

POLS 1150—Introduction to American Government
Fall 2017

Robert A. Cropf, Ph.D.

TR from 9:30 to 10:45 from August 28 to December 19, 2017.

Course Credits: 3

Course Description: Last year, 2016, was a pivotal presidential election year and will certainly go down among the most debated and controversial elections in all American history. To help you make sense about what is happening in the United States during this incredibly volatile period in our history, this course 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.

This course focuses 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 (see below).

Format and Assignments: Because the course covers substantial material in a concentrated time period, each class will be broken into segments that involve different kinds of learning activities: lectures, class discussions, etc. We will often refer to current events in American politics. Students are encouraged to follow American current events. We will occasionally use articles from different news venues in class. Students should be current with reading assignments to participate regularly in class discussions.

Grading: Class participation and quizzes.....10%
Midterm Exam (Oct.19).....30%
Term paper (Due Dec.7).....30%
Final Exam (TBD).....30%

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

Readings

In addition to the readings required from the text, you will also be assigned additional readings periodically throughout the course.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

American Government: Stories of a nation by Scott F. Abernathy, CQ Press, 2017.

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-39) Aug. 29, 31.

LABOR DAY

II. Chapter 2 (pp.40-82) Sept. 5, 7

III. Chapter 3 (pp.82-119) Sept. 11, 14

IV. Chapter 4 (pp.120-157) Sept. 18, 20

V. Chapter 5 (pp. 158-193) Sept. 25, 27

VI. Chapter 6 (pp.194-225) Oct. 3, 5

VII. Chapter 7 (pp.226-259) Oct. 10, 12

VIII. Chapter 8 (pp.260-292) Oct. 17, Midterm (Oct. 19)

FALL BREAK

IX. Chapter 9 (pp.293-333) Oct. 26, 31

X. Chapter 10 (pp.334-368) Nov.2, 7

XI. Chapter 11 (pp.369-405) Nov. 9, 14

XII. Chapter 12 (pp.406-452), Nov.16, 21

THANKSGIVING

XIII. Chapter 13 (pp. 453-492), Nov. 28, 30

XIV. Chapter 15 (pp.534-574), Dec. 5, 7 (term paper due)

XV. Final Exam (TBD)

GRADING SCALE

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

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 2

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>.

Expectations and Procedures

Technology

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

Communication

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

Disabilities

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. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

_ Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

_ University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at the Student Success Center.

Confidentiality

will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter

University Writing Services: I encourage you to take advantage of University Writing Services; getting feedback benefits all writers! Trained writing consultants can help with any writing, multimedia project, or oral presentation. During one-on-one consultations, you can work on everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. *These services do fill up*, so please make an appointment! Also, bring your assignment description, and a few goals, to the consultation! For more information, or to make an appointment, visit www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml or call 977-3484.

Social Science core requirement

Student Outcomes: Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will gain a better understanding of human diversity. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.