

PLS 101: United States Politics and Government

MWF 12:00-12:50

3 Credit Hours

Jeffery Tyler Syck, Ph.D.

Office: Armington 419

Email: tylersyck@upike.edu

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday: 1:30 – 3:00

Monday and Wednesday: 10:00 – 11:00 (Zoom)

This course introduces students to the major features of the American Government: The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; American ideals, especially equality and civil rights; the development of America's political institutions and how they function; and the interplay between conservative and liberal thought in our nation.

Course Objectives

Students will gain a strong factual knowledge of U.S. government and politics.

Students will learn fundamental principles and theories related to the operation and aims of U.S. government.

Students will learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view related to U.S. Government and politics.

Students will learn the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship.

Late Policy

Papers will drop 3 points every day they are late. Extensions are only granted for sudden emergencies or other university-approved excuses.

Use of Technology

Students are **not** permitted to use laptops or recording devices to take notes. Students are also not permitted to text or have their cell phones out in class. Continuous violation of this policy may detrimentally affect the student's participation grade.

Required Texts

A selection of readings will be posted online for the students. For students without a broad familiarity in American politics, I highly recommend purchasing the following textbook (which

can be acquired used very cheaply) as a companion to the course: James Q Wilson, American Government, brief edition.

Evaluation

Course Requirements

Participation and Attendance – 10%
Essay 1 – 20%
Essay 2 – 25%
Midterm Exam – 20%
Final Exam – 25%

Class Participation and Attendance

This course requires that each student complete the readings each week to participate actively in class discussions. Students should read the material and review the reading questions prior to every class. Students will be called to answer questions if there are no volunteers. Perfect attendance is expected. If a student must miss due to an illness, death in the family, school function, or some other understandable reason they should get in touch with the professor to work out an alternative assignment. Students who fail to attend 25% or more of the course are subject to the University FN policy (see below). Students who are late for more than four classes will from then on be counted as absent from the class when late.

Writing Assignment 1

Though the Constitution is now a fact of American political life – to the joy of its admirers and the ire of its detractors – this was not always the case. In the period before it was ratified a major debate raged between those who believed the document should be ratified and those who argued against it. For this assignment I want students to insert themselves into this debate. As we read the arguments of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists, who do you find yourself agreeing with more? Explain your reasoning in a short 3-5 page. Make sure to include a strong thesis and evidence to support your argument.

Due September 18th at Midnight.

Writing Assignment 2

One of the richest and most fraught debates in contemporary American constitutional theory is between those who advocate for a living constitution and those who argue on behalf of originalism. This assignment asks students to insert themselves into this debate. Based on the arguments we read in class which view is the strongest? Explain your position in 3-5 pages. For this assignment, I ask students to cite 2-3 supreme court cases they feel bolster their argument.

Due October 16th at Midnight.

Midterm

The midterm exam will consist of fifty multiple-choice questions taken from the readings and discussions of the course up until that point in the semester.

Final Exam

The Final will consist of thirty multiple-choice questions from the second half of the semester, five short answer questions (one to two paragraphs each), and a final essay. Both the short answer and essay will be cumulative.

Recommended New Sources

Below is a list of recommended news sources sorted by political leaning. These were selected due to their vigorous editorial process that typically maintains factual reporting.

Right Leaning: *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, *The Dispatch*

Centrist: *The Economist*

Left Leaning: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*

Schedule of Readings and Class Topics

Part I – Intro to Civics and The Declaration of Independence

August 28th – Introduction and Review of Syllabus

August 30th – What is Civic Education and Why is it Important?

Required Reading:

Abraham Lincoln, Lyceum Speech
John F. Kennedy, Speech at Dublin Castle

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Lincoln think the constitution is important? What does he think our relationship to the constitution should be?
2. How do we go about creating good citizens according to Lincoln? Do you agree?
3. What are the personal qualities that make democracy possible according to Kennedy? Do we possess them today? How might we cultivate them?

September 1st – Library Instruction

Attendance will be taken.

September 4th – The Declaration of Independence

Required Readings:

Declaration of Independence

Discussion Questions:

1. What are natural rights?
2. What is the source of man's rights according to the Declaration?

3. In what sense are men equal according to the Declaration?

September 6th – The Declaration of Independence contd.

Required Readings:

Declaration of Independence (original draft)
Thomas Jefferson to Roger Weighman
Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address

Discussion Questions:

1. What rights are included in the Declaration of Independence?
2. What are the differences between Jefferson draft of the Declaration and the final version?
3. Which is more important to the American founding: Liberty or Equality?
4. Does Lincoln's understanding of the Declaration differ from Jefferson's? If so whose do you like better?

September 8th - Tensions of the Declaration of Independence

Required Readings:

Alexander Stephens, Corner Stone Speech
Fredrick Douglass, 4th of July Oration

Recommended Reading:

Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglass, Second Debate

Discussion Questions:

1. What are natural rights' relationship to slavery?
2. Do you think the Declaration provides the grounds for slavery's extinction or not?

Part II – Creating the Constitution

September 11th – Why the New Republic?

Required Readings:

Articles of Confederation
James Madison, "Vices of the Political System of the US"

Discussion Questions:

1. What for Madison are the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?
2. To what extent are those weaknesses remedied by a more powerful national government?
3. Is Madison rejecting the state constitutions because they tend to be more democratic?
4. How does Hamilton Conceive of the New Constitution?

September 13th – Basics of the US Constitution

Required Readings:

The US Constitution
Federalists 1

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the powers of the national legislature?
2. What are the powers of the president?
3. What powers are left to the states?
4. What is the great experiment of the American government?
5. What is the purpose of the American government?
6. What is the Constitution's relationship with the Declaration?

September 15th – Captain Doyle Visits

September 18th - The Antifederalist Critique

Required Readings:

Brutus, Small Republic Argument
Melancton Smith, Representation Problem
Cato, Fears of the Executive

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is representation important to democracy and why does an extended republic threaten this?
2. Why does Cato fear the power of the new presidency?
3. Who do you agree more with: the federalists or anti-federalists?

September 20th – Separation of Powers

Required Readings:

Federalist 47, 48, 51,

Discussion Questions:

1. How is ambition used to make real the separation of powers?
2. In what ways do Madison and Hamilton attempt to rebuff the concerns of the Anti-Federalists?
3. What should the relationship between the branches be?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE AT Midnight

Part III – Congress

September 22nd – Midterm Exam

September 25th – The Houses of Congress

Required Readings:

Federalist 52, 53, 62, 63

Review Article 1 of US Constitution

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the powers of congress? Why does Congress have the powers it does? How are they limited?
2. What are the differences between the House and the Senate?
3. Why did the founders make the chambers different?
4. Do you think one chamber functions better today? Do the chambers maintain their original purpose?

Part IV – The American Presidency

September 27th – The Presidency Overview

Required Readings:

Review Article 2 of US Constitution
Federalist Papers 71

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the powers of the presidency?
2. Why does Publius expect good men will be attracted to the office?
3. How does Publius understand the president's relationship with the American people?
4. What do you think of the electoral college? Does it serve its original purpose? Does it now serve some other purpose?

September 29th – The Progressive Critique of Publius

Required Readings:

Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government*, Chapter 3

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the aim of government for progressives? How is it different from the founders?
2. How did the progressives wish to change the Presidency?

October 2nd – The New Deal

Required Readings:

FDR, 1944 State of the Union
FDR. Commonwealth Club Address
FDR, 1941 State of the Union

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the Second Bill of Rights?
2. Why, for FDR, has the time come for the government to restrict property rights to ensure all Americans have a better chance of realizing their potential?
3. What is the relationship between the New Deal and natural rights?

October 4th – Executive Reforms

Required Readings:

Milkis and Landy, *Presidential Greatness*, Chapter 5

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the New Deal's effect on the American Presidency?
2. Does such a presidency comport more with Brutus or Publius' view of the office?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a powerful executive branch?

Part V – The Courts

October 6th – Powers of the Court and Judicial Review

Required Readings:

Review Article 3 of US Constitution

Federalist Papers 78 and 84

Marbury v Madison Ruling (Excerpts)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are the courts so important to policymaking in the United States?
2. How does *Marbury v Madison* establish the Supreme Court's power to review the constitutionality of legislation and executive action?
3. Is judicial review problematic or indispensable for a well-ordered democratic regime?

October 9th – Legal Philosophies

Required Readings:

Antonin Scalia, "Originalism: The Lesser Evil"

William Brennan: "The Constitution of the United States: Contemporary Ratification"

Discussion Sections:

1. Why for Brennan must the constitution be considered a living document? Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Why, for Scalia, must judges restrict their interpretation of the US Constitution to its original meaning? Do you agree?

October 11th – Legal Philosophies Applied

Required Readings:

Anthony Kennedy, Majority Ruling of *Obergefell v Hodges*

John Roberts, Dissent of *Obergefell v Hodges*

Discussion Questions:

1. What reasoning does Kennedy give for the legalization of same-sex marriage?
2. What rationale does Roberts use?
3. Who is right?

October 13th – No Class

October 16th - Philosophic Approaches to the Constitution

Required Readings:

Federalist 49

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, September 6th 1789

Discussion Sections:

1. Why does James Madison think it is important to revere the constitution?
2. Why does Thomas Jefferson think it is important to update the constitution?
3. Who do you think is right? Is there a middle ground to be found here?
4. How do these approaches fit with the legal philosophies we discussed earlier?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE AT MIDNIGHT

Part VI – Religion in America

October 18th – The Founders and Religion

Required Readings:

George Washington, Letter to the Annual Meeting of Quakers

George Washington, Thanksgiving Proclamation

George Washington, Excerpt from his Farewell Address

Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Danbury Baptist Association

Discussion Questions:

1. Why for Washington is public virtue so important to republicanism?
2. Is Washington right that public virtue is only sustained by religion?
3. How does Jefferson define religious liberty?
4. What do you think the relationship between religion and the government should be?

October 20th – No Class, Fall Break

October 23rd - Religion and the Court

Required Readings:

Reynolds v United States

Wisconsin v Yoder

Discussion Questions

1. When does the free exercise clause allow a religious group special privileges?
2. Why are the states allowed to prohibit polygamy, despite the fact some religions condone it?
3. Should upright political communities receive special consideration from the courts and state legislatures when it comes to abiding by generally applicable laws?

Part VII – Civil Rights

October 25th – Civil Rights and the Supreme Court

Required Readings:

Plessy v. Ferguson

Brown v. Board of Education

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did the court originally hold segregation is legal if the facilities for whites and minorities are equal?
2. Why, according to Justice Harlan, does enforced segregation violate the 14th amendment?
3. What is the court's rationale for finally overturning the separate-but-equal holding in Brown v Board of Education?

October 27th – Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

Required Readings:

Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream..." speech

Martin Luther King Jr., Letter From A Birmingham Jail

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Martin Luther King Jr. conceive of political equality? Is it different from the Founders' conception?
2. How does King ensure his message will resonate, especially with White Americans?
3. Why does King insist on non-violent resistance?

Part VII – American Parties and Ideologies

October 30th – The Origins of American Parties

Required Readings: TBD

November 1st – American Parties Today

Required Readings:

APSA Report on Parties

Discussion Questions:

1. What proposals did the American political science association offer for the reform of parties?
2. Where these proposals followed through?
3. How do parties function differently today than they used to?

November 3rd – Liberalism

Required Readings:

FDR, 1936 DNC Acceptance Speech

Review: FDR, Commonwealth Club Address

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, *The Vital Center* (Selections)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does FDR think is wrong with America in his time?
2. What is his solution?
3. For Schlesinger, what is liberalism?
4. How do FDR and Schlesinger differ from Constant?

November 6th – Progressivism

Required Readings:

Michelle Goldberg, “Democratic Politics Have to be Identity Politics”

Port Huron Statement

Discussion Questions:

1. How do progressives differ from liberals? Is it a major change or merely one of emphasis?
2. Why does Goldberg think identity politics are important?
3. What are the stated goals of the Port Huron Statement?

November 8th – The Old Right

Required Readings:

Roger Scruton, “Why I Became A Conservative”

James Ceaser, “Four Heads, One Heart”

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Scruton become a conservative?
2. What are the four heads in Ceaser’s essay? Are they all still vibrant and powerful today?

3. What are the commitments of conservatism? How do they differ from modern American liberalism?

November 10th – The New Right

Required Readings:

Ofir Haivry and Yoram Hazony, *What is Conservatism?*
Donald Trump, Inaugural Address

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the new right differ from the old in America?
2. Which has the greater long-term future?
3. How does the new right seek to oppose liberalism?

Part VIII – State and Local Politics

November 13th – How the Federal System Works

Required Readings:

Martha Derthick, *Keeping the Compound Republic*
(selections)

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the federal system work?
2. What are its different layers?

November 15th – Why Have A Federal System?

Required Readings:

Federalist 10
Wilson Carey McWilliams, “Democracy As Means and End”

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is federalism a solution to the problem of faction according to Madison?
2. Has expanding the republic worked?
3. Why does McWilliams argue that local government is so important? Is he right?

November 17th – Arguments Against A Federal System

Required Readings:

Lawrence R. Samuel, “States Are A Relic”
Brutus, Small Republic Argument

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Samuel think states are a relic?
2. What is Brutus’ concern with having a national government?
3. Which do you think has the most valid concerns?

November 20th – Kentucky Politics I

Readings: TBA

November 22nd – Thanksgiving Break

November 24th – Thanksgiving Break

November 27th – Kentucky Politics II

Guest Lecture: Paul Patton, Former Governor & UPike Chancellor

November 29th – Local Politics I

Readings : TBA

December 1st – Local Politics II

Guest Lecture: TBD

December 4th – Make Up Day

December 6th – Final Exam Review

December 8th – Extended Office Hours

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS AT UPIKE

The Thrive Counseling center is located in the Record building and is a free service for students at UPIKE. From one-time meetings to be encouraged or long-term mental health support, the Thrive Counseling Center is for you. To set up an appointment please email counseling@upike.edu.

Students can access online support and a personalized counselor who can meet with you at a time/date convenient to you. This program allows you to seek out a counselor who may specifically connect with your desired preferences for gender, race, religion, sexuality, nationality, etc. This offering is called *Uwill*. Link for

UWILL: <https://app.uwill.com/register/y5qtyN00usnLozqFQAnAA>

We have another online resource called *Kooth* which gives great resources and provides you someone to immediately text if needed.

Link for Kooth: www.kooth.com/upike

Students can meet with the chaplain to journey in spiritual direction, be offered supportive listening, or prayer. Chaplain Rob Musick can be reached at robertmusick@upike.edu or 419-560-6381.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Pikeville respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. The institution is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to

make all learning experiences accessible. If you feel you may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability or health condition, please contact **Misty Asbury (DRC – Disability Resource Center, 204 Administration Building, (606) 218-4484, MistyAsbury@upike.edu)** to initiate a conversation about your options. Accommodations are not retroactive, so please avoid any delays in starting the process. Additional information can be found on the DRC website: <https://www.upike.edu/undergraduate/student-success/disability-resource-center/>.

UPIKE faculty are committed to supporting the learning of all students. If you have concerns about barriers to your full-participation in any course, please reach out to your instructor. Conversations, initiated early in the term, can clarify areas of concern and promote open dialogue with faculty. With a desire to learn, together with the support of faculty and campus services, you can successfully navigate your educational experience.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION STATEMENT:

The University of Pikeville is committed to providing a supportive learning environment and fostering safe, healthy relationships among our students, faculty and staff. As such, the institution and members of our community will not tolerate the offenses of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, harassment or stalking. To view the UPIKE Sexual Misconduct Policy, please visit:

<http://www.upike.edu/UPike/media/UPike/Documents/Student-Services/Title-IX-Policy-Updated-9-7-16.pdf>

If you have questions or concerns, please immediately contact your Title IX Coordinators listed below.

Beth Kingery
Title IX Coordinator
Exec. Director of Compliance & Legal Affairs
606-218-5344
bethanybowersock@upike.edu

Michael Pacheco
Deputy Title IX Coordinator
Assoc. VP for Operations & HR
606-218-5326
michaelpacheco@upike.edu

Beth's office is HPE 301B and Mike's office is in the Human Resources building (Laughlin Cottage).

TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS POLICY

Effective August 1, 2010, the University of Pikeville campus became completely tobacco-free. Specifically, smoking or use of other tobacco products will not be permitted on any University campus property or in University-owned vehicles.

FAILURE FOR NON-ATTENDANCE/NON-PARTICIPATION GRADE (FN)

Students who begin a course, but at some point in the semester cease attending, and do not provide official notification to withdraw, will be assigned a grade of "FN" (Failure for Non-Attendance), dated to the student's last date of attendance (based on the definition provided

below). A grade of "FN" will be assigned when a student stops attending and/or participating in a class for a period of 25% of the term or longer as measured in calendar days. An "FN" indicates that the student ceased attendance and failed to complete the course objectives. If a student receives all FN's (or failing grades) in a term, he/she is subject to the Unofficial Withdrawal procedure at the end of the term that includes the reduction and/or return of all financial aid. Students are fully responsible for all resulting charges on their student account.

Students receiving all F's or FN's in a term who are currently on probation must appeal to receive financial aid to receive aid in their next term of enrollment if these grades move the student to a suspension status.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Pikeville is an academic community, and like all other communities, it can function properly only if its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Essential to those goals and values is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic integrity. In order to articulate fully its commitment to academic integrity and to protect members of its community from the results of dishonest conduct, the University of Pikeville has adopted the following policies to address cases of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

1. **Cheating:** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise and/or claiming such material as one's own work product. The unauthorized receipt of or attempt to obtain answers or assistance during an examination or other gradable activity or event from another student or from an unauthorized device (phone, tablet, computer, etc.).
2. **Plagiarism:** Intentionally or knowingly taking another's ideas, work, or words as one's own without properly documenting or crediting the original source in any academic exercise and/or using these ideas, words, or statements in a paper or presentation without properly documenting or crediting the original source.
3. **Fabrication:** The deliberate falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
4. **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another individual violate any provision of this policy.
5. **Unauthorized Acquisition of Materials:** The unauthorized receipt or attempt to obtain unauthorized examination questions/answers either for personal use or distribution to others.
6. **Unauthorized Assistance:** Attempting to give answers, receive answers, or assistance to another student during an examination or other academic exercise without authorization.

7. **Academic Falsification:** Any attempt to falsify grades and/or data results.
8. **Academic Interference:** Any attempt to interfere with another student's outcome on an academic exercise or clinical performance.
9. **Failure to Report:** Failing to report known violations of the Academic Integrity Policy.
10. **Unapproved Collaboration:** Collaborating on any assignments such as homework, notes, take-home exams, draft papers, or projects in which the instructor does not allow collaboration.

If a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is determined to have occurred, sanctions will be imposed upon the individual consistent with the nature, circumstances, and severity of the offense. Possible sanctions may include the following actions:

1. A written and/or verbal warning;
2. The requirement of additional academic integrity training;
3. A grade reduction for the academic exercise;
4. The assignment of an "F" or zero for the academic exercise;
5. A failing grade in the course with the inability to withdraw;
6. Dismissal from the university (automatic for repeat substantiated incidents of academic dishonesty); or
7. Other sanctions deemed appropriate by individual colleges.

All cases will be addressed through the procedure outlined in the University Catalog and the Student Handbook.

Inclement Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather, see the link below:

<http://www.upike.edu/Student-Services/inclementweather>

COVID-19 Updates

Regular updates regarding COVID-19 and the impact on class scheduling will be posted on the UPIKE website. Please visit <https://www.upike.edu>.

Updated:
July 2021