) Chapter 4: September 21 and 23.
- V. (A) Chapter 5: September 28 and 30.
- VI. (A) Chapter 6: October 5 and 7.
- VII. (A) Chapter 7: October 12 and 14.
- VIII. (A) Chapter 8: October 19 and 26.
- IX. **Midterm (Due October 21) covers Chapters 1-7.**

Fall BREAK (October 28)

- X. (A) Chapter 9: November 2 and 4.
- XI. (A) Chapter 10: November 9 and 11.
- XII. (A) Chapter 11: November 16 and 18.
- XIII. (A) Chapter 12: November 23 and November 30.

Thanksgiving (November 25)

- XIV. Chapter 13: November 30 and December 2.
- XV. Chapter 15: December 7 and 9.
- XVI. **Final Exam (week of December 13-17 TBD) includes all chapters since midterm.**

IX. GRADING SCALE

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| A | 93-100% | B+ | 87-89% | C+ | 77-79% | D | 60-70% |
| A- | 90-92% | B | 83-86% | C | 73-76% | F | below 60% |

X. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

See the Modules on Canvas for the learning objectives for each week/Module. In general, the course is designed to achieve the following broad course objectives and CORE Student Learning Outcomes.

This course is designed to help students broaden their knowledge, skills, and values so that they will be able to:

- Identify the institutions, structures, practices, processes of the U.S. government and politics including the three branches of government, the U.S. Constitution, role of public opinion and media, public participation, and political campaigns and elections.
 - Understand the factual and historical background relating to the development of government and politics in the United States.

- Understand the structures of the United States government, the three branches, and its history as it pertains to institutional powers and constraints.
- Understand the processes and structure of the United States elections and political system and its history.
- Analyze the role of public participation and the media in the political process and American government and how they shape public policy in the U.S.

In addition, students taking this course will develop the following CORE components:

CORE Student Learning Outcomes:

- SLO 2: Integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines to address complex questions regarding governmental powers and constraints and the role of the public in American democracy.
 - Understand a range of social or behavioral theories and principles.
 - Use these theories and principles to acquire knowledge about individual, cultural, political, economic, or social events/processes.
 - Describe competing paradigms of knowledge (from the dominant discipline or field).
 - Apply social and behavioral knowledge to better understand contemporary issues and challenges.

SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions.

- Draw reasoned conclusions through the use of evidence and theories.
- Use conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world in the context of the American politics and government.
- Think, speak, and write critically about human behavior and community in the context of American governmental powers and constraints.
- Discuss and defend ideas orally, as part of in-class and online discussion.
- Engage in meaningful and productive dialogue with others.

xi. Honor Code

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such

conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to me and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Please refer to the university policy at <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>.

XII. Expectations and Procedures

Technology

Put everything on mute. You do not need to use your laptop for this course. Please take notes the old fashioned way. This will dissuade the trend of college students to browse the web, check email, and frequent social networking sites during lecture. I will upload to Canvas all lecture powerpoints.

Communication

I will post grades, send class emails, etc. through the SLU Banner and Canvas systems. Be sure that you can access the email address listed. I will only send email out to your SLU e-mail accounts listed on the course roster in Banner. I will not keep track of any other email addresses you may use.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:
https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience. This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: SLU's Title IX Policy (formerly called the Sexual Misconduct Policy) has been significantly revised to adhere to a new federal law governing Title IX that was released on May 6, 2020. Please take a moment to review the new policy and information at the following web address: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>. Please contact the Anna Kratky, the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/> to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

Disability Services Academic Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

University Writing Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/> or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.

Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.