CASPER COLLEGE COURSE SYLLABUS

POLS 1000: US and Wyoming Government N2

Semester/Year: Summer 2016

Lecture Hours: 3                      Lab Hours: 0                      Credit Hours: 3
Class Time: Online                    Days: Online                      Room: Online

Instructor’s Name: Sam Weaver

Office Hours: I will not be holding regular office hours this summer. If you have questions about the course or the material presented do not hesitate to email me. Please remember: Do NOT contact me through MOODLE mail. I do not check that inbox regularly and your question may go unanswered.

Contact Information: Email is the best way to get a hold of me, especially as this is an online class. I check my email at least once a day and will get back to you within 24 hours.

Office Phone: 307-268-2629  
I will be out of town in mid-June through July. If you need to contact me later in the semester email will be the only reliable means.

Email: sweaver@caspercollege.edu
Note: This is the only email address you should be contacting me at. Do not use Moodle Communication as I do not check it regularly and might miss your message.

Course Description: This course explores 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.

Statement of Prerequisites: None, however students are expected to read and write at a college level.

Goals: The goal of this class is to provide students with a functional knowledge of both the Federal and Wyoming governments as well as an appreciation for the competing values and ideas that motivate political actors and how those actors interact with government. Analysis of Wyoming’s government will demonstrate to students both how state government functions and how it interacts with the national government. Students will also develop their critical thinking skills through class discussion and writing projects. Much of what you learn in this class will depend on your participation. Your effort in reading the materials assigned, completing assigned research projects, and engaging in class room discussion will make this class more fruitful for everyone involved.

Specific Objectives (Outcomes): It is expected that completion of this course will assist each Student to:

1. Understand the historic and constitutional bases, organization, functions, and policies of the American and Wyoming political systems;
2. better understand and analyze political affairs and their implications;

3. better understand and analyze the bases and issues associated with current events, especially political, in the local, state, national, and international realms;

4. better meet the reading, writing, and researching demands essential for a college experience (this corresponds with the college’s outcomes #1 “Demonstrate effective written communication” and #6 “Use appropriate technology and information to conduct research”);

5. better identify the differences between major political philosophies and points of View and evaluate those differences;

6. understand what it means to be a responsible citizen in a democratic system (this corresponds with the college’s outcome #7 “Describe the value of personal, civic, and social responsibilities”).

*Casper College may collect samples of student work demonstrating achievement of the above college outcomes. Any personal identifying information will be removed from student work.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Grades in this class will be based on attendance, participation, the three exams, and three writing assignments. A breakdown of the assignments and exams in this course is provided below in the Course Policies Section.

A – 895 – 1000 Points  
B – 894 – 795 Points  
C – 794 – 695 Points  
D – 694 – 595 Points  
F – 594 Points and Below

**Required Text, Readings, and Materials:**  

The United States Constitution [http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/](http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/)

The Wyoming Constitution [http://soswy.state.wy.us/Forms/Publications/09WYConstitution.pdf](http://soswy.state.wy.us/Forms/Publications/09WYConstitution.pdf)

**Class Policies: Last Date to Change to Audit Status or to Withdraw with a W Grade:**

The last date to Withdraw from the course with a grade of W or to decide to audit the course is July 6, 2016. If you decide to stop attending this class you must withdraw. I will not perform faculty initiated withdraws. If you do not withdraw and stop attending class you will get an F in the course.
There will be three exams in this course covering the three sections of material presented. These will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions that will test your knowledge of the information presented in class. There is no cumulative final in this class. Each exam covers only the material for the relevant section of the course. **Each of these exams is worth 200 points for a total of 600 points.**

There will also be three writing assignments over the course of the semester that will be designed to encourage you to think critically about the section we are working through. These are 3-5 double spaced pages in length and it will be important for you to work diligently on these to produce the highest quality work that you can. **Each paper is worth 50 points for a total of 150 points.**

Chapter assignments will be required for each chapter in the book we are covering. These are designed to ensure that you are keeping up with the material and foster intelligent and critical conversations about American government and democracy. It is critical that you complete these assignments during the week they are posted so that you do not get behind in the course and can keep up with the class discussion. **Each chapter assignment will be worth 10 points for a total of 130 points.**

Finally, participation is a key element of living in a democratic society and to achieving success in this class. One of the major goals of this semester is to teach students to think critically about government and those that run it on a day to day basis. By engaging in class discussions you will have the opportunity to explore the material presented in the book and other media through a critical lens as a group. Often, we will use current events to explore the issues we are learning about in class to provide you with context for the material covered. In order to get full points on the discussions you must post an original response to the prompt and respond to two posts from other students. “Good post”, “I like your thoughts, “Ditto”, etc. are not acceptable posts for grading. If you like someone’s thoughts, please let them know, but state what it was about their thoughts you liked and then add another thought. These posts must be substantial and well thought out. **Each Chapter discussion will be worth 10 points, however the discussion on the Presidency and Executive Agencies will be one discussion forum. Each post (original post and two responses) will be graded on a 10 point scale with the final weekly grade being an average of the three. Class discussion will total 120 points.**

**Forum Posts Rubric**

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<tr>
<th>Unsatisfactory 0 Points</th>
<th>Minimum 1-2 Points</th>
<th>Satisfactory 3-4 Points</th>
<th>Very Good 5-7 Points</th>
<th>Excellent 8-10 Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>No posting made.</td>
<td>Brief posting</td>
<td>Thoughtful post,</td>
<td>Includes characteristics of the “Very Good” box plus an outside resource such as a research finding, or current media link relevant to</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting was just a link to a website with no original information.</td>
<td>lacking much thought, substance, does not address the assignment or course readings.</td>
<td>obviously written by the student that shows some understanding of assignment and course readings but fails to follow through or ignores</td>
<td>includes example(s) relative to the course readings or current events.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting was just information cut</td>
<td>Student did not use spell check.</td>
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<td>and pasted off Internet with no original thought or effort.</td>
<td>Student obviously just cut and pasted from another source and did not write the content.</td>
<td>instructor’s prompts to further refine the post. Student did not use spell check.</td>
<td>Takes prompts from the instructor in how to develop a fuller answer or thread.</td>
<td>the course reading or current events.</td>
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**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 me, the instructor, to attempt to solve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the solution offered by the instructor, you should then take the matter through the appropriate chain of command starting with Department Head Erich Frankland, then Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences Dr. Brandon Kosine, and lastly the Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Shawn Powell.

**Academic Dishonesty:** 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 for more information on this topic. In short, don’t cheat and don’t plagiarize. It is not worth your time and could ruin your academic career. If you have any doubts as to whether a passage of your paper might be plagiarized, talk to me and I will help you work out how to cite it.

**Official Means of Communication:** Casper College faculty and staff will employ the student’s assigned Casper College email account as a primary method of communication. Students are responsible for checking their account regularly. Make sure you do this as you could miss important communications from me or from the college. You should also use my email address as your primary means of communication with me outside of class. It is the best way to get a hold of me and helps create a record of our conversations.

**ADA Accommodations Policy:** If you need academic accommodations because of a disability, please inform me as soon as possible. To request academic accommodations, students must first consult with the college’s Disability Services Counselor, Brent Heuer, located in the Gateway Building, Room 344, (307) 268-2557, bheuer@caspercollege.edu. The Disability Services Counselor is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting accommodations, determining eligibility for accommodations, and helping students request and use appropriate accommodations. If the Disability Services Counselor determines that you need accommodations and provides you with a letter detailing those accommodations please see me privately after class or during my office hours so we can make sure you are taken care of.
Course Schedule: Note that the schedule is subject to change. In the event of a change I will post a revised syllabus to Moodle. Also, keep in mind that this schedule only refers to class preparation. Each week we will also have discussions and activities that you must participate in.

PART I: The Foundations of American Government

Week 1

Syllabus Overview
   Syllabus Quiz (Required to Open Course Content)

Introduction and the Nature of Democracy
   What is Democracy and why do we Struggle for it?
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 1: Democracy and American Politics

The Constitution: History and Development of American Government
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 2: The Constitution
   The United States Constitution: All
   The Wyoming Constitution: Articles 1-6

Week 2

   Read Greenberg and Page CH 3: Federalism: States and Nation

Structuralism as a Means of Studying Politics
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 4: The Structural Foundations of American Government and Politics

Week 3

Exam 1
   Opens 6/20/2016
   Closes 6/27/2016

PART II: The Institutions of American Government

The Legislative Branch: The House and Senate
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 11: Congress
   Read the United States Constitution Article 1
   Read the Wyoming Constitution Article 3

First Writing Assignment Due 6/24/2016
Week 4

The Executive Branch: The Presidency and Government Agencies
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 12: The Presidency and CH 13: The Executive Branch
   Read the United States Constitution Article 2
   Read the Wyoming Constitution Article 4

The Judicial Branch: The Courts and Justice System
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 14: The Judicial Branch
   Read the United States Constitution Article 3
   Read the Wyoming Constitution Article 5
   Read Marbury v. Madison Case Brief Summary http://www.lawnix.com/cases/marbury-madison.html

Week 5

Exam 2
   Opens 7/4/2016
   Closes 7/11/2016

PART III Political Linkages and Participation

Public Opinion
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 5: Public Opinion

Second Writing Assignment Due 7/8/2016

Week 6

Political Parties: Political Organization in a Two Party State
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 9: Political Parties

Elections: The Freedom of Choice
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 10: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Week 7

The Media
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 6: The News Media

Social Movements
   Read Greenberg and Page CH 8: Social Movements
Week 8
Third Writing Assignment Due 7/29/2016

Exam 3
   Opens 7/22/2016
   Closes 7/29/2016