

**Political Science 2544G 650 (The University of Western Ontario)
American Government and Politics
Course Outline**

Type: Second term Course Jan 3/22 to April 1/22

Place: Online/Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Robert F. Jonasson

Office Hour: Mondays 2-3pm SSC 4141

E-mail address: rjonasso@uwo.ca (please e-mail anytime)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Political Science 2544G is an essay course which examines the basic workings of the American political regime. The course is a basic introduction to the American constitution and associated institutions.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will become familiar with the American constitution and its historical development. Both horizontal and vertical checks and balances in the American governmental system will be explored including the executive, legislative, judiciary and federalism. Political parties will also be examined closely as a key institution of the American liberal democratic regime. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify the key components of the American regime. Students will have an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the American institutions of liberal democracy - both in the past and today.

GRADE BREAKDOWN: (more info on these items is in the outline)

1) ESSAY worth 50%; e-file due Friday, February 4 by 7pm in OWL –Assignments –Essay (PDF or Word file): *only if you can, also please put a hard copy under my office door (or hand to me in office hour) no later than Monday, February 7 3pm; late penalties go by the e-file submission*

2) FINAL EXAM (April exam period, TBA online, open-book essay – on whole course; 24 hours): *worth 50%*

REQUIRED READINGS: The UWO bookstore should have a hard copy edition of the textbook for you (and hopefully an e-file as well).

Ken Kollman. The American Political System. 3rd Ed. Norton, 2018.

TOPICS: (these are a suggested weekly breakdown, but it is up to you as to how you want to proceed): Readings are from the textbook and the course notes on OWL. The online lectures should correspond to the weekly topics.

Week 1 (Jan.3-7): course outline (see OWL), U.S. history Ch.1

Week 2 (Jan.10-14): Constitution Ch.2

Week 3 (Jan.17-21): U.S. Presidential system in general (no textbook reading)

Weeks 4 (Jan.24-28): Executive Ch.6

Week 5 (Jan.31-Feb.4): **Essay due Friday, February 4 by 7pm (see other in this outline);** no topics

Week 6 (Feb.7-11): Legislative Ch.5

Week 7 (Feb.14-18): Judiciary Ch.8

Week 8 (Feb.21-25): Reading Week

Week 9 (Feb.28-March 4): Federalism Ch.3

Week 10 (March 7-11): Political Parties Ch. 12

Week 11 (March 14-18): Parties continued

Week 12 (March 21-25): Elections Ch.13

Week 13 (March 28-April 1): Elections continued

POL.SCI. 2544G 650 ESSAY

Length: 10-13 pages double-spaced minimum

Due date: Friday, February 4/22 – e-file to be put into OWL – Assignments – Essay by 7pm on the same day (do not wait until the last minute – lates will be strictly enforced: if you submit the wrong file, you must e-mail me the correct one before the deadline); see instructions about the hard copy above (a hard copy is not mandatory, however)

Files: the e-files must be in Word or PDF format and must have your last name as the start of the file name

Lost Assignments: It is your responsibility to have other copies of your paper.

Bibliography: You must include a bibliography.

Citations and other items: See Essay Instructions document on OWL.

Essay questions/ thesis statements

Choose one as the core argument of your paper (you may take the reverse of each).

- 1/ The U.S. should abolish the Senate filibuster altogether.
- 2/ The U.S. Supreme Court should remain at 9 justices well into the future.
- 3/ The District of Columbia should not be made a state.
- 4/ The U.S. Electoral College should be abolished.
- 5/ The impeachment power of the House of Representatives should only be used when there is strong bipartisan agreement in the Senate that a President must be removed from office.
- 6/ The current U.S. 2 party system is harming American democracy.

NOTE: You may do your own thesis statement/topic with permission.

IMPORTANT: SEE ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS DOCUMENT ON OWL FOR MORE INFO

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
POLITICAL SCIENCE 2544G 650
FINAL EXAM INFO**

Instructor: Dr. Jonasson

Format: Take-home, open-book, online (all must do it; April exam period)

Time: (24 hours) – QUESTIONS WILL BE POSTED IN OWL-RESOURCES one day before the chosen exam date (TBA) (the file will be called final exam questions)

DUE DATE: TBA– the typed (it must be typed) answer in Word or PDF format only must be submitted to OWL-ASSIGNMENTS – final exam

Study on-line notes, readings and the various lecture files. The notes are most important.

2 Essay questions (5 essay questions will be given as choices)

The material covered will be all material on the entire course.

Value: worth 50% of course grade (25% for each answer)

Sample question: (this will not be on the final exam)

1/ Outline the main points of American history. In your view, is U.S. history a process which has revealed the U.S. as a disappointment or success today (or aspects of both)? Why?

Answer all parts of the question. Write as much as possible without going off topic or repeating yourself. Write in proper paragraph and sentence form. No citations or bibliography are needed (do not include these). A proper structure (i.e. introduction, conclusion) is required but no formal thesis statement is needed. The fact based first part of the question is worth quite a bit more than the opinion part (although it should be fact based too) – although I cannot give you an exact breakdown.

Questions might incorporate several course topics, but will not be too broad..

Length:

I would suggest a target of 6-10 pages double-spaced total (3 to 5 each answer) but answering the questions properly is more important than strict page lengths.

*However, please give me no more than 12 pages double-spaced. Please double-space and do not create a title page. Make sure your last name is on your e-file and your full name is on the top of the answer. **Again, the answer must be typed.***

Grading:

Expectations will have to be higher on the grading, given the format of the exam, but these will not be unrealistic (see bold notes below). Style will also be graded more carefully since you can more easily correct grammar and spelling.

Questions of the instructor during the exam period:

I will endeavour to answer *emergency* e-mail questions only during the period, but if the questions are answered by this document, I will refer you back to it.

The questions cannot be about whether the responses should involve certain information or whether if information is correct etc. Use common sense here. I will not be looking over any draft work or final submissions before the due date. Do not ask questions in the last 2 hours before the due date (this gives you an incentive not to wait to the last minute to submit).

Late: even one minute past the due date will require you to get formal approval to avoid a zero.
I WOULD NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTES TO SUBMIT THIS

I WOULD NOT PROCRASTINATE – in general, computer problems will not be accepted for late answers, so get things in early

If you have submitted the wrong file to OWL, you can e-mail the updated one *before the due date* only – if after, the late situation applies. Therefore, carefully upload the correct version.

Missed exam: if you have valid reasons for missing the exam in the 24 hour periods (sick with a virus comes to mind but there may be other issues), **you must contact Academic Counselling and get their approval to set up a make-up exam.**

I realize these are crazy times but I am trying to give you a decent window for completion of this exam. That you might have other tests or classes in the 24 hour period is possible, so do not use these as an excuse to get around the exam (you do not need to –see below in bold)..

NOTE: You really do not need even remotely close to 24 hours to do this well (it is just a long time frame for you to have so you can do the exam properly if you have other obligations, normally require SSD accommodations etc.).

For most of you, likely only a short time frame is required (although around 2- 4 is likely, maybe 5 hours at most – NOTE: all people are different here in what they might need).

Some of you have a tendency to take the maximum time you are allotted in an exam so that you feel you are doing everything you can to get a good grade – for these two, such thinking may be counterproductive if you overthink the material, rush to hand it in at the last minute etc.

Give yourself a certain time frame in the 24 hours (again, I am suggesting something like 2-5 hours for most of you) and complete it and hand it in (and again, why not early?)

COURSE PROCEDURES

1/ **E-Mail:** You may e-mail me at rjonasso@uwo.ca anytime. I will check e-mail Monday to Saturday (not including any holidays) – from 10am to 6pm. I will endeavour to answer your e-mails within several hours during the above period (from 6pm to 10am, you may e-mail, but I will take longer to respond). There may be some exceptions to the above, but I will try to stick to this schedule. Please always be courteous.

2/ **Questions:** Ask questions intelligently. Do not ask questions for the sake of asking them (i.e. to show ‘interest’, to ‘stick out’ etc.). Please ask specific questions about the topics; questions like ‘can you explain this topic to me?’ are too broad. I cannot tutor each student obviously. Questions about course material can usually be answered in this course outline or on other documents. Of course, ask away! I’m especially glad to answer thoughtful questions.

3/ **Lecture Notes:** These are on OWL in Resources. They are crucial to what I want you to know (especially for the final exam). I have placed all the notes together by topics (in order). How you go about learning them is up to you, but the outline is suggesting a certain weekly breakdown.

4/ **Lecture files:** These are in OWL –Resources. These audio/video files are summaries of the lecture topics. They should be helpful in understanding the notes. They will be posted weekly.

5/ **Grading:** All grade values in the course outline are ‘set in stone’. There will be no re-weighting or bell-curve. No extra assignments will be given. No items will be omitted from the final grade.

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

A+ 90-100% One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level

- A 80-89% Superior work which is clearly above average
- B 70-79% Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C 60-69% Competent work, meeting requirements
- D 50-59% Fair work, minimally acceptable
- F below 50% Fail

6/ Appeals: You may ask me to revisit your grades, but be aware that I mark carefully! YOU MUST PUT ALL CONCERNS IN WRITING. I will only change a grade if you prove to me that I am in error about certain pieces of factual information in your midterm or final exam. Please remember that I do not give grades according to your personality - try not to be personally offended by what you consider a poor grade (indeed, it is difficult to get to know students in an on-line course in any case). An appeal must go to me first. Your grade may go up, stay the same or go down (I would give then you an average of the old grade and the new grade). You may go down if I discover critical things I missed the first time.

NOTE: Do not assume your past (eg. past grades, experience level, age) is the key to your future performance. Profs assume everyone wishes high grades. Please do not indicate to the prof that you need or expect a certain grade in the course.

7/ Due dates: All due dates (eg. essays, assignments, tests, exams) in the course outline are 'set in stone', unless they are moved to a later date by the instructor. Under no condition will due dates be made *earlier* than the dates indicated in the course outline.

8/ Extensions: As indicated in the policy of the dept., there are some legitimate excuses which may allow students to get limited extensions for essays, tests and exams. ALL EXCUSES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFICIAL NOTE (eg. doctor's note) which is shown/sent to **Academic Counselling**. Dates must be present to indicate the time period the student was affected. The Instructor must be notified by **Academic Counselling** within 2 weeks of the missed essay or test. **I must have the clear approval of Academic Counselling for any extension.** The permission must be produced immediately in the case of the final exam. If an extension is warranted, the prof and the student will negotiate a time frame for submission. This time frame cannot be just what the student wants.

9/ Problems with OWL/Internet: If OWL is officially down for all students generally for a period of more than 12 hours on the day something is due, I will permit an extension to all students – generally, the next day. However, short problems cannot justify this, even to the deadline itself. My advice is do not wait to submit work to the last minute on due days!
Personal computer/internet/OWL issues are not valid grounds for an excuse.

10/ If you are a student with a serious concern, whether valid or not, and you are unable to keep up with the course for a long period of time, the prof strongly advises that you drop the course. Students who get too far behind generally do not finish in any case or receive an uncharacteristically low grade. Sometimes unfortunate events occur in our lives; try to persevere, but if you cannot, it is no shame to reduce your course load in certain situations.

11/ Please do not ask the instructor for final grades (or final exam grades). These must be released by the Registrar's Office first.

12/ NOTE: the following updated policy takes effect for all reference requests past August 1, 2021 for past or current students

I will give students basic references (for jobs, student exchange programs etc.) if their grade is above 75% in a class in which I have taught them (final grade). **For all post-graduate references (law school, grad school, teachers' college etc.) and scholarships, students must have completed at least 3 courses (half or full) with me beyond 1020E and have a grade of 85% or better (as an average in the courses). If students took 1020E with me, they may or may not factor the grade in this class into their average, but they will need 2 more classes (half or full).** However, good character is an important consideration for promotion as well. I do not promote opportunists (eg. those who ask for higher grades without merit) or those with 'entitlement' attitudes. Make sure you give me at least 3 weeks notice for any deadlines and always give me all forms and postage. **I will do a maximum of 4 paper/online references for a student in a term.**

APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar* <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>)

"**Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams** - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

Academic Offences

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

EXAMINATIONS/ATTENDANCE (Sen. Min. Feb.4/49, May 23/58, S.94, S.3538, S.3632, S.04-097) A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Medical Policy, Late Assignments, etc.

Students registered in Social Science should refer to https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html for information on Medical Policy,

Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

University Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html

PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently.

Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they

will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History

August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The Registrar's office can be accessed for Student Support Services at www.registrar.uwo.ca
- Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here) can be reached at:

<https://westernusc.ca/your-services/>

- Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://sdc.uwo.ca/>

- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Procedures for Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:
Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;

- For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in order to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are **not** an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- must communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration **is not** normally intended for students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing

disability. These students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability.

Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). These students should access support through Student Health and Wellness and Learning Skills Services in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Form

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the **online Self-Reported Absence portal**. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities **within 48 hours or less**.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances: Students will be allowed:

- a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April;
- a maximum of one self-reported absence between May and August.

Any absences in excess of the number designated above, regardless of duration, will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

- The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
- The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30 am on the day following the last day of classes each semester regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- Self-reported absences **will not be** allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period;
- Self-reporting **may not be** used for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.
- students must be in touch with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a medical absence not covered by existing Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation, will be required to provide documentation in person to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in the form of a completed, signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Non-Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence will be required to provide appropriate documentation to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.