POLS101
Introduction to Political Science and American Government

Independent Study in Idaho
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The University of Idaho in statewide cooperation with Boise State University — Idaho State University — Lewis-Clark State College
Course Guide

Political Science 101
Introduction to Political Science and American Government

University of Idaho
3 Semester-Hour Credits

Prepared by:
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Instructor
University of Idaho

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3-POLS 101
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POLS 101: Introduction to Political Science and American Government

3 Semester-Hour Credits: UI

Welcome!
Whether you are a new or returning student, welcome to the Independent Study in Idaho (ISI) program. Below, you will find information pertinent to your course including the course description, course materials, course objectives, as well as information about assignments, exams, and grading. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ISI office for clarification before beginning your course.

Policies and Procedures
Refer to the ISI website at [www.uidaho.edu/isi](http://www.uidaho.edu/isi) and select Students for the most current policies and procedures, including information on setting up accounts, student confidentiality, exams, proctors, transcripts, course exchanges, refunds, academic integrity, library resources, and disability support and other services.

Course Description
Introduction to the study of politics focusing on basic concepts, processes, and institutions; emphasis on government and politics of the U.S. examined in comparative perspective; probable topics include nature of constitutional democracy, ideology, parties and elections, and formation of public policy. UI students: general education credit Social Science, American Diversity.

14 graded assignments, 14 non-graded self-study assignments, 3 proctored exams.

Students may submit up to 3 assignments at a time/6 per week. Before taking exams, students MUST wait for grades and feedback on assignments, which may take up to three weeks after date of receipt by the instructor.

ALL assignments and exams must be submitted to receive a final grade for the course.

Course Materials
Required Course Materials

If purchasing textbooks from another source, refer to the ISBN(s) for the textbook(s) listed for this course to ensure that you obtain the correct edition(s).

Course Delivery
All ISI courses are delivered through BbLearn, an online management system that hosts the course lessons and assignments and other items that are essential to the course. Upon registration, the student will receive a Registration Confirmation Email with information on how to access ISI courses online.

Course Introduction
As stated above, POLS 101 is the “Introduction to the study of politics focusing on basic concepts, processes, and institutions; emphasis on government and politics of the U.S. examined in comparative
perspective; probable topics include nature of constitutional democracy, ideology, parties and elections, and formation of public policy.”

In summary, the American political process is often over-simplified in the modern 24/7 news cycle. The reason for this is simply to promote the agenda of the corporate ownership, whether it is CNN, MSNBC, FOX, etc. American politics is, however, anything but simple. The American political landscape is composed of institutional, non-governmental, and individual actors. For this reason, this course will concentrate primarily on the main constitutional actors: the legislative, executive, and judicial actors and how these actors are relevant to society and, most importantly, to you the voter; i.e. the “Iron Triangle of US intergovernmental relations. The two overarching questions that you, as a novice student of politics, should ask throughout this course are these: how can I affect the political process at Federal, state, or local levels, and what effect does my participation have on me?

Course Objectives
For political science majors/minors, this course is meant as an initial stepping stone in your political science studies. By the end of this semester, you should have the ability to correctly express yourselves, in writing, as to your political views and affiliations. You will be able to write a sufficient essay that covers the governmental branches, their exact functions, the electoral process, and reasonably comprehend and excel in upper-level political science coursework.

For future education studies majors, this course is meant to give you a basic grounding in the American political process and its actors: how it works, actor function in government; the Lasswellian concept of “when, where, and how much,” societal control/reciprocity that the individual in society is “due.”

General Studies majors and other disciplines, this course will not only fulfill coursework requirements but enhance your knowledge of the American political process and your rights/obligations within that process.

Lessons
Overview
Each lesson includes lesson objectives, an introductory lecture, and a reading and writing assignment. The written assignments consist of term descriptions (three complete sentences each) and essays. All answers to essays are to be written in essay form using complete sentences. Students should write in their own words when referencing authorities and all quotations must include complete citations of the work from which they are taken. Do not copy from the textbook or any other book.

Study Hints:
- Keep a copy of every assignment submitted.
- Complete all reading assignments.
- Set a schedule allowing for course completion one month before your personal deadline. An Assignment Submission Log is provided for this purpose.
- Web pages and URL links on the World Wide Web are continuously changing. Contact your instructor if you find a broken Web page or URL.
- Introduce and explain any terms that are essential to understanding the course.

Refer to the Course Rules in BbLearn for further details on assignment requirements and submission.
Exams
- You must wait for grades and comments on assignments before taking initial and subsequent exams.
- For your instructor’s exam guidelines, refer to the Course Rules in BbLearn.

Refer to Grading for specific information on assignment/exam points and percentages.

Proctor Selection/Scheduling Exams

All exams require a proctor.

To submit your Proctor Information Form online, visit the ISI website and select Forms, Proctor Information Form. Submit this form at least two weeks before your first exam. Refer to Students, Assignments and Exams on the ISI website for information on acceptable and unacceptable proctors.

Grading

The course grade will be based upon the following considerations: the written lesson assignments will be worth a total 20 possible points. The key term questions are worth 1 point each and the two or three essay questions are worth 5 to 7 points each (unless noted otherwise).

The grading scale is as follows:
A = 90% and above, B = 80% – 89%, C = 70% – 79%, D = 61% – 69%, F = 60% and below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Self-Study Assignments

The final course grade is issued after all assignments and exams have been graded. Your self-study assignments can help in raising your course grade. While self-study assignments are not graded,
consider them as an extra credit assignment. Even a few paragraphs of comment you have on the self-study questions, inserted into your study lessons as notes, should improve lesson and exam performance, ergo grade average.

Your lesson’s essay sections will always contain two questions. The self-study questions can help connect the information treated in the chapter. Please set aside a bit of time each day to just ponder the self-study assignment.

**Acts of Academic Dishonesty**
Acts of academic dishonesty include cheating or plagiarism are considered a very serious transgression that may result in a grade of F for the course. Because of the nature of Independent Study instruction, the main academic honesty issue is not cheating, but plagiarism. At the introductory course level, it is understandable that during the course students should grow in the disciple; growth often includes mistakes. To avoid plagiarism issues, please understand how to cite the written word correctly as expressed in books, newspapers, the internet, journals, personal interviews, reference works, legal documents, etc. While blatant plagiarism will not be tolerated, obvious “soft” issues such as punctuation, integration of quotes/author intent, and citation style requirements, will be addressed in a more informal manner.

**About the Course Developer**
Your course developer has had the sincere pleasure of instructing this course for ISI since 2009. In this class, you will be learning about the formation and function of the US government; in your assignments you will be sharing what you have learned through term definition and essays.

It is my pedagogical view that this sharing continues with your instructor guiding you through work product formulation and the sharing of knowledge regarding American governance. Each lesson will serve as a building block towards that section’s exams. Your final exam is not cumulative.

**Contacting Your Instructor**
Instructor contact information is posted on BbLearn under Course Rules.
# Assignment Submission Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Date Submitted</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>By the People, CH 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>By the People, CH 3</td>
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**It is time to make arrangements with your proctor to take Exam 1.**

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<th>Grade</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>By the People, CH 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>By the People, CH 9 &amp; Appendix III</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>By the People, CH 12</td>
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**It is time to make arrangements with your proctor to take Exam 2.**

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<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Date Submitted</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>By the People, CH 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>By the People, CH 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>By the People, CH 13 &amp; “Our Government”</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>By the People, CH 114</td>
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</table>

**It is time to make arrangements with your proctor to take Exam 2.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Date Submitted</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Final Public Policy Term Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*Final Course Grade*
Lesson 1
The Formation of the American Political Landscape

Lesson Objectives

- To understand the beginnings of American style politics.
- To understand the concepts of freedom, liberty, equality, in juxtaposition with the American sociopolitical forces present at the founding of the United States of America.
- To understand the influence of institution on the American political landscape.
- Effectively explain all terms listed in the lesson.

Reading Assignment

By the People, Chapter 1, “Ideas That Shape American Politics,” Pgs. 10-31
By the People, Chapter 2, “The Constitution,” Pgs. 27-63

Introductory Lecture

- In the initial readings, three sectors of society are listed and explained.
- The main purpose of the readings is to understand the interaction/purpose of these sectors in American life and politics.
- Freedom, rights, and equality of American’s culture of individuality are the cornerstones of societal structure.

Written Assignment

Before beginning the first written assignment, refer to the Course Rules in BbLearn for your instructor’s assignment requirements. Upload your assignments in MS Word or PDF format directly into BbLearn for grading.

Tips for uploading assignments into BbLearn are available at www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bblearnhelp/student-help/assignments/submit-assignment.html.

Terms: (one point each) define ten of the following terms (50% of lesson grade).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Economic Equality</th>
<th>Equality</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>Negative Liberty</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Jersey Plan</td>
<td>Originalism</td>
<td>Political Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Equality</td>
<td>Positive Liberty</td>
<td>Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Equality</td>
<td>Virginia Plan</td>
<td>Unicameral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay Questions:

Each essay question is worth five points, or 50% of the lesson grade. Define any relevant concepts and incorporate specific examples to illustrate the main points. Answer each section of both questions completely, in essay form. Each question will be at least four hundred (400) words in length.

1. Define freedom in terms of negative and positive liberty. List and categorize each of Roosevelt’s “four freedoms (positive/negative).” How do positive freedoms affect the idea of freedom from “to” and “from” perspectives with examples?
2. The text lists two types of equality. First define equality, then list each type and explain its meaning. Next discuss how each type has/had not changed over time in the U.S. Incorporating the ideas of equal opportunity and outcome and Figures 2.4, does the United States, as a nation, have economic equality for its citizens? Why or why not? Does the United States, as a nation, have economic equality for its citizens? Why or why not?

Self-study assignments can aid in raising your overall course grade by helping you draw connections and retain information as you work through new ideas and concepts in the course. While self-study assignments are not graded or submitted. Answering the Self-Study Assignment in your personal notes, should improve overall lesson and exam performance.

Please set aside a bit of time each day to ponder and answer the self-study assignment.

**Self-Study Assignment (do not submit)**
The By the People, “The Constitution,” Chapter 2, conclusion poses the question “does the Constitution still work?” What is your preferred method of interpreting the US Constitution (Hint: see pg. 81)?