



POL 51-13 American Government and Politics

Kingsborough Community College

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Class Website:

Weekly In-Person Meeting: Thursdays, 11:30-1

Students Hours: Thursday 1:30-2:30 on campus, Wednesdays 11:30-12:30 on zoom, and by appointment

TLDR Syllabus Summary¹:

- [Read](#) and annotate our textbook every week according to the schedule on our class site, and watch linked videos
- Write [1 blog post](#) each week.
- Participate in our in-person class each week on Thursdays
- Choose which assignments you want to do and do them throughout semester- they are all explained on the Adventures Overview. **You don't have to do all of them!**
- For every assignment (except the exams), **write a self-grading assessment**- assigning yourself a number of points and explaining how your work fulfilled the requirements of the assignment for that amount of points.
- **All due dates are flexible**, and you will grade yourself on everything (except the exams)
- We are learning here together this semester, so if I can be of any assistance, email me!

The Course

Welcome to American Government! This course is designed to provide an introduction to the major institutions of American federal government as well as the most important political processes and theories of political science more generally. We will use this knowledge to consider some of the major controversies, criticisms, and suggestions for reform in American politics. The learning objectives for this class are:

1. Students will be able to explain the primary organs and functioning of the US government,
2. Students will be able to identify the mechanisms for change in policymaking.
3. Students will get more comfortable and competent at reading and writing about American Government
4. Civic Engagement: Students will demonstrate understanding of how the process, principles, and structure of governments and political institutions affect individuals in society
5. Your personal learning goal(s) for the semester:

¹ Please note that links to the files for each section's specific documents, like the schedule and Assignments Overview, would be included throughout the syllabus to make it easier for students to use the syllabus and find what they need, but they have been removed from this copy for sharing purposes.



This is a hybrid class, which means we will be meeting together once each week in person, and you will spend the rest of the week reading, writing blogs, and doing assignments related to our course topics. This course takes an open pedagogy approach to teaching, and will use modified self-grading for all written assessments. We are still in an ongoing pandemic, and you are all adults with complex lives and needs, so all due dates are flexible- you can do your work in the ways that work best for you.

Adventures

The learning activities available to you this semester are all available on the Assignments Overview. You do not have to do all of them! Pick 100 points (or so) worth of things you'd like to do, then plan out how and when you'll do them; write this up as your first blog post, which you'll revisit at the middle and end of the course. Bloggng and Class Meetings/Annotation are mandatory, but the rest is up to you.

The Grading

All of the learning activities in this class, except the exams, are **self-graded**. That means, along with each assignment, you will give yourself a grade (out of the points possible for the assignment), and write an explanation of why you assigned that grade to yourself. This explanation must include an analysis of how successful you have been in fulfilling the requirements of the assignment. If I agree with your analysis, that's the grade you'll get. I do reserve the right to correct grades that do not seem accurate, so make sure your self-grading is rigorous and reflective of each adventure's requirements (not just effort put in). Add up all of the points you have earned and convert them to a letter grade using simple math and the letter grade allocation from the student handbook, reprinted below:

97-100 = A+	77-79 = C+
93-96 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	66-69 = D
83-86 = B	00-65 = F
80-82 = B-	

Course Policies and Resources

1. **Access-Ability Services** <https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/access-ability/homepage.html> It is the policy of Kingsborough Community College and of this instructor to provide all reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require accommodations for any disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other), or have any questions about accommodations, whether you need them, or how to get them, please contact the Kingsborough Community College Access-Ability Services (AAS) at 718-368-5145 or aas@kbcc.cuny.edu. Please let me know the accommodations needed as soon as possible so I can make any necessary changes.
2. **Support Services** Take advantage of the many, many opportunities for support in your development as a student available at Kingsborough. **All of the offices/services on**



campus have remote assistance available. Some offices on campus that may be helpful to you include (but are not limited to):

- a. **KCC Library:** [KBCC library](#)
 - b. **Access Resource Center** (718-368-5411, [Access Resource Center](#) - benefits screening, winter coat and clothing closet, resource center, legal and financial consultations)
 - c. **Food Pantry-** Several food supports available, including grab and go, weekly pantry bags, and weekly produce bags [Food Resources](#).
 - d. **The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation Student Emergency Grant Fund-[Student Emergency Funds](#)** provides financial assistance to KCC students who are currently enrolled, are in good academic standing and are facing short-term financial emergencies (examples: job loss, illness, or death of family member/self, need for glasses or dental work, homelessness or impending homelessness, theft of books/computer, etc).
 - e. **Counseling Center**(718-368-5975 [Counseling Center](#))
 - f. **Center for Academic Writing Success**, 718-368-5118, [CAWS](#))
 - g. **IT Helpdesk:** [IT Helpdesk](#) 718-368-6679 or helpdesk@kbcc.cuny.edu
 - h. **Health Services** (718-368-5684 [Health Center](#))
 - i. **Women's Center** (718-368-4700 [Women's Center](#))
 - j. More Student Resources are listed here: [Current Student Resources](#)
3. **Courtesy:** Students must treat each other with respect. **All opinions must be backed up by evidence from reputable academic sources.** Some of the topics we will cover may be traumatic for different students because of their past experiences. If you anticipate or are experiencing any such difficulties with course materials or assignments, please email me as soon as possible so an alternative assignment can be arranged.
4. **Preferred Gender Pronoun and Name:** I affirm all forms of gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to inform me on your preferred gender pronoun or if you do not have a pronoun. The gender-neutral bathrooms are located in the following places on campus: A117, A119, L303, L504, M436, T4 154, T8 108B, V211, and V212. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. For more information, please visit [Protecting the Rights of Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students – CUNY Newswire](#)
5. **Commons & Email:** A copy of the syllabus and all assignments and course documents will be posted to our class site on the CUNY Academic Commons; other information (links to articles of interest or additional readings) may be posted as well. If you would like to write on the Commons (on our class site or your own site) you will need a CUNY email address to work on the commons, so please get it sorted out as soon as possible. You can follow the instructions to get into your KCC email [here](#) and let me know if you have any problems.
6. **Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is of the utmost importance- this is your learning, and you must be responsible for it. I am here to help in any way I can- if you find yourself tempted to engage in academic dishonesty for any reason, please discuss it with me, as there is likely a better option available. Nevertheless, cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including academic and disciplinary sanctions (i.e. failure or suspension).



Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, having other people do your coursework, buying prepackaged or custom answers to papers, tests, or assignments, and working with other students on class projects when not specifically permitted to do so. Keep in mind, if you can find a place to buy a paper/answers on the Internet, your professors probably can find the same place, because we have the Internet too. You can familiarize yourself with the official KBCC's official [Academic Integrity](#) policy.

Schedule & Readings

The schedule of topics and readings is on the course schedule.

The required textbook is based on Krutz et al (2022). American Government 3e from Openstax. It is free and posted on the course website; it is also available [here](#). Make sure you do all of the required reading each week and annotate the reading in our private annotation group, with questions, thoughts, and suggestions. There is a series of Crash Course Videos on YouTube that are quite relevant (and linked throughout the text)- the videos are available [here](#). The interactive slides for the entire semester will be linked to our class site; you should work your way through them each week. They are meant to *assist* your comprehension of your reading- *not to replace* your reading or participation.