

**WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**  
**Phoenix Campus**  
**School of Behavioral and Social Sciences**

*Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, lifelong learning, and service to God and humankind.*

**POLS 2301 WINTR-CMP2009PH06 Federal and State Government**

**TERM:** Winter term, 2009

**Instructor:** Thomas Ware

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**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Class Time and Location:** 5:30-9:40 p.m. Friday November 13, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Saturday November 14, 5:30 – 9:40 p.m. Friday January 29, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday January 30 plus online from November 8 to February 13. No classes online during the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years

**Catalog Description:** This is a survey course covering such topics as the national and state constitutions, institutional structures and processes, political parties, elections, civil liberties and civil rights.

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the organization, structure and functions of the American and Texas systems of government and politics. We will examine the origin and purpose of constitutional government, the distribution of political power, the systems of national and state government, the nature of federalism, civil rights and civil liberties, the role and future of American political parties, the nature and effectiveness of elections, the process and consequences of policy making, and the nature of political change. Also, when it is appropriate, we will discuss the discipline of political science itself (i.e., the approaches, methods, and assumptions that constitute the “science” of political study). The particular orientation to our analysis and discussion will be provided by the current context of political activity and change in America, although the general framework of discussion for this course is the meaning and practice of American democracy.

**There is no prerequisite for this course**

**Textbook:** American Government and Politics Today, the Essentials, by Barbara Bardes, Mack C. Shelley and Steffen W. Schmidt, 2009/2010 Edition.

**Course Outcome Competencies:** At the conclusion of the course the student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the state and national constitutions, the major institutions of state and national government, the national policymaking process, the electoral system, federalism, civil liberties and civil rights.:

**Attendance:** Students enrolled at one of the University’s external campuses should make every effort to attend all class meetings. All absences must be explained to the instructor, who will then determine whether the omitted work may be made up. When a student reaches that number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will so advise the student and file an unsatisfactory progress report with the campus dean. Any student who misses 25 percent or more of the regularly scheduled class meetings may receive a grade of F in the course. Additional attendance policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the University’s attendance policy.

**Additional attendance policies:** Students must also participate in the online discussion forums each week.

Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. If you are unable to attend any class meeting, you need to contact me as soon as possible. Except in an emergency, waiting until after class to inform me is unacceptable. You should treat attendance at this class just as you would treat attendance at work; just as you let your supervisor promptly know of illness or other problems, you should do the same for this class. Prompt communication with me allows us to make appropriate arrangements for completion of assignments.

**Service for the Disabled:** It is University policy that no otherwise qualified disabled person be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the University. Students should inform the instructor of existing disabilities at the first class meeting.

### **Course requirements:**

Reading: You will need to read the chapters in the textbook as scheduled below.

Current events: In odd numbered weeks you will need to find an article in the news about political activities, write a brief summary of the article and then post your summary and the article in Blackboard by Wednesday. By Saturday of each week, you will need to make at least one substantive response comment to another student's summary.

Videos: In even numbered weeks, there will be a video assigned to watch. You will then write a summary and give your opinion of the video, and post this info in Blackboard by Wednesday of each week. By Saturday of each week, you will need to make at least one substantive response comment to another student's summary.

Reflections: Each week, after the online activities, you will write a short essay giving your reflections on the one most interesting thing about our government and politics that you learned during the week. It may be something from the textbook, from our discussions online or in class, from any of the other assignments or from something that happened outside of the class. This needs to be emailed to me by Saturday each week.

Book report: You will need to find a non-fiction book about our government. I will provide some suggested books, but you should choose a book that interests you. For example, if you are interested in becoming a paralegal or a lawyer, you might be interested in learning more about how our courts operate. An interesting selection would be, *The Supreme Court*, by former Chief Justice William Rehnquist. This book gives an excellent history of the Supreme Court as well as explaining how the court works. You will need to choose a book and submit a one paragraph written proposal by Wednesday of week 3. You will then read the book and prepare a written book report and post it in Blackboard by Wednesday of week 11. Then you will need to post a substantive comment about another student's report by Saturday of week 11.

Exams: There will be a midterm exam in week 5 and a final exam in week 10. Both will be open book and you will have the entire week to complete the exam.

### **Method of determining course grade:**

Current events: 2% each (20 points each), total 10% (100 points total)  
Reflections: 1% each (10 points each), total 10% (100 points total)  
Videos: 2% each (20 points each), total 10% (100 points total)  
Book Report: 20% (200 points)  
Exam: 20% each (200 points each), total 40% (400 points total)  
Textbook discussions: 1 % each (10 points each), 8% (80 points)  
Participation: 2% (20 points)

The University has a standard grade scale:

A = 90-100 (900-1000 points), B = 80-89 (800-899 points), C = 70-79 (700-799 points), D = 60-69 (600-699 points), F= below 60 (600 points), W = Withdrawal, WP = withdrew passing, WF = withdrew failing, I = incomplete. An incomplete may be given within the last two weeks of a long term or within the last two days of a micro-term to a student who is passing, but has not completed a term paper, examination, or other required work for reasons beyond the student's control. A grade of "incomplete" is changed if the work required is completed prior to the last day of the next long (10 to 15 weeks) term, unless the instructor designates an earlier date for completion. If the work is not completed by the appropriate date, the I is converted to an F.

**Instructor's policy on Academic Dishonesty:** All assignments are expected to be your own work. By putting your name on any assignment, you are certifying that the work was done by you without the assistance of any other person. If I determine that you have submitted an assignment in violation of this rule, you will receive a failing grade on that assignment, and depending upon the circumstance, you may receive a grade of F for this course.

**Tentative Schedule:**

- Week 1: Chapter 1, current events #1
- Week 2: Chapters 2-3, video #1
- Week 3: Chapters 4-5, current events #2
- Week 4: Chapters 6-7, video #2
- Week 5: Exam 1, current events #3
- Week 6: Chapters 8-9, video#3
- Week 7: Chapters 10-11, current events #4
- Week 8: Chapters 12-13, video #4
- Week 9: Chapters 14-15, current events #5
- Week 10: Exam 2, video #5
- Week 11: Book report, current events #6