

WESTERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE
POLS 2000 QNT: Current Issues in American Government
BRIEF SYLLABUS
Spring, 2011

INSTRUCTOR NAME: Jim Hissong

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COURSE NUMBER: POLS 2000 DNT

CREDITS: 3

PREREQUISITE: none

TRANSFERABILITY: Keep this course outline for future transferability issues with other schools. Students planning to attend another school should check with that institution concerning articulation agreements, since transferability is up to the discretion of each institution.

REQUIRED READINGS AND/OR MATERIALS:

Instructor handouts, websites and blog information posted to Blackboard. No text.

Weekly news magazines and/or daily newspapers (hardcopy or on the Net.)

Note: It will be of utmost importance to the student who wishes to be successful that he/she keeps abreast of current news events as they pertain to policy making at the national and state level. Suggestions: www.huffingtonpost.com, www.npr.org, www.foxnews.com, www.msnbc.com, (Casper Star Tribune) www.trib.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of current political topics in the United States. Focus is on key public policy problems, the policy-making process, and the final policy choice. Students are expected to keep abreast of political events on a daily basis and to apply basic concepts in American government to current affairs. **Course begins on Monday, February 14, 2011.**

WWCC GOALS/METHODS OF ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Five major goals - WWCC has identified the following as goals for student success -

- Communicate Competently
 - Retrieve Information
 - See Issues from Multiple Perspectives
 - Solve Problems
 - Develop Life Skills

WWCC GOAL	GOALS FOR THIS COURSE	CLASS ACTIVITY	OUTCOMES/ ASSESSMENT
Communicate Competently Solve problems	1) Demonstrate electronic communication skills via email and postings to website during discussion of policy-making. 2) Demonstrate ability to write a cogent opinion paper	Group Discussion Board via BlackBoard course website to brainstorm solutions to policy-making dilemmas Two opinion papers 1600 words in length, each	Instructor assessment of participation in weekly DBQ according to rubric. Instructor and peer review of opinion papers.
Retrieve information	Demonstrate ability to search internet sources of information relating to policy-making	Defend opinions posted to DBQ by referring to information retrieved from Net	Instructor assessment of postings to weekly DBQ. Determination that opinion papers are in compliance with MLA standards of source documentation.
Develop Life Skills	Through an understanding of key political events and the policy-making process, develop the skills necessary to be an informed voter within a republic	Retrieval of pertinent information via the Net; collaboration on problem solving activities through participation in weekly DBQ; critical reading of point/counter-point articles	Instructor assessment of participation in weekly DBQ according to rubric. Instructor and peer review of opinion papers.
See Issues from Multiple Perspectives	Develop an open mind in order to see political issues from multiple perspectives	Read point/counter-point articles/blogs. Review alternative viewpoint articles on Net	Discussion Board participation. Opinion papers as assigned

LEARNING OBJECTIVES will be posted each week under *Learning Modules* on BlackBoard coursesite.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: This course is conducted through three methods: 1) online multimedia; 2) assigned readings; and 3) a course website conducted through BlackBoard (BB) Course Management System (CMS) (www.bb.wvcc.wy.edu) accessed through CampusCruiser.

EVALUATION: 1) Participation in Weekly Discussion Board (See *Guidelines for Discussion Board* under BlackBoard/Start Here! tab.) 2) Successful completion of two (2) short opinion papers (See *Guidelines for Opinion Papers* under BlackBoard/Assignments tab.)

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS FOR YOU TO READ ON FIRST DAY OF CLASS, 2/14/11

Access the following documents on first day of course at BlackBoard/Start Here!

- Brief course syllabus
- Instructor Introduction (read for expectations).
- WWCC *Civitas*
- *Netiquette*
- *Guideline for Discussion Board*
- Course calendar
- Suggested Opinion Paper Topics

GRADING POLICY

2 Opinion Papers, 100 points each = 200
Postings to Discussion Board, 10 issues x 20 points each = 200

TOTAL 400

A = 360 pts. +
B = 320 – 359 pts
C = 280 - 319 pts
D = 240 – 279 pts
F = 239 pts and below

MAJOR UNITS OF STUDY:

*Navigation to *Learning Modules* on BlackBoard CMS will direct you to reading assignment and topic for week. The first five weeks and topics are listed below. In week #5, I will conduct a class poll to determine what topics a majority of class wishes to discuss in second half of course.

Week 1 *Is Democracy the Answer to Global Terrorism?*

Week 2 *Should the Electoral College be Abolished?*

Week 3 *Should America Adopt Public Financing of Political Campaigns?*

Week 4 *May the President Wiretap Without a Warrant to Protect National Security?*

Week 5 *Is "Middle Eastern" Profiling Ever Justified?*

INCOMPLETE POLICY:

A grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be given after the mid-point of the course when unexpected circumstances, such as illness or military service, make it impossible for a student who is passing the course with a "C" or better at the mid-point of the course to complete the remaining work by the end of the semester. The purpose of an incomplete, therefore, is not to repeat the entire course but to complete no more than 50% of the work. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process, but an Incomplete is assigned solely at the instructor's discretion. Check the College Catalog for the entire policy.

APPROPRIATE STUDENT BEHAVIOR:

You are expected to adhere to WWCC's *Civitas* policy. One of the College's goals is to "See Issues from Multiple Perspectives." Therefore, part of this class will involve hearing and reading perspectives different from your own. Everyone in class has a right to learn and express their views in a comfortable environment, so please be considerate of others' rights to hear, take notes or exams, express their ideas and participate in the class. College policy 5420A states that "the College can immediately suspend or dismiss a student for disciplinary reasons if the college considers the student's actions detrimental to its educational purposes."

Gentle Warning: Rude, discourteous, personal attacks on the opinions of others . . . known in the vernacular as "flaming" . . . posted to BlackBoard and directed at the instructor or a classmate will not be tolerated. You will only be warned once and an apology to class will be required. If a second occurrence of "flaming" on your part should occur, I will recommend to WWCC administration that you be removed from course under auspices of WWCC Policy 5420A

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM:

All submitted, written work will be checked for plagiarism. If I suspect that a student has submitted a plagiarized paper, I have software that will confirm my suspicions. An obvious attempt to take credit for research as your own . . . not properly citing the research of others . . . may result in expulsion from course. An excellent discussion of plagiarism can be found at BB/Student/Resources/Plagiarism Information and at [http://www.turnitin.com/resources/documentation/turnitin/sales/Some Thoughts on Plagiarism by N Stanlick.pdf](http://www.turnitin.com/resources/documentation/turnitin/sales/Some_Thoughts_on_Plagiarism_by_N_Stanlick.pdf) Please, do not risk expulsion. I am not amused by students who "cut and paste" or creatively paraphrase information from the Internet or textbooks into their papers. Be proud of your individual work and do it properly. You will be required to submit your opinion papers to course site at where Turnitin will verify their originality. In addition, it is never proper, at the college level, to cite "mass encyclopedia" websites such as Wikipedia, answers.com, howto.com, etc.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: It is the responsibility of the student who qualifies for specific accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) who wishes to seek services, to contact Disability Support Services (DSS) each semester to apply for accommodations. The DSS Specialist can be reached at (307) 382-1806, or via e-mail Karen Flaim at kflaim@wwcc.wy.edu The DSS office is in Room 2015 within the Student Development Center. The DSS office will provide information regarding appropriate accommodations to the instructor of this course.

CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS: The above schedule and procedures in this syllabus/outline are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Students will be notified of any changes.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES: Students enrolled in courses taught via compressed video, Internet, videotape, or courses taught in computer labs can expect technical difficulties to arise from time to time. The internet, campus server, and your PC are ruled by Murphy's Law. Please be patient when glitches arise. Students are asked to be understanding and flexible as technical difficulties are resolved. **Warning: technical difficulties with your home PC are not a viable excuse for missing due dates.** One of the beauties of internet courses is you can access class from any library, your place of employment during a break, or a friend's PC or Mac.

RESPONSE TIME: Students can generally expect a response from the instructor within 24 hours with exceptions during holidays and/or scheduled breaks. Please see *Instructor Letter of Introduction* at BB/Start Here!

It is very important that you carefully read this syllabus/course outline. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask. I strongly encourage suggestions and comments about this course. Feel free to consult with me about any questions or problems.

Thank you,

Jim Hissong