CASPER COLLEGE COURSE SYLLABUS
POLS 1000 US and Wyoming Government

Semester/Year: FALL 2006

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Credit Hours: 3

Class Time: 1:00 – 2:15PM Days: Tuesday and Thursday Room: WT 105

Instructor’s Name: Art Washut Please call me Art

Instructor's Contact Information: Office AD 175E
Office Phone: 307 268-2711 Email: awashut@caspercollege.edu

Office Hours: Reach me by telephone or in my office Monday 9-10:45AM, Tuesday 9-9:45AM, Wednesday 10-10:45AM, Thursday Noon-12:45PM, Friday 9-10:45AM You may also reach me via email with any questions or concerns.

Course Description: The course examines the organization and nature of the American national government and Wyoming state government and their constitutional development. This course meets the statutory requirement for instruction in the Constitutions of the United States and Wyoming. Credit earned for POLS 1000 will replace and delete credit earned for POLS 1010.

Statement of Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course; however, college level reading and writing abilities are presumed. Students with an ACT English score below 18 or a Compass writing-skills score below 75 may want to complete Basic Writing (DVST 0610) before taking this course.

Goal: The primary purpose of this course is to help the student develop an informed understanding of American politics, state government and the national government.

Outcomes: It is expected that this learning experience will assist the student in becoming:

1. more aware of the organization and function of the American political system;

2. a more critical reader of social science materials;

3. better able to understand the conflict of social change within a stable political system;

4. better able to rationally evaluate contemporary social issues and to formulate and defend his or her own opinion based upon this critical evaluation;

5. better able to write at the college level;

6. increased understanding of different political philosophies;
better able to differentiate between an opinion and an argument;

also, this course satisfies the 1925 Wyoming statutory requirements of studies of the Constitutions of the United States and Wyoming.

The U.S. Constitution and other key founding documents of the United States established certain key principles—republic, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, etc.—that have structured the characteristics and practice of government and politics in the United States. Students will be asked to exhibit an understanding of these key principles and concepts by answering selected multiple choice questions on an examination and each instructor will select one question on one concept to track.

The application of political knowledge and basic critical skills are important aspects of the curricula of POLS 1000. In this light, students will be given an editorial, issue, essay, or political cartoon relating to a contemporary issue in American government and politics. Students will be asked to correctly identify the main point of the piece and be able to form and articulate their opinion in a response essay of 250 to 400 words.

Methodology: Lecture/discussion broadcast via the WEN system to distant locations. This is a traditional lecture discussion course. Students are expected to attend class, take notes, participate in class discussions, read the assignments, write the required papers, and study for and take the exams.

Evaluation Criteria:
1. Four section tests .................................................................60% of final grade

Four section tests must be taken by each student. The average grade from the four section tests will account for 60% of the final grade. During the final exam period, a student may re-take the test on which he or she scored the lowest grade. The questions will be similar, but not necessarily the same as the questions on the original test. The grade on this “second chance” test will be used in place of the original test for calculating the test average.

A note to students regarding missed tests – tests may be taken in advance, if a student anticipates being absent on a test day. Tests may not be taken late or after the test day. If you miss one test, you may still obtain a passing grade on that test by taking the one missed test during the final exam period.

2. Critical Essay .................................................................30% of final grade

The critical essay will account for 30% of the final grade. All students must submit all three essays. Only the final essay will be graded. The first two essays will help you prepare to write the final essay. However, if any one of the three essays is not submitted, the grade for the critical essay will be an F. The application of political knowledge and basic critical skills are important aspects of the curricula of this class. In this light, students will be given two articles or editorials relating to a contemporary issue in American government and politics. Students will be asked to evaluate the articles in 3 steps.
Step 1 - Read the first article and then write an essay of 250-400 words. In the essay, correctly identify the main point of the piece and evaluate it using the established format described below. Must be reviewed by the Writing Center by October 12, 2006. Re-write the essay, based on the Writing Center critique, and then submit both versions to the instructor on October 19, 2006.

Step 2 - Read the second article and then write an essay of 250-400 words. In the essay, correctly identify the main point of the piece and evaluate it using the established format described below. Must be reviewed by the Writing Center by November 7, 2006. Re-write the essay based on the Writing Center critique and then submit both versions to the instructor on November 14, 2006.

Step 3 - Write a third essay of 250-400 words that compares and contrasts the two articles. In what ways are they similar? In what ways do they differ? How did each article affect you? This third essay must be reviewed by the Writing Center by November 28. Re-write the essay based upon the Writing Center critique and then package all of the material from Steps 1,2 and 3 and submit the entire package to the instructor by December 5, 2006.

Note: The Writing Center can be very busy at times. Be certain to plan your work and submit it to the Writing Center well in advance of the due dates to insure that the review and re-write are completed on time.

The instructor will place the material on reserve at the library and students may read it there or make an individual copy (at the student’s expense).

3. Participation and Attendance..........................................................10% of final grade

Participation and Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class on time and to remain for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken promptly at the beginning of the class. Any student who arrives after attendance has been taken should remind the instructor after that class that he/she was present. At the instructor’s discretion late arrivals and early departures may be counted as absences. More than two unexcused absences will diminish the participation and attendance grade.

A note for students who miss class: You are responsible for the work that you missed. Please obtain notes or handouts from a student who was in attendance. If your absence is expected, work should be requested from the instructor in advance and turned in (if required) upon your return. If the absence is unexpected, the missed work should be completed as soon as possible and not later than three class days following your return.

Participation is expected! Current affairs are very relevant to the study of political science as they provide examples and applications of many of the abstract principles in the course. When events warrant, class will begin with a short discussion of contemporary news events. You are expected to keep yourself well informed and to be prepared to discuss major items at any time. Items from current affairs discussed in
class may be included on any exam. It is strongly suggested that students develop the habit of reading a daily newspaper. Viewing or listening to the news and public affairs programming and perusing one of the weekly newsmagazines are also excellent means for keeping abreast of current affairs information.

4. Extra credit - The grade will be determined based upon the above assignments. Extra credit is generally not available in this course.

Grades will be assigned according to the following grading scale. At the instructor’s discretion a curve may be applied that makes grading of a particular assignment somewhat easier. It will not be made harder.

**Grading scale:**

- A: 90% - 100%
- B: 80% - 89%
- C: 70% - 79%
- D: 60% - 69%
- F: less than 60%

Required Text, Readings, and Materials:

Students will be supplied with the *Wyoming Constitution* and other handouts.

Class Policies: Last Date to Change to Audit Status or to Withdraw with a W Grade will be the Friday before finals week.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Please refer to the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code for information concerning your rights and responsibilities as a Casper College Student.

Chain of Command: If you have any problems with this class, you should first contact the instructor in order to solve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the solution offered by the instructor, you should then take your problem through the appropriate chain of command starting with the department head, then the division chair, and lastly the vice president for academic affairs.

Academic Dishonesty - Cheating & Plagiarism: Casper College demands intellectual honesty. Proven plagiarism or any form of dishonesty associated with the academic process can result in the offender failing the course in which the offense was committed or expulsion from school. See the Casper College Student Code of Conduct.

ADA Accommodations Policy: It is the policy of Casper College to provide appropriate accommodations to any student with a documented disability. If you have a need for accommodation in this course, please make an appointment to see me at your earliest convenience.
Calendar or schedule indicating course content:

**Tentative Calendar or Schedule Indicating Course Content:**

NOTE: This schedule will be adjusted depending upon the arrival date of our text books!

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ATTACHMENT 1

Critical Essay Format
Length: Minimum 250 words Maximum around 400 words 12 pt. Font or larger

Title of Article, Author, Source, Page(s) Publication Date
Student’s Name, Assignment Title (Essay 1, Essay 2 or Essay 3) and the date submitted.

Essential Elements – write an essay that flows, do not simply laundry list the essential elements. Rather, blend this information together in your essay in a way that conveys the information effectively and smoothly. In order to do this, prepare a fact sheet that answers all of the following. Then use the fact sheet to help you formulate your essay. Submit the fact sheet along with the essay.

- Issues of Government – Identify the main issues discussed that impact government or that are impacted by government?
- Constitutional issues – Identify any issues that are affected by the Constitution or that raise Constitutional questions.
• Government Actions-Identify what actions have been taken or are being considered by government? Which branches of government or which agencies of government are involved?
• Impact on People-What impact is this issue having on people? Will (do) people support the government’s actions or will (are) they opposed?
• Costs-Did the article mention anything about how much this government action is costing taxpayers (you and me) or where the funding is coming from?
• Persuasion – did the author attempt to persuade you to see the issue in a particular way?
• Sources- what sources did the author identify? Research these sources and determine if the source has an agenda or a political leaning (conservative or liberal).
• Bias-Was the article biased in any way? Was the language used in the article “loaded”?
• You-After reading this material, do you agree or disagree with the government’s activity? Did the author’s presentation persuade you in anyway?

Essay writing basics – [www.harbrace.com](http://www.harbrace.com) or the Harbrace Handbook may be helpful. An essay should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The introduction should set forth the writer’s thesis. Make certain that your thesis is clearly stated in your introduction. The body of your essay should then convey the information that supports your thesis statement. Your conclusion should briefly summarize the essay and bring it to a logical conclusion.

**Helpful hints and idiosyncrasies:**
Effective essay writing is enhanced when the writer knows a little bit about the audience. Since I am your primary audience, here are some things you should know…

**My Pet Peeves** –
1. Spelling, grammar and organization count – write well, like an artist, be proud of your work before you put your name on it.
2. When I read a student’s essay I want to know that some planning and careful thought went into creating it.
3. Make sure your essay is well organized and that the information flows with helpful transitions between paragraphs or ideas when needed.
4. Agreement between pronouns and nouns. When you insert a pronoun in place of a noun, the two must agree in number. This means that a singular noun such as agent must be replaced with a singular pronoun such as he or she or perhaps he/she or even he or she. It is incorrect to replace the singular noun with the plural pronoun they. Example: A CIA agent needs extensive training. They need training in the culture and language of the people they are infiltrating. WRONG! Here the singular noun agent has been replaced in two places by the plural pronoun they. Correct example: CIA agents need extensive training. They need training in the culture and language of the people they are infiltrating. Here the plural pronoun they has been properly used to replace the plural noun agents.
5. I don’t grade based on whether or not I agree with your position. I once had a student write an essay about abortion that took a position completely opposite to my own view. The essay was very well written and the student’s position was well defended. The student earned and received an “A” grade.
6. Humor is not useful in these essays. There is a time and place for humor, but not in these essays.
7. This is formal writing. Do not write your essay in the same tone and style that you might write an email to a good friend. Avoid abbreviations, incomplete sentences and colloquial language.
8. Excuses for being late don’t help. You know the assignment and the due dates - just get it
done on time. Anticipate Murphy’s Law – anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Your printer will run out of ink, your computer will crash, or your dog will eat your homework. Planning and time management will be rewarded. I will not be nagging you and reminding you when a due date is approaching. I expect you to note due dates on your calendar and to get the work done without further prompting from me.

Practical application – students often ask what practical use a class will have in their lives. So consider this assignment as practice for performing in the workplace. Regardless of whether you are working in construction, business, a professional office or just about any other job, your boss is likely to give you an assignment with a timeline and have an expectation that your work will be of suitable quality.

1. The same goes for this essay project. Think of your instructor as your boss. He just gave you an assignment with a timeline. Make sure that you complete the assignment on time and that your work is the best that you can do.

2. In the real world we often have to network with others in order to complete our assignments. Working with the Writing Center is a form of networking. You will be well served if you contact the Writing Center early in the semester and ascertain their requirements (how much lead time will they require to insure that your essay is reviewed in time for you to re-write it and get it to the instructor on time?) You will also want to know exactly what they can and can’t do for you. Just like in real-life. Sometimes the people we network with can be very helpful, but they can only work with the material that we provide them. Knowing what services they offer and what they will not do for you is very important information to have before you begin.

3. If you get into the habit of completing tasks on time and performing quality work – you will be well served in whatever you do in life!

4. In the real world, there is often no room for excuses or late submissions. If your part of the project is late, it will impact all the other parts that are depending on your work to be complete before the other employees can begin their tasks. If you are late with an important assignment in the real world, you may be fired or demoted to a position with less demanding (and less rewarding) duties. If you regularly complete assignments on time and in a quality manner, you will likely be promoted or rewarded for doing so.