


# Political Science 120: American Government

## International & Political Affairs

Professor: Dr. Nicole R Foster Shoaf Email: [Shoaf-N@MSSU.edu](mailto:Shoaf-N@MSSU.edu)

Office: Justice Center 111

Office Hours <sup>1</sup>	Tuesdays	1230 pm – 230 pm
	Wednesdays	1000am – 100 pm - Online
	Thursdays	1230 pm – 130 pm
	By Appointment	<a href="#">Click here to schedule</a>

## 1 COURSE DESCRIPTION (FALL 2022)

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This course is designed to give students an understanding of their governments, enabling them to keep up with political developments with the goal of becoming the informed citizens needed to sustain democracy. This is a core curriculum requirement for bachelor's degrees and prerequisite for all political science courses.

*Democracies require an informed population.*

This course provides a survey of the American political system and is designed to introduce students to the American political process and explore how the “rules of the game” shape politics. This course covers America’s foundational documents in detail and traces the US Constitution from its conception through contemporary politics. We will consider the consequences of American federalism and explore the significance of civil right and liberties in the American political system. This course is designed to provide an opportunity to engage with many of the issues challenging scholars, citizens, and politicians today. What is the proper role of government? Who participates in politics and what impact does uneven participation have? How should we balance individual rights against the needs/desires of the community?

### 1.1 SPECIAL NOTES

We will cover a lot of material in this course – it turns out that a functioning democracy has a lot of moving parts and the American version is full of interesting idiosyncrasies we have to explore in order to understand how are system works (or doesn’t, as the case may be).

Keep in mind that no one is born with a natural inclination for political science – we all start from scratch. It is best to approach this course with what they call a “growth mindset”, acknowledging that there is a lot we do not know (that’s why were are in this course), that sometimes we may struggle with the material (that means we are learning something), and that the goal is not perfection, but progress. The course is structured in such a way that everyone who is willing to put in the time and effort can be successful. Points are spread across assignments of different types and course polices allow you to make mistakes without destroying your grade. This is not to say that some will find the course more challenging than others, just that even those that struggle will be able to earn a passing grade.

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<sup>1</sup> *Office Hours* are the times each week that faculty are required to spend in the office, making ourselves available to students to discuss class and advising issues. There will be times when faculty will need to adjust regularly scheduled office hours to accommodate other obligations and there are students who might not be able to make a particular faculty member’s office hours. In these cases, all students are encouraged to schedule an appointment with their faculty member to meet at another time. You may use this link to view my availability and add yourself to my calendar if my scheduled office hours do not work for you: [Click here](#)

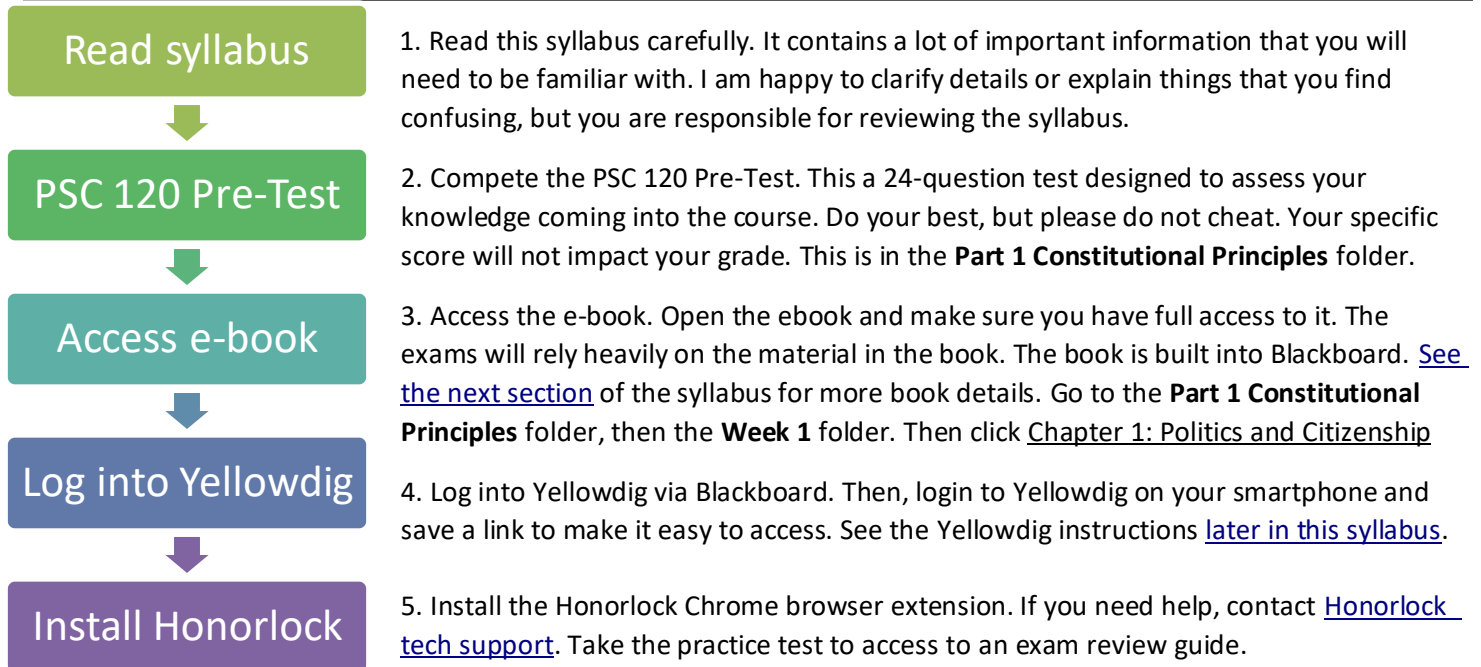
## 2 COURSE OBJECTIVES

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- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate important writings in the history of the United States [1A].
- Demonstrate the ability to defend conclusions using relevant evidence and reasoned argument [2D].
- Compare and contrast historical movements and contrary ideological development in the United States [3A].
- Demonstrate a deep familiarity with the constitutions of the United States and the State of Missouri [5F].
- Demonstrate the ability to draw on history and the social sciences to evaluate contemporary problems [5C].

## 3 QUICK START GUIDE [AKA THINGS TO DO ON DAY 1]

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## 4 COURSE TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

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For this course you will need regular access to a computer with Google Chrome installed and a webcam (for exams). You will also need regular access to the internet. You may use a personal device, or university computers. This syllabus contains a variety of links to technical support services – I am happy to help where I can, but often professional tech support is a better choice.

- For help with Blackboard: [BlackboardHelp@mssu.edu](mailto:BlackboardHelp@mssu.edu)
- Contact IT at [HelpDesk@mssu.edu](mailto:HelpDesk@mssu.edu) or 417.625.4444 for email and LioNet help
- You can contact Honorlock tech support 24/7. Call 1.844.243.2500, email [Support@honorlock.com](mailto:Support@honorlock.com) or live chat.
- If you need tech support for Yellowdig: <https://help.Yellowdig.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>
- SAGE Vantage Technical Support - live support is available at 805.410.7080 from
  - Monday – Friday: 800 am – 1100 pm EST
  - Saturday: 1130 am – 800 pm EST
  - Sunday: 1130 am – 1100 pm EST

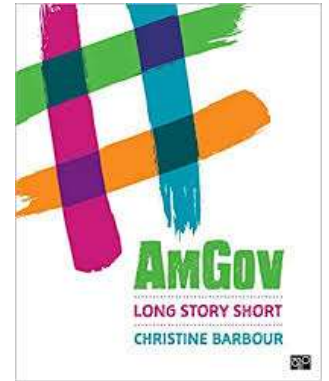
## 5 TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MATERIALS

### 5.1 TEXTBOOK

The textbook for this course is built into Blackboard. Upon registering for the course, you were charged for the ebook and the included Vantage system. The Vantage system is integrated into Blackboard and will be used throughout the course. No additional materials or purchases are required for this course. All coursework will be submitted via Blackboard.

#### 5.1.1 Vantage System

- SAGE Vantage for Barbour's, *AmGov: Long Story Short*, ISBN: 9781071820667
- Vantage Course ID (helpful if you need to call tech support):
  - Online: SHOAFZ-5727
  - 930 am section: SHOAFH-7483
  - 1100 am section: SHOAFV-7677



This course requires the use of SAGE Vantage, an online learning environment that includes access to the entire text and integrated assignments, including multimedia activities, concept-based knowledge checks, and end of chapter reading tests. These will contribute to your final course grade.

#### 5.1.1.1 SAGE Vantage Technical Support

Live support is available at 805.410.7080 from

- Monday – Friday: 800 am – 1100 pm EST
- Saturday: 1130 am – 800 pm EST
- Sunday: 1130 am – 1100 pm EST

If you are having any difficulties accessing the course, you may also visit <https://sagevantage.softwareassist.com> for videos, FAQ's and to log a tech support issue. You can also speak to a Technical Support Representative by calling 1.805.410.7080 for assistance. Calls are answered in about 2 min or less and this is your fastest way to ensure support.

Outside of live support hours you may leave a voicemail with your call back information and/or submit a ticket on the tech support website. Tickets are addressed within 24 hours and you can generally expect a response within hours.

For assistance familiarizing yourself with the Vantage system, see the following links:

- Introduction to Vantage: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=RaNxr3YJe-s&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode\\_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=5&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=RaNxr3YJe-s&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=5&t=0s)
- Highlighting & Notetaking in the online textbook: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPb65Flu2e0&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode\\_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPb65Flu2e0&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=5)
- Vantage Student Dashboard Assignments: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_OiAlmi3uE&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode\\_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_OiAlmi3uE&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=6)
- Vantage Student Knowledge Checks & Chapter Tests: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_84XL8kepA&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode\\_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_84XL8kepA&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=7)
- Navigate to Textbook in Vantage: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aReHk4p\\_hd4&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode\\_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aReHk4p_hd4&list=PLg8Hz5Alt2Fr5rDhigode_xZCAXR5RrQZ&index=8)

## 5.2 CURRENT EVENTS

In addition to the assigned book, we will discuss current events throughout the semester which means that you will need to stay up to date throughout the semester. Staying on top of the news can be difficult, so to help I have collected links to a variety of resources below.

### 5.2.1 Newsletters

5-Minute Fix newsletter. This summarizes the biggest political stories in something you can read in 5 minutes or less, every Monday, Wednesday, & Friday. Other good options include: Monkey Cage newsletter. The Monkey Cage is a site that connects the expertise of political scientists with members of the public. "At TMC, political scientists draw on their expertise and the discipline's research to provide in-depth analysis, illuminate the news, and inform civic discussion." Sent 3 times a week. The Hill's Morning Report & Tip Sheet newsletter through the Hill.com. This site is a top non-partisan political news site that focuses on the White House, Congress, and the federal government. Sent daily. FiveThirtyEight.com Politics Newsletter. When you use this link, there are several newsletter options that are available – we will only need the *Politics* newsletter for this course – but their sports newsletter is popular among fans.

### 5.2.2 General News

You will also need to be familiar with major headlines in the news– which you can pick up from your favorite source, including but not limited to: CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, ABC News, CBS News, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Post, etc. For those of you who are just developing the habit of paying attention to current events you might consider starting with satire which uses humor, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues. In other words, it is a funny way of learning about current events. You can try The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, The Daily Show, Late Night with Seth Meyers, or Full Frontal with Samantha Bee. Note that some political satire utilizes adult language. For a humorous take on politics and policy issues in more depth, check out John Oliver's Last Week Tonight show. Note that some political satire utilizes adult language. The shows on broadcast television tend to edit for language, but there is less censorship on cable and minimal (if any) censorship on HBO.

## 6 ASSIGNMENTS & LATE WORK POLICIES W/ GRADING SCALE

Your final grade is based on your performance on the assigned work and your level of mastery of the course content. Grades are earned based upon individual performance on course assignments.

The core assignments are worth the bulk of the course points and includes exams, an Elected Officials assignment, and Yellowdig. Reading Assignments are built into the e-book and will help reinforce the key concepts introduced in the assigned readings.

*A note of formatting: All written assignments must be submitted as .doc, .docx, or PDF documents. All MSSU students have access to Microsoft Word through their email account. You may use the online version of Word in a browser, or you can download a copy of Microsoft Office programs on your computer for free, and university computers around campus have these programs. Do not submit your work in other formats – including but not limited to .pages. If you need help accessing your software, the MSSU Helpdesk or I can assist you.*

A	• 900+ points
B	• 800 - 899 points
C	• 700 - 799 points
D	• 600 - 699 points
F	• 599 & under points

**All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. No assignments will be accepted via email.**

## 6.1 PSC 120 PRE/POST TESTS

The first week of class you will take the PSC 120 Pre-Test. This a 24-question test designed to assess your knowledge coming into the course. Do your best, but please do not cheat. Your specific score will not impact your grade. Note that some other portions of the course may be unavailable to you on Blackboard until you complete the PSC 120 Pre-Test.

Later in the semester, you will take the PSC 120 Post-Test. Do your best, but please do not cheat. Your specific score will not impact your grade. The Post-Test must be completed in order to access the final exam.

**Late Policy:** Must be submitted on time in order to earn credit. Submitting the Pre-Test will give you access to course materials and submitting the Post-Test will give you access to the final exam.

## 6.2 EXAMS

All exams are required. Exams will contain multiple choice and short answer questions. If you miss an exam you will have the opportunity to make it up. All exams are comprehensive.

0 Points	Practice Test (Completion will give you access to the exam 1 review guide)
100 Points	Exam 1 – Constitutional Principles
100 Points	Exam 2 – Political Institutions
100 Points	Exam 3 – Comprehensive Final Exam

Honorlock will proctor your exams this semester. To get started, you will need Google Chrome and the Honorlock Chrome Extension. You can download the extension at [www.honorlock.com/extension/install](http://www.honorlock.com/extension/install). Honorlock is an online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your own home. You do not need to create an account, download software, or schedule an appointment in advance. Honorlock is available 24/7 and all that is needed is a computer, a working webcam, and a stable Internet connection.

You are allowed to use handwritten notes on the exam. If you are reading this syllabus closely, you will see this helpful notice. If you do not read the syllabus carefully, you may miss this and find the first exam especially difficult. The lesson? Always read syllabi carefully at the beginning of the course.

**Need Tech Help?** You can contact Honorlock tech support 24/7. Call 1.844.243.2500, email [Support@honorlock.com](mailto:Support@honorlock.com) or live chat. To chat with tech support, for to our BB page and go into the Exams folder. Click the link for Honorlock (the first link on the page) and then look for the small blue speech bubble icon in the top right corner. Click the icon to launch the live chat.

**Testing Center.** If you would like, you have the option of scheduling an appointment to take exams in the MSSU Testing Center, located on the ground floor of Webster Hall. To schedule your test, please call 417.625.9577 or toll free 877.837.8527 or email [distancetesting@mssu.edu](mailto:distancetesting@mssu.edu).

<https://www.mssu.edu/academics/distance-learning/testing.php>

**Review Guides.** Review guides are available upon completion of specific tasks.

Exam 1 Review Guide	Submit the Practice Test
Exam 2 Review Guide	Submit the Elected Officials Assignment
Exam 3 Review Guide	Submit the Elective Assignment

**Late Policy:** No extensions will be available during the middle of the semester, but if you miss an exam for any reason, you will be allowed to take a makeup exam with no penalty. Makeup exams will be available Dec 4-9.

### 6.3 ELECTED OFFICIALS ASSIGNMENT

The goal of this assignment is for you to identify the elected officials who represent you. In order to hold elected officials responsible, you must first know who they are. Download the Elected Officials document from Blackboard and fill in the boxes. To locate your elected officials, you can type your address into sites like these: [Vote411](#), [270 to Win](#) or [Ballotpedia](#).

There should be one name per line, and no names should appear twice. US Senators and US House members work in DC, passing national laws. State house members and state senators work in your state capitol, passing state laws. Those of you who live outside of city limits or in tiny towns may find that you do not have a mayor and/or city council member. You may enter – **N/A** in those boxes, if that is the case.



If you are an international student, you may use the University's address to complete the Elected Officials Assignment – 3950 E Newman Road, Joplin, MO 64801.

If there are problems with your Elected Officials assignment and you earn partial credit, you have the option to revise and resubmit it through Thanksgiving. Please note that all revisions must be submitted on Blackboard. I cannot accept any homework via email. If you email me a photo of your pet (or a cute animal if you do not have a pet), I will give you 10 points extra credit as a reward for carefully reading the syllabus. This offer expires August 31 @ 1159 pm.

**Need Help?** How do I resubmit an assignment on Blackboard? What if I revised my Elected Officials assignment and need to resubmit it? Check out this short video for instructions: <https://youtu.be/m9tNw9oqiIE>

**Late Policy:** Late and revised submissions will be accepted through Thanksgiving.

### 6.4 READING ASSIGNMENTS

These assignments are all built into the Vantage system and woven throughout the textbook. These are designed to incentivize you to read the assigned material carefully and to help you prepare for the exams. Although these assignments will be accepted late through the first exam that covers the chapter, you are strongly encouraged to complete these on-time, as their utility as preparation for exams is contingent upon them being completed before the exams.

The *Knowledge Check* assignments, the *Video Activities*, *Data Activities*, and the *Chapter Quizzes* are all built into the ebook on Blackboard.

**Late Policy:** These assignments will be accepted late through the dates below:

- Chapter 1-3 accepted late through Friday, September 23
- Chapter 4-6 accepted late through Friday, October 21
- Chapter 7-10 accepted late through Thanksgiving

### 6.5 CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN SIMULATION

Late in the semester we will participate in a constitutional design simulation. Details will be provided on Blackboard.

**Late Policy:** Constitutional design simulation assignments must be submitted on time.

## 6.6 YELLOWDIG

To facilitate conversation among course participants, we will utilize Yellowdig. Yellowdig is like a private class Facebook page, without all of the privacy concerns. You can earn points each week by posting and commenting on videos, articles, and photos, as well as responding and reacting to the posts of other participants.

### Why Yellowdig?

Yellowdig participation will replace discussion boards. Theoretically, discussion boards offer the opportunity to have engaging conversations outside of class. However, in reality, most discussion boards become tedious and we rarely get to have genuinely engaging conversations. Many people procrastinate, making it difficult to have a back and forth; forcing everyone to respond to specific posts becomes tedious if they are not interesting and topics that you find interesting can only earn you a handful of points and sometimes it you have nothing original to add.

Unlike typical Blackboard discussion boards where everyone would respond to the same prompt, Yellowdig lets you find and share real-world content (articles, videos, etc.) that you feel is relevant to lectures and readings. Another major difference is that you can ask questions or get clarifications about things in the course. The important thing is that you are posting and having useful conversations about course-relevant topics. As you create posts and make comments that contribute to the community, and as other students react to or comment on your posts, you will automatically receive participation points. Using Yellowdig is a required part of the course, and the points you acquire count for 10% of your course grade.

### How does Yellowdig impact my course grade?

From time to time I will post something for us to engage with (an article or video), but you do not need to wait for me to post something to participate in and earn points for Yellowdig. When you see a video or read an article that you think the class will find interesting and that is relevant, share it. You earn points for posting, commenting, reacting, as well as points when others comment on or react to your posts.

Scores for Yellowdig participation will appear in the Blackboard gradebook as a percentage because Yellowdig points use a different scale than the course as a whole. A Yellowdig score in Blackboard of 100% will earn you 10 points at the end of the semester – equivalent to 10% of your final grade (or a full letter grade).

### How are Yellowdig points distributed?

Your goal is to earn 1000 points each week (weeks end Saturday at 1100 pm). You can earn up to 1300 points each week, which can help you make up for weeks when you things get in the way. You earn points for interacting and engaging with your peers in Yellowdig in the following ways:

1. Writing a Post of at least 40 words (150 points)
2. Writing a Comment of at least 20 words (75 points)
3. Receiving a Comment on your Post (50 points)
4. Receiving a Reaction on your Post or Comment: 😊❤️😏😬🤔💔👍👏👉👈: 30 points

I want you to read what other people are thinking and to have real discussions about course-relevant content. Therefore, I would like everyone to pay attention to the fact that you will earn quite a few points when other people react to your posts and comments. Your posts will also get more points if they get a good conversation started (i.e., if people comment on them). So, think about your audience when you are posting (i.e., your fellow classmates). Also, be sure to recognize good posts by reacting to them and talking about them. Posting early in the week and having others comment on your posts will save you time! I will also be dropping in occasionally to give accolades to posts that are exceptionally good or thoughtful. You will increase your odds of your posts receiving that recognition if you have them up early and I can see you are contributing to a vibrant discussion.

### **Getting do I get started in Yellowdig?**

The first time you login to Yellowdig you must do so via Blackboard. After the first time, you may login via Yellowdig directly, so you can save an icon to your smartphone to login without messing with Blackboard. Unlike Blackboard itself, Yellowdig should be mobile friendly.

Go to our Blackboard page and click the folder Core Assignments. Inside the folder is a link for Yellowdig – click it. Use your MSSU email address to get set up.

**Get Yellowdig on your Smartphone:** After you log in via Blackboard and set up Yellowdig, you can access it directly. Open the Chrome app on your smartphone, go to [Yellowdig.app/user/login](https://yellowdig.app/user/login). Click the three stacked dots in the top right corner and click “Add to Home screen”. This will create a shortcut on your phone so that the next time you want to access Yellowdig, you will not have to go in via Blackboard.

**Need Inspiration?** If you are having trouble figuring out what to post about on Yellowdig, check out some news sites. You can find an interesting video or article and share it with the group and add your commentary. If you go to [section 5.3 in this syllabus](#) you will find a long list of reputable sources that you can use to explore current events.

**Late Policy:** You can earn up to 1300 points per week; average of 1000 weekly points = 100% performance.

## **6.7 ELECTIVE ASSIGNMENT**

You may complete 1 elective assignment to earn up to 100 points. Pick whichever assignment that suits your interests or skills the best.

### **6.7.1 Option 1: Political Cartoons**

Draft 2 political cartoons or memes and an artist’s statement for each (1/2 - 1 page, single spaced) that explains the content of the cartoons/memes, your inspiration for the cartoons/memes, and the political points you are trying to make. Your artistic skills are not the point – the message is. You will be graded on your creativity, the strength of your message, and your explanation. The drawing should be legible but does not need to reflect professional artistic abilities. Submit the artist’s statement on Blackboard and submit the cartoon on paper or via blackboard. You can take a picture of your cartoon and submit it on Blackboard, or you can use one of the many free smartphone apps like OneDrive that allow you to snap a photo with your phone and save the file as a PDF, and submit that PDF to Blackboard.

**Late Policy:** May be submitted late through October 18 with no penalty. Submissions October 19 – Thanksgiving will be accepted with a 20% penalty.

### **6.7.2 Option 2: Letters to Elected Officials**

Write a series of 3 letters to your elected officials. Pick an elected official from your list and draft a 1-page letter. The letter should conform to standard business letter formatting. We are looking for 2-4 solid, substantive paragraphs of content. The content and focus of the letters are left to your discretion, but be sure that you are addressing your concern to the appropriate level of government. Do not write you US Senator a letter about potholes on your street, or write to your city council member about immigration. This requires you to put your knowledge of federalism to use – see the instructor if you need help.

The letter should encourage your elected official to take some action – to support or oppose a policy, for example. Or, the letter can ask your elected official a question about their position on a policy that you are concerned about. You could, for example, write your state representative and encourage them to oppose the governor’s recommended cuts to higher education funding. Your letter should explain why the elected official should support/oppose the policy or why they should follow your recommendation. I recommend that you do not mention that this is for a class project. Ideally, we want your elected official to write back to you, and they



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are more likely to do this if they believe that you have personal motivation to contact them. Be sure to include some contact information so that your elected official can get in touch with you.

You may write multiple officials on the same general topic, but each letter must be different. It does not count if you simply send the same letter multiple times. To earn the points for this assignment you must *send* the letter.

- If you are going to **mail** it, take a picture of the complete printed letter and the addressed & stamped envelope. Submit the photos to Blackboard for points, either as jpegs or copy the images into a .doc, .docx, or PDF document.
- If you choose to **email** your letter, snap a photo of the full email (so we can see that there is substantive content) and take a picture of the email in your "Sent" folder in your email. The email can be sent from your MSSU or personal account. Submit the photos to Blackboard for points, either as jpegs or copy the images into a .doc, .docx, or PDF document.

**Late Policy:** May be submitted late through October 18 with no penalty. Submissions October 19 – Thanksgiving will be accepted with a 20% penalty.

### 6.7.3 Option 3: Get Out The Vote Poster

You may create a poster for a get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaign. The poster should encourage MSSU students to register to vote and/or show up to the polls in November. The posters should be non-partisan (leave references to Democrats & Republicans out). Your poster should be no smaller than standard 8x11 paper, but can be as large as a full poster board. Posters created digitally may be submitted via Blackboard and those created by hand can be submitted in class or dropped off in Justice Center 109. Posters will be displayed on campus, with a signed FERPA release.

**Late Policy:** May be submitted late through October 18 with no penalty. Submissions October 19 – Thanksgiving will be accepted with a 20% penalty.

## 7 COURSE POLICIES

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### 7.1 COURSE PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Regular participation in the course is required. In this online course, participation is defined by the submission of assigned work at least weekly. If circumstances arise that will prevent you from actively participating in the course for more than a week, you need to get in contact with me. Failure to actively participate in the course for 2 weeks will result in a report of non-attendance, which may have consequences for extracurricular activities or financial aid.

### 7.2 LATE WORK POLICY

The late work policy for each of the assignment categories is included in the assignment description above. The late work policy in this course is both reasonable and flexible and will be adhered to firmly.

### 7.3 COURSE COMMUNICATION & EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Important information will be circulated via Blackboard and the MSSU email system. Check your MSSU email account and Blackboard sites regularly. I recommend having your MSSU email sent to your phone and/or forwarded to an account you check frequently. Information about exams, due dates, and assignments will be posted on Blackboard, and Blackboard announcements are sent directly to your MSSU email. You are responsible for any information you miss if you choose not to read your MSSU email or check Blackboard announcements regularly.

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The best way to contact me is via email at [Shoaf-N@mssu.edu](mailto:Shoaf-N@mssu.edu). I will make every effort to respond to your email as quickly as possible. Please be considerate when sending emails. Odds of receiving a prompt, useful reply increases substantially when you adhere to the following email etiquette guidelines:

1. **Syllabus:** It is a good idea to check the syllabus, course schedule, and Blackboard before you send an email to your professor. If the info is there, you will not only get your answer quicker, but you can avoid being that student who asks, "When is assignment X due?" when it is written in 3 places in the syllabus. If the syllabus is not clear, do ask for clarification. It is the professor's job to make course expectations clear. It is your job to read the syllabus. Do not be surprised if you receive an email response that simply says, "Syllabus" or an amusing meme that reminds you to look in the syllabus.
2. **Salutation:** Titles matter. You can address me as "Dr. Shoaf" or "Professor Shoaf." If the instructor has a PhD, "Dr." is appropriate. If not, or if you do not know, err on the side of caution and refer to the instructor as "Professor". This is safe, and you can avoid giving the impression that you are being disrespectful.

Think twice - maybe 3 times - about referring to female professors as "Mrs." or "Miss" unless they have specifically asked to be referred to in that manner. Trust me on this. The tendency to omit the academic and professional titles of female scholars and professionals is called, "untitling" and is a pervasive symptom of a culture that values the expertise of men more than women. Do not be part of the problem.

- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/untitling-women-academia-raza-m-mirza-ph-d->
- <https://www.fastcompany.com/90596628/we-need-to-stop-untitling-and-uncrediting-professional-women>
- <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210216-why-do-professional-titles-actually-matter>

3. **Subject:** Use the subject line and be specific. It helps determine which emails should be reviewed first, and which can wait. But do not be dramatic - "END OF THE WORLD" subject lines are hard to take seriously.
4. **Introduction:** Explain who you are - "I am Madison Jackson, from PSC 120 TR @ 11:00 am" is extremely helpful when you are asking for information about a class. (If this sounds tedious, you could set up a signature to go out in every email with your name, email, and list of current courses). This is especially helpful if this is the first course you have taken with me or it is early in the semester. Don't make me go through the Blackboard gradebooks of 5 different courses to figure out with whom I am corresponding.
5. **Proofread:** Be professional and proofread before sending. Your friends might not mind reading a message 3 times to figure out what you are trying to say, but in a professional environment like a university you want to come across as competent. In addition, err on the side of formality and professionalism in emails to professors. Emails do not need to be long or complicated but understand that tone is difficult to communicate in email and a few extra seconds reviewing a message can build good will.

### 7.4 CLASS CANCELLATION / INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY / PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

If it is necessary to cancel class due to an emergency or inclement weather, information will be posted on Blackboard.

### 7.5 OFFICE HOURS

If you ever have questions or concerns about this course, please consider visiting my office hours. Office hours are times faculty members are scheduled to be available to meet with students – you will not be bothering me or imposing if you visit my office hours.

University policy dictates that full-time faculty hold 6 office hours each week and I will be available a combination of in-person and online hours. I will be available to chat with you more than 6 hours a week and you are welcome to schedule

an appointment for any time that I am available. You are also welcome to swing by my office without an appointment and if I am available, I will be happy to chat with you.

[Click here](#) to schedule an appointment. Unless you specify otherwise, I will assume that you would like to meet online.

## 7.6 ONLINE COURSE STRUCTURE & TIME ON TASK

This is a 3-credit hour course. You should expect to spend approximately 10 hours per week working on this course—although this will vary by student and by week. Please note that MSSU policy requires students to submit work on a weekly basis and requires substantive feedback from instructors each week.

## 7.7 CLASS RULES AND NORMS

*It Is Your Grade.* If you are ever confused or unsure about the material or expectations, ask immediately (before assignments are due). The longer you wait, the less opportunity there is to get on track. Grades are determined by the quality of work submitted and the degree to which your performance meets the course requirements. While I empathize with the demands of the world outside of my classroom, only your performance affects your grade.

*Respect is required at all times.* You will interact with the professor and classmates and at times, the subject matter may be controversial and the discussions provocative. We will maintain a respectful environment at all times. You are encouraged to express your opinions and engage your classmates; however, all interactions must be done in a respectful manner. This course is an academic exercise, and disrespect and hostility will not be tolerated.

# 8 UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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## 8.1 UNIVERSITY DATES & DEADLINES

- August 29 Drop/Add Fees & Late Registration Charges Begin
- September 2 Last Day for Full Refund of Charges
- September 5 Dismissal for Labor Day
- September 14 Withdrawal after this Date No Refund of Charges
- October 17-18 Fall Break
- November 23 Dismissal for Thanksgiving Holiday
- December 5 Last Day to Withdraw from a Class with a “W”
- December 9 Last Day of Classes
- December 12 Final Examinations
- December 17 Commencement

## 8.2 BASIC NEEDS STATEMENT



Students experiencing personal or academic distress, food insecurity, and/or difficulty navigating campus resources are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs (417.625.9392 / [studentaffairs@mssu.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@mssu.edu)) for support. If you are uncomfortable making this contact, please notify your instructor so they can assist you in locating the needed resources.

Students who are experiencing challenges securing food for themselves and their families, and who believe this may affect their performance in this course, are encouraged to visit the Lion Co-op, which is located in the MSSU Residential Life Emergency Shelter and is open three times a week. Students are also encouraged to contact the Student Life and Conduct Office (BSC 347, 417.625.9531), ACTS (Hearnes 314, 417.625.9324), and/or your instructor for assistance in securing additional resources. Follow the Lion Co-Op on Facebook.

### **8.3 DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT**

If you are an individual with a disability and require an accommodation for this class, please notify the instructor or the Coordinator of Student Disability Services, at the Student Success Center 417.659.3725.

### **8.4 INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT / COURSE DELIVERY**

The teaching format for MSSU classes is subject to change at the university's discretion. Students should be prepared to handle alternative or online formats, if they should become necessary.

### **8.5 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Missouri Southern State University is committed to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Academic work is evaluated on the assumption that the work presented is the student's own, unless designated otherwise. Submitting work that is not one's own is unacceptable and is considered a serious violation of University policy. Cheating is a serious offense that invalidates the purpose of a university education. Any student who takes credit for the work of another person, offers or accepts assistance beyond that allowed by an instructor, or uses unauthorized sources for a test or assignment is cheating. Students must be conscious of their responsibilities as scholars, to learn to discern what is included in plagiarism as well as in other breaches of the Student Handbook and must know and practice the specifications for citations in scholarly work. When dealing with cases of academic dishonesty, the course instructor may choose to use the campus judicial system; this includes filing an incident report with the Dean of Students, who may act on the report by issuing a written warning or by recommending disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion. Penalties for academic dishonesty may include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate.

### **8.6 REPETITION OF COURSES**

Students may only receive credit value for a repeated course once. Students may repeat courses in which grades 'F, D, C, B, U, LP, or P' have been earned. When a course is repeated, the highest grade will be used when computing GPAs. The grade of B is considered higher than P for repeating purposes. Transfer courses may be repeated if Missouri Southern offers the same course. Once a degree is earned, a student is no longer eligible to exclude the grade of the first course in their GPA.

### **8.7 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND TITLE IX STATEMENT**

Missouri Southern State University emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all persons and adheres to a strict non-discrimination policy regarding the treatment of individual faculty, staff, students, third parties on campus, and applicants for employment and admissions. In accord with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally protected class, in employment or in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University, including, but not limited to, athletics, instruction, grading, the awarding of student financial aid, recruitment, admissions, and housing. Questions, concerns, and reports about Title IX, including sexual misconduct or pregnancy educational planning, should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator in the Student Affairs Office at 417.625.9532.

I will seek to keep information private to the greatest extent possible. However, as an instructor, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred related to Title IX. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting a counselor in the Advising, Counseling, and Testing Services Office (ACTS) at 417.625.9324. Crime reports to law enforcement can be made at 417.623.3131.

## **8.8 ACADEMIC IMPACT FOR UNIVERSITY-SPONSORED ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC ABSENCES**

Students participating in University sponsored academic and athletic events are considered representatives of the University and scheduled activities/competitions resulting in a missed class may be considered excused absences. Missed classes qualify as excused absences if the student informs the instructor(s) in advance, is responsible for all information, tests, materials and assignments, and completes assigned work prior to the departure, unless the instructor has agreed to other arrangements.

Faculty are encouraged to work with students, whenever possible, to facilitate their participation in University sponsored academic and athletic events; however, in some cases, it is not possible to replicate missed course content. In these cases, students may need to attend class. Whenever possible, students participating in University sponsored academic and athletic events should work with their advisor to create a schedule that will avoid missed class time.

Students should not be penalized if absent from a test, lecture, lab or other activity because of an excused absence. Policies should be fair and equitable in application. For example, excused absences should not be penalized with point reductions or require students utilize the dropped grade option for a University sponsored activity or athletic event. Inclement weather and other factors may preclude a student's ability to provide notification in advance and/or to complete assigned work prior to departure or return to campus. It may be necessary to provide make-up opportunities in these cases.

No class time shall be missed for practices or home events except for time required to prepare or warm-up before the activity/competition. Logistics necessary for home activities or competitions will vary by activity/sport so students and instructors should collaborate to handle this missed class time as part of the absence if possible. For away competitions students shall not miss class prior to 30 minutes before the scheduled time of departure.

Students who will miss class due to participation will identify themselves to their instructors at the beginning of each semester using the approved documentation and provide a schedule with departure times to identify class meetings in conflict with event dates. In addition, the student is responsible for reminding the instructor by e-mail and/or in person of each upcoming absence. The student who fails to properly communicate with her/his instructor in this regard may be penalized for an absence per the course syllabi. The amount of lead time for upcoming absences should be discussed by the instructor and student as this may vary with the situation. Sponsors and coaches are asked to confirm an accurate roster of students traveling for each event. Students who are unable to participate or have not been cleared to play should attend class.

## **8.9 COPYRIGHT STATEMENT (REQUIRED FOR ONLINE COURSES)**

You are encouraged to use the materials from these courses to learn. You can listen, read, view and interact with the pages. You can print them out for your own use. You may not, however, let others not registered in the courses hear audio, view or read pages, either on the screen or printed out. You may not make copies of these copyrighted and all rights reserved materials electronically or optically without express permission from the copyright holder. You may not incorporate these copyrighted materials or derivatives into other works. The copyright includes the course artwork. Some portions of the courses use material from other copyrighted material. These materials are noted and are used with permission of the author, or under compliance with federal guidelines. You are encouraged to use materials you create as part of the course; however, you may not use materials created by others taking the course without their written permission. This includes but is not limited to written assignments submitted to the instructor, postings to discussion groups or any online comments or other collaborative events. MSSU will not use any of your work for purposes other than your learning without getting your written permission. If we use your materials with your permission, we will credit your work if you so desire.

## **8.10 COURSE INTERACTION (REQUIRED FOR ONLINE COURSES)**

Students can expect responses to emails within 24 hours, Monday – Friday @ noon. If you do not receive a response within 24-48 hours, feel welcome to send a second email to follow up – it is possible your message was overlooked or

accidentally deleted. Scores and feedback on quizzes will generally be available within 72 hours. Scores and feedback on homework and exams will generally be available within 2-5 days of the due date. The exact timeline will depend upon the length and complexity of the activity being reviewed, and the amount of feedback that is appropriate. Feedback will be shared via Blackboard (written or audio) or via email. You are encouraged to follow up on any feedback with an appointment for a video chat.

## 9 COURSE SCHEDULE

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A detailed course schedule with a list of assignments, due dates, and exam dates is available on Blackboard. Please note that this schedule is subject to change – if anything changes, an updated schedule will be posted on Blackboard. I do not expect you to memorize due dates – I certainly do not – this is why there is a schedule.

- Part 1: Constitutional Principles
- Part 2: Political Institutions
- Part 3: Political Behavior & Policy

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY - COURSE SYLLABUS

Week	Date	Assignment / Task
1	23 Aug	Spend some time familiarizing yourself with Blackboard
		Read the syllabus carefully - Learn how to ace the course
		Login to the ebook & Vantage via Blackboard - Learn to access the book
		Complete the PSC 120 Pre-Test
		Native American Population Misconceptions (Video)
		How Prostitutes Settled the Wild West (Video)
		Log into Yellowdig & submit post (worth 100 points for full semester)
	25 Aug	Read Chapter 1 Politics & Citizenship – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes
		What is the Tragedy of the Commons? (Video)
		Messed-Up Story of How Hawaii Became a State (Video)
2	30 Aug	Read Chapter 2 The US Founding – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes
		Post on Yellowdig
	01 Sep	How the Continental Army Was Actually Formed (Video)
		Why Wasn't the BOR Included in the Constitution? (Video)
		How is power divided in the US government? (Video)
3	06 Sep	Read Chapter 3 Civil Liberties & Civil Rights – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes
		A 3-minute guide to the Bill of Rights (Video)
		Freedom of the Press: Crash Course (Video)
	08 Sep	Post on Yellowdig
		<b>Elected Officials Assignment</b>
		Freedom of Religion: Crash Course (Video)
		Due Process of Law: Crash Course (Video)
		Complete the Practice Test (located in the Week 5 folder)
4	13 Sep	Post on Yellowdig
		Equal Protection: Crash Course (Video)
		Sex Discrimination: Crash Course (Video)
	15 Sep	Reconstruction and 1876: Crash Course (Video)
		Civil Rights and the 1950s: Crash Course (Video)
5	20 Sep	Post on Yellowdig
		Exam 1 Available Friday, September 16 – Friday, September 23
	22 Sep	<b>Reminder:</b> Chapter 1-3 Knowledge Checks, Video Activities, & Chapter Tests are accepted late through Friday, September 23
<b>* End of Part I Constitutional Principles *</b>		

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY - COURSE SYLLABUS

Week	Date	Assignment / Task
6	27 Sep	Post on Yellowdig
		Read Chapter 4 The Legislative Branch – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes
		How a Bill Becomes Federal Law (Video)
	29 Sep	Congressional Elections: Crash Course (Video)
		Congressional Decisions: Crash Course (Video)
		Congressional Committees: Crash Course (Video)
		Gerrymandering: Crash Course Government (Video)
7	04 Oct	<b>Elective Assignment Due</b>
		Post on Yellowdig
		Read Chapter 5 The Executive Branch – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes
		Inventing the American Presidency (Video)
		Why the Electoral College Ruins Democracy (Video)
	06 Oct	Bureaucracy Basics: Crash Course (Video)
		How do executive orders work? (Video)
		How Does Impeachment Work? (Video)
		The Spoils System Explained: US History Review (Video)
	8	11 Oct
Post on Yellowdig		
13 Oct		Mass Incarceration, Visualized (Video)
		Legal System Basics: Crash Course (Video)
		How do US Supreme Court Justices Get Appointed? (Video)
		Judicial Review: Crash Course (Video)
9		18 Oct
	Last day to submit Elective Assignment with no penalty	
	20 Oct	Exam 2 Available Friday, Oct 14 – Friday, Oct 21 Reminder: Chapter 4-6 Knowledge Checks, Video Activities, & Chapter Tests accepted late through Friday, October 21
<b>* End of Part 2 Political Institutions *</b>		



MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY - COURSE SYLLABUS

Week	Date	Assignment / Task	
10	25 Oct	Read Chapter 7 Parties & Interest Groups – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes	
	27 Oct	Political Parties: Crash Course (Video)	
		Post on Yellowdig	
11	01 Nov	Read Chapter 8 Public Opinion, Campaigns, & Elections – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes	
		Post on Yellowdig	
	03 Nov	One Person, One Vote Course (Video)	
		The Fight for the Right... (Video)	
		Voting on Tuesday- How is this still a thing (Video)	
		How Statistics Can be Misleading (Video)	
Women’s Suffrage: Crash Course (Video)			
12	08 Nov	Read Chapter 9 Media & Political Communication – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes	
		Post on Yellowdig	
	10 Nov	How to Choose Your News (Video)	
		How False News Can Spread (Video)	
		How to Spot a Misleading Graph (Video)	
13	15 Nov	Read Chapter 10 Domestic & Foreign Policy – including Knowledge Checks, Data Activities, Video Activities, & Chapter Quizzes	
		Post on Yellowdig	
	17 Nov	The Story Behind the Berlin Wall (Video)	
		Fascism Explained (Video)	
US Federal Budget Process (Video)			
14	22 Nov	<b>No Class – American Model United Nations Conference</b>	
	24 Nov	<b>No Class - Thanksgiving</b> Chapter 7-10 Knowledge Checks, Video Activities, & Chapter Tests – <b>and</b> – the Elected Officials Assignment – <b>and</b> – the Elective Assignment (w/ 20% penalty) <i>All are accepted late through Thanksgiving</i>	
15	29 Nov	<b>Constitutional Design Simulation</b>	
	01 Dec		
16	06 Dec		
	08 Dec		
17	09 Dec		Makeup Exams Available Sunday, December 4 – Friday, December 9
	12 Dec		PSC 120 Post-Test Available Monday, December 5 – Tuesday, December 13 @ 1230 pm • <i>Completion is required to access the final exam</i>
		Exam 3 – Final Exam - Available Beginning Friday, December 9 <i>Note: Final exam periods are set by the university</i> • Online Class: Due Tuesday, December 13 @ 1230 pm • 1100 am Class: Due Monday, December 12 @ 300 pm • 930 am Class: Due Tuesday, December 13 @ 1230 pm	