POLS 2000 – Introduction to Politics

Fall 2026 (3 Credit Hours)

Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of politics as a systematic way of understanding power, governance, and collective decision-making in societies. Students will explore how political institutions, laws, and norms shape everyday life, from voting and public policy to civil rights and social movements. The course examines key political concepts such as authority, legitimacy, representation, and justice, while also introducing major political systems, including democracies, authoritarian regimes, and constitutional governments. Emphasis is placed on developing students' ability to analyze political events, evaluate competing arguments, and understand how politics operates at local, national, and global levels.

Course Information

Instructor: Professor Christine (Chris) Bailey

Department of Political Science and Public Management

Email: baileyc1@apsu.edu

Class Schedule: MWF: 1:25 – 2:20 pm, Clement 128

Office Phone Number: (931) 221-7197

Office: Clement Building 143B

Office Hours: MW 10:00 am to 11:00 am, and 12:10 pm to 1:20 pm; F 10:00 am to 11:00 am, and by appointment

Zoom: https://apsu.zoom.us/j/6463412650

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Define and explain core political concepts** such as power, state, government, democracy, legitimacy, and rights.
2. **Describe and compare major political systems**, including democratic and non-democratic forms of government.
3. **Identify the roles of key political institutions** (e.g., legislatures, executives, courts, and bureaucracies) in shaping policy and governance.
4. **Analyze political behavior**, including voting, protest, political participation, and public opinion.
5. **Evaluate how laws and public policies affect different groups** within society, particularly in relation to inequality, representation, and access to power.
6. **Apply political concepts to real-world events**, using examples from U.S. and global politics.
7. **Interpret basic political data and arguments**, including news reports, scholarly writing, and public policy debates.
8. **Construct clear, evidence-based political arguments** in writing or discussion.

Required Materials

As I am cognizant of the limited nature of student resources, all required materials for this course are free for you to access.

The primary textbook for this course is *OpenStax's Introduction to Political Science (2022),* which is available online for free. Readings from this textbook will be linked in D2L, but if you want a physical print copy of the textbook, you can order it at this link: https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/openstax-introduction-political-science?utm_source=openstax&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=book-page ***Note: if you elect to order a printed copy of the textbook, there is a fee associated with your order.***

In addition to the readings from the textbook, there may also be selected readings, podcasts, and videos for you to review. These will also be free to access and linked in D2L.

The readings and course lectures are all required and are listed in the course schedule. Readings and course lectures for each week must be completed during the week they are assigned in the course schedule. I recommend reviewing the weekly materials in the order they appear in the syllabus. If you have any questions about the course materials, please come to my office hours or email me at the email address listed in the Contact Information section of this syllabus.

Communication Policy

Class communication will primarily be via email. The best way to contact me directly is by email at baileyc1@apsu.edu. **DO NOT email me or send me messages in D2L**. I do not check this frequently, so your correspondence will likely be missed if you use the mail feature in D2L. If needed, Zoom video conferences, phone calls, or office visits can be scheduled via email. Please be sure to check your APSU email and D2L on a regular, if not daily, basis.

I will try to respond to student emails within 48 hours Monday through Friday from 9:00 am-5:00 pm. Response times may vary during weekends and holidays.

Statement of Academic Freedom

- Students have the right to engage in polite, reasoned disagreement with the professor and other students with no penalty to their grades whatsoever.
- Everyone has the right to participate in a learning environment that emphasizes mutual respect, tolerance, and free inquiry.
- This class is a forum for critical discussion in pursuit of the truth. Both the professor and students have the right to challenge any beliefs, world-views, ideology, or attitudes, even those that many hold sacred.

Divisive Concepts Statement

APSU is committed to the free and full exchange of ideas and perspectives that is central to the educational enterprise. We are also committed to encouraging students — and all people — to be exposed to, and think critically about, sensitive topics and issues. This is an essential element of higher education and necessary to better prepare students for community participation and robust civic engagement. Curricular materials on concepts including but not limited to racism,

sexism and classism may be presented and discussed in this class; while students are expected to master course content, it is not expected that students endorse or subscribe to any theory or viewpoint.

Student Conduct in the Classroom

This course engages complex and, at times, politically charged material. To ensure a respectful, inclusive, and productive learning environment, the following classroom conduct guidelines were collaboratively established by students on 8/28/2026:

- **No hostility, or yelling.** Students are expected to communicate without yelling, hostile behavior, intimidation, or aggressive conduct toward classmates or the instructor.
- **Keep it in the classroom**. Students should not harass, intimidate, retaliate against, or otherwise target classmates outside of class because of views, opinions, or statements expressed during class. What happens in the classroom should remain a basis for classroom discussion—not for personal conflicts outside the classroom.
- **No interruptions.** Students should allow others to finish speaking and should not engage in repeated interruptions, disruptive outbursts, or other conduct that prevents others from participating.
- **Be open to different opinions**. Students are expected to listen respectfully to perspectives with which they disagree. Disagreement and debate are encouraged; dismissive, hostile, or disrespectful responses are not.
- **Leave the Drama at the Door.** Personal conflicts, interpersonal drama, and unnecessary theatrics have no place in the classroom. Students are expected to address disagreements maturely and keep the focus on the course material.

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in the student being directed to take a **five-minute break from class**. Repeated or serious violations may result in a referral to Student Affairs for failure to comply with course policies and/or other applicable university policies.

Minors in the Classroom

Minors (any non-student under the age of 18) accompanying staff, faculty, students or visitors on campus are not permitted in the classroom.

Service Animals in the Classroom

Consult Policy 3:007 Animals on Campus for appropriate situations allowing service animals in the classroom.

Technology Requirements

- Web Browsers - Online course content is delivered through the D2L learning management system which is accessible through any web browser; however, Distance Education recommends the most up-to-date versions of Google Chrome or Apple Safari. Please use the D2L System Check to ensure that your web browser is properly configured.
- Free Microsoft Office 365 - You will need software for word processing. Currently enrolled APSU students receive access to Microsoft Office 365 for free and can install it on up to 5 compatible PCs or Macs. Additional information is available through the GOVSTECH website. Contact GOVSTECH at govstech@apsu.edu with questions.

Technology Skills Required for the Course

- Accessing and navigating D2L
- Sending/receiving email
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office

Technology Assistance

- For Austin Peay email and OneStop login issues, contact (931) 221-HELP (4357) or govstech@apsu.edu. Go to GovsTech for more information.
- For D2L questions/concerns, contact (931) 221-6625 or online@apsu.edu. Go to Distance Education for more information.
- Distance education has put together a list of resources for you to help you navigate online courses. Find it here.
- You can locate university policies related to the accessibility and privacy policies of D2L, Turnitin, and other approved university technology vendors here.

Grading & Assessment Policies

Assignments & Assignment Weights

Syllabus Quiz (10%)

Each student must complete an introductory quiz in D2L during the first week of class. You MUST read the course syllabus in it's entirety before beginning the quiz. The quiz is **due Thursday, 8/27 by 10:00 am (CST) for federal attendance reporting purposes;** therefore, it cannot be submitted late or made up. It is imperative you complete this assignment by the due date to avoid being dropped from the class.

In-Class Assignments (25%)

DUE: Throughout the semester

There will be multiple assignments given in class throughout the semester. The purpose of these assignments is to encourage your participation and attendance in class; therefore, these assignments cannot be made up. The assignments are designed to increase your understanding and retention of the course material. On the days we have in-class assignments, be sure to bring a pen and paper to class! ****Note, this list is not inclusive of all in-class assignments**. Assignments will also be given at random throughout the semester.**

Midterm Exam (20%)

DUE: Friday 10/2 During Class Time

A midterm exam will be given at the end of Module 2. The exam will be held in-person **during class time** on **Friday, 10/2**. The exam will be inclusive of all material covered in the first half of the course. The exam will not be open note, so it is imperative that you study for the exam.

Final Exam (20%)

DUE: 12/7 @ 10:30 am-12:30 pm

A final exam will be given during the university-scheduled exam time on **December 7th between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm**. The exam will be inclusive of all material covered in the second half of the course. The exam will not be open note, so it is imperative that you study for the exam.

Final Project (25%)

DUE: Due Date Schedule or Calendar of Assignments Below

In place of a traditional final paper, students will work in small groups (3-5 students per group) to design and deliver a 10-minute mini-lesson that creatively teaches one key concept or idea from the course. Groups may use slideshows, skits, media, games, or other formats to explain the concept in a way that is clear, accurate, and engaging. Each student will also complete a short individual reflection after the group presentation. This project emphasizes collaboration, applied understanding, and communication skills.

There are several assignments associated with this project that will be due throughout the semester. I will give you time in class to work on most of these assignments, but you and your group may need additional time outside of class to complete some of the assignments. Be sure to coordinate with your group members to complete the assignments by their respective due dates.

Final Project Important Due Dates:

- Group Roster (5%): DUE 9/11
- Proposal (20%): DUE 10/9
- Literature Review (25%): DUE 10/23
- Final Presentation (40%): DUE 11/20, 11/23, 11/30
- Reflection (10%): DUE 11/30

Grading Scale

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59% and under

To calculate your percentage/letter grade at the end of the course, multiply the points per assignment by their associated weight and sum the resulting totals. This will give you the percentage associated with the letter grades. In order to pass a course in Political Science, you must achieve a “D” or better grade.

Calendar of Major Assignments

Note, this list is not inclusive of all in-class assignments. Assignments will also be given at random throughout the semester.**

- Syllabus Quiz: 8/27 by 10:00 am (CST)
- Final Project Group Rosters: 9/11
- Midterm: 10/2
- Final Project Proposals: 10/9
- Final Project Literature Review: 10/23
- Final Project Presentations: 11/20, 11/23, 11/30
- Final Project Reflection: 11/30 by 11:59 pm
- Final Exam: 12/7 from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Testing Procedures

The Midterm and Final Exam will be held in-person. The Final Exam will be held during the time designated by the University.

Assessment of Written Work

The largest writing component of this course are the assignments associated with the Final Project and the writing associated with the In-Class assignments. I will provide detailed instructions for each of these assignments. Grades will be issued based on your compliance with the instructions.

University Attendance Policy

The Department of Education requires that all universities receiving federal financial aid report attendance on the 14th day of classes each semester. Please be aware that if you do not attend class or manifest your attendance online through the submission of academic work within the first 14 days, you will be dropped from the class by the university and may be liable for repayment of any received financial aid for the course.

Instructor Grading and Feedback Response Time

All assignments and exams will be graded, and the grades will be posted in D2L within two weeks of the due date.

Late and Missing Work Policy

All course deadlines are carefully crafted to ensure I can provide feedback on your work in a timely manner. Therefore, late assignments will not be accepted this semester.

Statement of Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with the university policy regarding academic integrity. Do not violate it. Any form of cheating will be referred to the Dean of Students and dealt with in accordance with the university policies described in the Student Handbook: University Academic Policies.

The following is the definition of Academic Misconduct from APSU's Policies and Procedures Manual:

1. Plagiarism. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images or works of another person as one's own without proper attribution.
2. Cheating. Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
3. Fabrication. Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
4. Facilitation or Collusion. Assisting or attempting to assist another to violate a provision of the institution's student code of conduct regarding academic misconduct.

Academic and Classroom Misconduct

Students are expected to always conduct themselves appropriately. Academic and classroom misconduct will not be tolerated. Students must read the "Code of Student Conduct" in the new Student Handbook for an understanding of what will be expected of them within the academic setting. APSU Policy 3:005 Student Academic and Classroom Misconduct will be followed in reporting any suspected cases of academic misconduct.

Rules Governing the Use of Artificial Intelligence

In recognition of the increasing prevalence of AI tools in academic settings, this course implements a policy on AI usage that balances technological advancements with the need for genuine learning and skill development.

Students may utilize AI tools (such as ChatGPT or Claude) under the following guidelines:

- AI tools are permitted solely for initial brainstorming and idea generation in the early stages of projects or assignments.
- All AI-generated content must be clearly marked and submitted separately from the student's own work. This separation allows for transparency in the ideation process.
- Students are required to expand upon, critique, or refine AI-generated ideas in their own words. The goal is to use AI as a springboard for your own critical thinking, not as a substitute for it.
- The final submission for any assignment must be entirely the student's own work, without direct AI assistance. This ensures that the core academic skills this course aims to develop are being practiced and demonstrated.
- Students must include a brief reflection (approximately 250-300 words) on how they used AI in their ideation process and how it influenced their final work. This reflection serves as both a metacognitive exercise and a means of accountability.
- **Students are FORBIDDEN from using AI to take notes for the course or to upload course content to AI platforms**. This course is my intellectual property, and I do not consent to its upload to any AI platform.

All students are *required* to keep evidence of written work generation, including document editing history. If I strongly suspect you have inappropriately used AI, I will request these records. Adherence to this policy is considered part of the course's academic integrity requirements. Violations may be treated similarly to other forms of academic misconduct as outlined in the syllabus. The consequence for inappropriate use of AI in this course could include a failing grade for the assignment or the course. Additionally, if intellectual property theft occurs by uploading course content to AI platforms, you may be subject to disciplinary

action under the APSU Student Code of Student Conduct and/or civil and criminal legal action.

Students with questions about the appropriate use of AI tools should consult with the instructor before using them for any assignment.

Copyright, Note Selling, and Recordings

The lectures and course materials, including lecture slides, assignments, tests, outlines and similar materials are protected by U.S. copyright laws and by university policy. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use in this class. You may also share those materials with another student who is registered and enrolled in this course**.**

You may NOT reproduce, distribute, upload, or display any lecture notes or recordings or course materials in any other way– whether or not a fee is charged – without my express written consent. **This includes uploading course materials to generative AI or LLMs**. If you do so, you may be subject to disciplinary action under the APSU Student Code of Student Conduct. This does not pertain to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), although recordings or sharing of course materials and notes for ADA accommodations should not be distributed beyond the students receiving the accommodations. Similarly, you own the copyright to your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course website, I will ask for your written permission. **Students may not record this course without the permission of the instructor.**

Students with Disabilities

Any student who has a disability that may affect his/her academic performance is encouraged to make an appointment with me to discuss this matter, or you may contact Student Disability Resource Center; telephone 221-6230; tty 221-6278; fax 221-7102.

Academic Support

- ## University Support

The university has a broad array of resources to help students succeed. These are detailed in the following document. If you need to borrow a laptop, get research and writing help, find a health care provider, or get tech support, the university has you covered.

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments

A few notes about reading the course schedule:

- Please do the readings in the order listed on the syllabus
- All readings can be found on D2L
- Readings must be completed by class time on the date listed in the schedule

Module 1: Course Introduction and What is Politics?

- Wednesday 8/26- Course Introduction
  - **Read** the syllabus
  - **Complete** Syllabus Quiz (DUE 8/27 by 10:00 am (CST))
- Friday 8/28- What is Politics?
  - **Read** 1.1 and 1.2
- Monday 8/31 - What is Political Science?
  - **Read** 1.3 - 1.5

Module 2: Politics and Individuals

- Wednesday 9/2 – Political and Human Behavior
  - **Read** 2.1-2.4
- Friday 9/4 - Political Ideology (I)
  - **Read** 3.1-3.4
- Monday 9/7 – **NO CLASS (Labor Day)**
- Wednesday 9/9 – In Class Assignment
- Friday 9/11 – Introduction to Final Project
  - **Read** Final Project Overview
  - **Complete** Final Project Group Rosters

- Monday 9/14 - Political Ideology (II)
    - **Read** 3.5-3.8
- Wednesday 9/16 – Civil Liberties (I)
    - **Read** 4.1-4.3
- Friday 9/18 – In-Class Assignment
- Monday 9/21 – Civil Liberties (II)
    - **Read** 4.4-4.6
- Wednesday 9/23 – Political Participation
    - **Read** 5.1-5.3
- Friday 9/25 – Public Opinion
    - **Read** 5.4-5.6
- Monday 9/28 – TBA
- Wednesday 9/30 – Midterm Review
- Friday 10/2 – Midterm Exam

Module 3: Politics and Groups

- Monday 10/5 – Group Political Activity
    - **Read** 6.1-6.5
- Wednesday 10/7 - -In-Class Assignment
- Friday 10/9 – Final Project Working Day
    - **Complete** Final Project Proposal
- Monday 10/12 -Fall Break- **NO CLASS**
- Wednesday 10/14 – Civil Rights
    - **Read** 7.1-7.5
- Friday 10/16 – Interest Groups
    - **Read** 8.1 and 8.2
- Monday 10/19 – Political Parties and Elections
    - **Read** 8.3- 8.6
- Wednesday 10/21 – In-Class Assignment
- Friday 10/23 – Final Project Workshop: Final Project Sources
    - **Read** TBA
    - **Complete** Final Project Literature Review

Module 4: Politics and Institutions

- Monday 10/26 – Legislatures
    - **Read** 9.1-9.4
- Wednesday 10/28 – Executives, Cabinets, and Bureaucracies
    - **Read** 10.1-10.7
- Friday 10/30 – Courts and Law
    - **Read** 11.1-11.6
- Monday 11/2 – The Media
    - **Read** 12.1-12.5
- Wednesday 11/4 – In-Class Assignment
- Friday 11/6 – In- Class Assignment
- Monday 11/9 –
- Wednesday 11/11 – Veteran's Day – **NO CLASS**

- Friday 11/13 - Presentations working day
- Monday 11/16 Catch Up
- Wednesday 11/18 Catch Up
- Friday 11/20 - Presentations
- Monday 11/23- Presentations
- Wednesday 11/25 – Thanksgiving Break – **NO CLASS**
- Friday 11/27 – Thanksgiving Break – **NO CLASS**
- Monday 11/30 – Presentations
    - **Complete** Presentation Reflection
- Wednesday 12/2 - Final Review
- Final 12/7 @ 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Caveat

This syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are made during the term of the course, the instructor will immediately notify students of such changes both by email communication and posting both notification and nature of change(s) on the course announcements page in D2L.