

**PLSC 112-14 Winter 2016**

**MW** 2:00-3:15  
Pray-Harrold 420  
[CRN 20704]

[Credit Hours: 3]

**American Government**

Dr. Henschen  
601Q Pray Harrold  
Hours: MW 12:30-1:30 (office)/by  
email/and by appointment  
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In this course we will examine American political institutions and processes at the national level. We will discuss the context of American politics and look at how individuals and groups participate in the political system. We will also examine the behavior of political actors in government institutions and explore the making of public policy. A recurring theme will be the complexity that characterizes American politics. This semester, special attention will be given to the run-up to the 2016 presidential elections.

**Book: (Required)** Sidlow, Edward and Beth Henschen. *GOVT 7*. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2016, 2014.

**Reading, Assignments, and Exam Schedule**

**January**

- 6/Wednesday Politics and the Art of Governing
- 11/Monday Government, Politics, and Ideology—ch.1
- 13Wednesday Creating the Constitution: An Exercise in Compromise—ch.2
- 18/Monday Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No Class
- 20/Wednesday Enduring Constitutional Principles—ch.2  
Dividing Power in the Political Arena—ch.3
- 25/Monday **Quiz #1** **10 points**  
Federalism: Part of the Context of American Politics—ch.3
- 27/Wednesday Civil Liberties: Balancing Interests/Drawing Lines—ch.4  
*Shouting Fire* (DVD)

**February**

- 1/Monday Telling the Story of Civil Rights—ch.5
- 3/Wednesday Groups as Political Participants—ch.6

<b>8/Monday</b>	<b>Exam I</b>	(chapters 1-6)	<b>60 points</b>
10/Wednesday	Noisy Politics and the Two Party System—ch.7		
15/Monday	Noisy Politics and Voting Behavior—ch.8		
17/Wednesday	<b>Quiz #2</b>		<b>10 points</b>
	The Constant Campaign: Whose Idea Was This?—ch.9		
<b>22/Monday-Friday/26</b>	<b>Winter Recess</b>		
29/Monday	The Electoral College: Think World Series (or Tennis)—ch.9		
<b>March</b>			
2/Wednesday	The Media and Televised Campaign Ads—ch.10		
7/Monday	Electoral Politics in the Twenty-First Century		
<b>9/Wednesday</b>	<b>Exam II</b>	<b>(chapters 7-10)</b>	<b>70 points</b>
14/Monday	Congress: The Institution—ch.11		
16/Wednesday	Congress: The Legislative Process—ch.11		
21/Monday	Presidential Roles and Job Descriptions—ch.12		
23/Wednesday	The Expansion of Presidential Power—But Just How Powerful is the President?—ch.12		
28/Monday	Bureaucratic Politics—ch.13		
30/Wednesday	Courts—ch.14		
<b>April</b>			
4/Monday	Judges—ch.14		
6/Wednesday	<b>Quiz #3</b>		<b>10 points</b>
	<b>*Elections Journal Due</b>		<b>60 points</b>
11/Monday	Foreign Policy and the Art of Governing—ch.16		
13/Wednesday	Presidential Politics—2016		

18/Monday	My Favorite Color Is Gray	
<b>20/Wednesday</b>	<b>Study Day</b>	
<b>22/Friday</b>	<b>Final Exam 1:30-3:00</b> <b>(chs. 11-14, 16)</b>	<b>80 points</b>

**Summary of Graded Exercises:**

January 25/Monday	Quiz #1	10 points
February 8/Monday	Exam I (chapters 1-6)	60 points
February 17/Wednesday	Quiz #2	10 points
March 9/Wednesday	Exam II (chapters 7-10)	70 points
April 6/Wednesday	Quiz #3	10 points
April 6/Wednesday	*Elections Journal Due	60 points
April 22, 2016/Friday (1:30-3:00)	Final Exam (chs. 11-14, 16)	80 points

**Grading scale:**

282-300 points	A	94-100%
270-281	A-	90-93
261-269	B+	87-89
249-260	B	83-86
240-248	B-	80-82
231-239	C+	77-79
219-230	C	73-76
210-218	C-	70-72
201-209	D+	67-69
189-200	D	63-66
180-188	D-	60-62
Below 180	F	Below 60%

Depending on the circumstances, any make up exams that are necessary/warranted may be given during the last week of classes. The exam format may be different.

Class attendance, good note taking, and careful reading are essential to doing well in this course. It is also important to *be present*—to be fully engaged during lectures and in class discussions. Laptops closed, phones put away...

Check your university e-mail frequently for announcements related to class.

**Additional information regarding classroom matters will be discussed in class.**

In addition to the articulated course specific policies and expectations, students are responsible for understanding all applicable University guidelines, policies, and procedures. The EMU Student Handbook is the primary resource provided to students to ensure that they have access to all University policies, support resources, and students' rights and responsibilities. Changes may be made to the EMU Student Handbook whenever necessary, and shall be effective immediately, and/or as of the date on which a policy is formally adopted, and/or on the date specified in the amendment. *Please note:* Electing not to access the link provided below does not absolve a student of responsibility. For questions about any university policy, procedure, practice, or resource, please contact the Office of the Ombuds: 248 Student Center, [734.487.0074](tel:734.487.0074), [emu\\_ombuds@emich.edu](mailto:emu_ombuds@emich.edu), or visit the website: [www.emich.edu/ombuds](http://www.emich.edu/ombuds)

## UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

115 Halle Library

734-487-0694

<http://www.emich.edu/uwc>

### WINTER 2016 SYLLABUS TEXT

The **University Writing Center** (115 Halle Library; 487-0694) offers one-to-one writing consulting for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students can make appointments or drop in between the hours of **10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays**. The UWC opens for the Winter 2016 semester on **Monday, January 11** and will close on **Tuesday, April 19**. Students are encouraged to come to the UWC at any stage of the writing process.

The UWC also has several satellite locations across campus (in Owen, Marshall, Pray-Harrold, and Mark Jefferson). These satellites provide drop-in writing support to students in various colleges and programs. **Satellite locations and hours can be found on the UWC web site:** <http://www.emich.edu/uwc>.

UWC writing consultants also work in the **Academic Projects Center** (116 Halle Library), which offers drop-in consulting for students on writing, research, and technology-related issues. The APC is open

**11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays**. Additional information about the APC can be found at <http://www.emich.edu/apc>.

Students seeking writing support at any location of the University Writing Center should bring a draft of their writing (along with any relevant instructions or rubrics) to work on during the consultation.

Go to <http://www.emich.edu/uwc> for information about the university writing center.

**Key Dates:**

January 6: classes begin

January 12: last day to add a class on line (after that until March 7 requires department permission)

January 15: deadline to submit proposals to be included in the April 1 [Undergraduate Symposium](#)

January 18: MLK Holiday (campus events; no classes)

February 22-28: winter break (no classes)

March 23: last day to withdraw from a class with a "W" grade

March 25-27: spring recess (university closed)

April 19: last day of classes

April 21-26: final exams

April 24: commencement

**Deadlines**

1/12/16 Last date to add courses via the web (a)

3/7/16 Last date to add courses with departmental authorization

1/15/16 Last date for 100% tuition refund (individual or total withdraw from term)

3/23/16 Last date for individual class withdrawal (with W grades) - No Refund

2/2/16 (b) Last date for 50% tuition refund (total withdrawal only) with W grades

3/7/16 (b) Last date for 25% tuition refund (total withdrawal only) with W grades

4/19/16 (b) Last date for total withdrawal from term (with W grades) - No Refund

1/15/16 Last date to declare pass/fail grading option or select to audit a course

4/19/16 Last date to remove pass/fail grading option and receive letter grade

**Codes**

(a) Initial registration occurring on or after the Part of Term start date will incur a one-time \$140 late registration fee

(b) Date applicable only if student's classes are ALL within the same Part of Term and/or a later starting Part of Term

(\*\*) A written request must be faxed to the Office of Records and Registration at 734.487.6808 before midnight

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This course (PLSC 112) provides students with critical exposure to the methods used by social scientists in creating knowledge. Political Science 112 provides a thorough grounding in American government. It also provides a strong introduction to the discipline of political science. In this course,

students gain exposure to how knowledge is generated in the social sciences through the lens of one content area, that of American government. Through material covered in the course, students gain practice in asking important questions about the political world and answering them using the methods practiced in this social science discipline.

Completion of this course fulfills a requirement in the Knowledge of the Disciplines/Social Sciences: In Knowledge of the Disciplines courses, students will

Acquire introductory knowledge about the discipline.

Develop questions for inquiry that reflect an understanding of the discipline(s) in which they are asked.

Learn how knowledge is developed and disseminated in particular disciplines.

In Social Science courses, students will

Acquire an understanding of social science methods and of how they are used to engage in the systematic study of society and culture.

Understand and compare formal and informal social and political structures, organizations, and institutions.

Explore and understand power relationships and the impact of social change on different groups and on society in general.

Develop an appreciation of different interpretations of contemporary issues, institutions, or structures.

Use social science methods and content to interpret and analyze data and reports in the media and to make informed decisions regarding local, national, and international issues.

Use basic social scientific research techniques to examine and present information in a clear and concise manner.

Understand the relation between qualitative and quantitative research.

These objectives will be addressed through our examination of the historical and constitutional context of American government, the evolving nature of civil liberties and civil rights, the mobilization of political participation by interest groups and political parties, the behavior of individuals in the political arena, the measurement of public opinion, the role of the media, the power and procedures of national governmental institutions and agencies, and an assessment of the processes by which domestic and foreign policy is made.

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\*Elections Journal

Keep up with what's happening in the 2016 presidential elections cycle. Make regular entries (once or twice a week) in a journal about the candidates and their campaigns, including poll numbers, fund raising, highlights of speeches given, debate performances, caucus and primary results, and media coverage during this pre-nomination phase. Be ready to share something you've seen or read when class discussions turn to the race for the presidency.

Your journal should include separate sections for each of the topics mentioned above, and any additional information or insights you find useful, interesting, or amusing. Entries can be hand written or typed. The important point is to follow the news about the race for the nomination and to become familiar with the candidates and with what we learn about them as well as about the electoral process from the campaign. Include personal reflections about the candidates and the process at several points throughout your journal.

April 6/Wednesday

\*Elections Journal Due

60 points

#### **SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR ELECTIONS JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT**

For a comprehensive collection of election polls, go to the Real Clear Politics Web site at [www.realclearpolitics.com/polls](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/polls) .

The Center for Responsive Politics Web site, [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org) , is an excellent source for information about who's contributing what amounts to which candidates.

For polling data and state maps showing election results over time, go to [www.270towin.com](http://www.270towin.com) .

The ElectoralVote Web site tracks political polls for U.S. federal elections, including state-by-state polls. Go to [www.electoral-vote.com/](http://www.electoral-vote.com/) . You will also find additional useful information here.

Ballotpedia (at [ballotpedia.org](http://ballotpedia.org)) is an excellent site for information about the candidates and their positions on policy issues, among other useful material.

FactCheck.org is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania that monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by candidates and other major players in American politics.

Television and newspaper coverage:

CNN MSNBC FOX News

ABC NBC CBS

*New York Times* *Washington Post* *Wall Street Journal*

*Des Moines Register* *Union Leader* (New Hampshire)

You can also enter the candidates' names in a search engine to access relevant newspaper and magazine articles, as well as clips from television. Social media sites are also worth exploring.

#### Preliminary Debate Schedule

Jan. 14, 2016/Republican debate – Fox Business/Location – North Charleston Coliseum and Performing Arts Center, North Charleston, South Carolina

Jan. 17, 2016/Democratic debate – NBC/Congressional Black Caucus Institute/Location – Charleston, South Carolina

Jan. 28, 2016/Republican debate – Fox News/Location – Iowa Events Center, Des Moines, Iowa

Feb. 6, 2016/Republican debate – ABC News/IJReview/Location – St. Anselm College, Manchester, New Hampshire

Feb. 11, 2016/Democratic debate – PBS/Location – Wisconsin

Feb. 13, 2016/Republican debate – CBS News/Time – 9 p.m. ET/Location – South Carolina

Feb. 26, 2016/Republican debate – NBC/Telemundo/National Review/Location – Houston, Texas

March 9, 2016/Democratic debate – Univision/The Washington Post/Location – Miami, Florida

March 10, 2016/Republican debate – CNN/Salem Radio/Location – Florida

March 2016/Republican debate – Fox News (pending)

Caucus and Primary Schedules Will Be Highlighted in Class