

**West Virginia Government
Political Science 321
West Virginia University
Fall 2012**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 AM to 12 noon and 1 PM to 3 PM
and by appointment
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Course Objectives:

This web-based course is designed to provide you with a thorough understanding of the historical development and contemporary structures, functions, and operations of West Virginia's state and local governments. Special attention is focused on the state's capacity to provide goods and services, its relationship with the national government, the state executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, and contemporary public policy issues facing West Virginia's state and local government officials.

This course is appropriate for students from all academic disciplines that are interested in learning about West Virginia's political system. As a 300 level course, students are expected to have some, but not extensive, knowledge of American politics and the structure and operations of state and local governments. Although not a formal requirement, students without any knowledge of American politics and governance structures (e.g., how a bill becomes a law, the definition of a bicameral legislature, the basic functions of the institutions of government, etc.) are advised to take POLS 102 before taking this course.

Course Requirements:

This course is presented in a series of weekly readings, written assignments, archived online classroom sessions, and discussions. Each topic includes assigned readings from the texts, supplemental readings (when appropriate) and a clearly defined list of written assignments that includes due dates. The schedule should be followed sequentially (week 1 first, week 2 second, etc.). When appropriate, the topics and assignments also include a list of key concepts, terms, phrases, or theories that must be mastered.

Students are also required to scan the on-line versions of [The Charleston Daily-Mail](#), [The State Journal](#) and [The Charleston Gazette](#) on a weekly basis. These publications provide extensive coverage of the state's political activities and are an excellent source for background material for the assignments. In addition, current events from these publications will be discussed using the WVU eCampus discussion tool.

All students are required to actively participate in on-line discussions. Periodically through the semester (weekly), questions based on the readings will be posted to the discussion board. All students will be expected to regularly participate in class by using the discussion tool to post reactions to each question. In addition, students will be expected to explain and defend their discussion postings to their classmates and me.

All students are also required to listen to the bi-weekly WIMBA classroom lectures. Although there is no formal, scheduled class meeting time, students must listen to an archive of each session within the week to earn attendance points for that session. If you have a conflict, advise me **in advance** and request permission to listen to the archives of the WIMBA classroom session at a later date.

All written assignments are due by **12 midnight local (Morgantown, WV) time**. **The quarterly graded discussions will be assessed at the end of the day on selected Sundays as outlined in the course schedule section of this syllabus.** Note that the WVU eCampus **does not** automatically make time allowances or adjustments if you are in another time zone. Each written assignment must be submitted as an attachment and placed in the appropriate assignment drop box. E-mailed copies of assignments are NOT acceptable. **It is your responsibility to be sure that your assignment arrives on time.** I advise you to allow enough time to compose, upload and submit your assignments. When the system is very busy (such as within 10 or 15 minutes of the due date and time), uploading attachments can become slow. Do not wait until the very last minute to put the assignments in the drop box. **Individual technical problems are not a valid excuse for late assignments or missed discussions.** Once you submit an assignment, **check the contents of the assignment drop box** (using the “submitted” tab) before the assignment due date/time to be certain your document uploaded, attached, and submitted correctly. If the assignment drop box does not contain what you intended, **take back the assignment and resubmit it.** You may take back and resubmit assignments as many times as you want up until the due date/time has passed.

Late assignments will be accepted for up to one day following the original assignment deadline for up to ½ credit. For example, if an assignment is due by Sunday at midnight, it will be accepted until Monday at midnight for up to ½ credit. This is a substantial change from past policy. If you miss the due date/time and one day grace period for any assignment, your grade will be zero (0) for that assignment. This class is designed with many assignments and opportunities to earn points rather than only two or three assignments or exams to allow ample opportunity to recover from a poor grade or late assignment. In addition, **students can earn up to 100 bonus points** by completing and submitting a special optional “bonus” assignment late in the semester to make up for a poor grade or a missed assignment. Given the liberal number of bonus points, makeup opportunities or late submissions for discussions and lectures will **not** be permitted, regardless of the reason for missing the discussion or lecture. Late submission of writing assignments (beyond the one day grace period for up to ½ credit) are at the discretion of the instructor and will not normally be allowed except under extreme circumstances.

Meeting appointments and commitments is part of being a professional – and that’s true for electronic environments, too. Without participating actively and regularly in this class, you cannot perform your job as a student involved in learning. Please note that this online course has an attendance requirement. I expect you to visit the e-classroom a minimum of **three times each week on three separate days** to read the announcements, check the calendar, post comments to the discussion board, interact with me and your fellow students, check e-mail messages, and read the supplemental materials for helpful hints and important explanations about class materials. You may pick the times and days, but you must stay current with the course site. The best way to do this is to log on regularly. The WVU eCampus technology makes it possible for me to track where and how often you visit portions of the course site.

Grading:

Your course grade will be based on the total number of points earned. You can earn up to 100 points for each of the 6 writing assignments. Class participation/discussion in the WVU eCampus classroom is worth up to 200 points (up to 50 points issued quarterly at the end of weeks 4, 8, 12 and 15). WIMBA attendance is worth up to 200 points (up to 25 points per session for each of the 8 sessions).

A	90% - 100%	900-1000 points
B	80% - 89.99%	800-899 points
C	70% - 79.99%	700-799 points
D	60% - 69.99%	600-699 points
F	less than 60%	fewer than 600 points

Writing assignments are worth up to 600 points or 60% of the overall grade
Class discussion/participation is worth up to 200 points or 20% of the overall grade
WIMBA attendance is worth up to 200 points or 20% of the overall grade

NOTE: Copying from the textbook or cutting and pasting sections from web sites or other reference materials or presenting someone else's ideas as your own is plagiarism and will not be tolerated and will result in zero (0) points for that assignment. All writing assignments are expected to be your own original work written specifically for this section of this course this semester.

The basis for grading the written unit assignments and the discussion board postings are explained in detail in the "Discussions and Class Participation" and "Written Assignments" documents in the "Other Resources" folder on the Home Page in the e-classroom and as an addendum to this syllabus. Violation of the discussion "ground rules" will not be tolerated and will result in a warning. **Repeated violators will be subject to dismissal** from the virtual classroom discussions and will be issued an "F" for discussion/participation in the class.

Grade appeals should be made in writing with one week of the time the assignment grades are posted. Requests for exception to the late policy should be made within one week of the original due date on an assignment. Late appeals or late requests for exceptions (such as during the last week of class for a grade on the first assignment or a late/missed first assignment) will not be considered.

It is your responsibility to be sure that assignments arrive on time. **Late assignments will be accepted for up to one day following the original assignment deadline for up to ½ credit.** For example, if an assignment is due by Monday at midnight, it will be accepted until Tuesday at midnight for up to ½ credit. This is a substantial change from past policy. If you miss the due date/time and one day grace period for any assignment, your grade will be zero (0) for that assignment. **No makeup** is permitted for the weekly discussions or the weekly lecture attendance points. Instead, students who miss one or more discussions or lectures should use the optional extra credit opportunity to make up for points lost.

Missed assignments will only be accepted late (beyond the one day grace period for up to ½ credit) in cases when an emergency prevents a student from submitting the assignment on time. If you know or suspect you may have a conflict with an assignment deadline, speak with me in advance of the scheduled date and you **may** be able to negotiate a special arrangement. Should you miss an assignment, contact me as soon as possible to determine if a late assignment will be accepted. I generally do not grant makeup opportunities after the fact. **Individual technical problems are not a valid excuse for failing to submit an assignment as scheduled.** I am under no obligation to accept late work or to grant makeup opportunities. Instead, I offer a built-in chance to earn extra credit as a way to make up for missed deadlines due to unexpected emergencies, last minute individual technical problems, health or family crises, or any other reason.

WVU recognizes the diversity of its students and the needs of those who wish to participate in Days of Special Concern, which are listed in the Schedule of Courses. Any student should notify me by the end of the second week of class regarding Day of Special Concern observances that will affect your ability to participate in class. I will make reasonable accommodations for any assignment or announcement a student misses as a result of observing a Day of Special Concern. In addition, if you know you have a condition or commitment that will prevent you from handing in an assignment on time, let me know **in advance** and no later than the end of the second week of class. While I will be sympathetic to authentic medical and personal emergencies, delaying submission of any assignments or failing to visit the e-classroom regularly (missing class) will put the student behind and should be avoided at all costs.

Registration and Withdrawing from the Course:

Students may withdraw from courses without a W being placed on their record through the end of the first week of the semester (August 24). They may withdraw with a W from the end of the first week through the end of the 10th week of the semester (October 26). If you want to withdraw from the course, you **MUST**

withdraw through the STAR system. Students are not automatically withdrawn if they stop attending, and I cannot administratively withdraw students for nonattendance. Retroactive withdrawals for students who stop attending a course will NOT be granted. **YOU are responsible for making sure that your registration (in all courses) is correct** by the end of the first week of the semester. Neither I nor the Dean's Office can "fix" errors should you "forget" to withdraw from a course or should you mistakenly think you are no longer enrolled in this or some other course.

Technical Requirements:

In addition to a reliable internet connection and an internet browser that is properly configured for the WVU eCampus, you must be able to compose written assignments (using Microsoft Word, Open Office or Corel WordPerfect but NOT Microsoft Works) and submit them using the assignment tool in the WVU eCampus classroom. If you use a Mac, save your assignments in RTF format so that I can read them. When you submit written assignments, **put your name, the name of the class, the assignment number and the semester in the subject line and at the top of the first page in attached documents** (for example, Lucinda Potter PS321 Writing Assignment 1 SpFall 2012) to clearly identify your assignment and **check the "submitted" tab** in the assignment drop box to be certain your assignment is in the box. You can generally expect me to pick up assignments within a day or two except for weekends and holidays. If I experience any problem with your assignment (the file is corrupt, etc.), I will let you know by e-mail in the eCampus classroom within a day or two of the assignment due date/time. **Always check the assignment drop box to be certain that any assignment was properly and completely uploaded, attached, and submitted.**

This class will use WIMBA voice tools and the WIMBA live classroom to add sound to some elements of the course. You must be able to access and use the WIMBA voice and live classroom software. To get the most out of the WIMBA experience, a headset (microphone and headphones all in one) or a built-in microphone and a high speed internet connection is recommended. If you do not have a headset, a standing microphone and speakers will suffice. Dial-up service will suffice; phone access to the audio will be made available. At an absolute minimum, you do need speakers and a sound card to listen to the audio portion of the class. More information is available on the WIMBA "getting ready" page at http://www.wimba.com/support/assets/free_resources/WC_Getting_Ready_Guide.pdf. If you have never used WIMBA before, please **do not worry!** This software is relatively easy to use, and the company has a team of technical support personnel available to help with technical problems.

Although they are rare, technical problems can and do come up unexpectedly. Have a backup plan for Internet and e-mail access in case your home or work computer connection goes off line or crashes. **Always** keep a back-up copy of all your assignments, e-mails, and other important course materials in a safe place (such as the "My Files" storage space in the WVU eCampus). Though they are rare, major system outages and failures do happen. I have had students lose everything in the middle of a course. Remember that individual technical problems are **not** an acceptable excuse for failing to meet course requirements completely and on time (late or missed assignments, inability to post discussions, etc.). Throughout the semester, I will be placing readings, announcements, notes of clarification, and grades in the WVU eCampus classroom. To access these, enter the electronic classroom regularly (at least three times each week). Detailed instructions are available at <https://ecampus.wvu.edu/>. Be **certain** to do a browser check-up during the first week of class so that you will be able to see and access all the features in the WVU eCampus classroom.

Make it a practice to visit the virtual classroom to check your e-mail and review the announcements regularly. This is where I will send individual comments, clarification, or special instructions. **If you have a technical problem or cannot enter the WVU eCampus classroom, contact the OIT Help Desk** by phone at 304-293-4444 or on line at <http://oit.wvu.edu/support/helpdesk/index.html>. Request and note your "trouble ticket" number which will be used to document and verify any system failure. Also report the problem to me.

You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view some of the course materials. Download it for free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/alternate.html>.

Required Texts, Subscriptions and Supplemental Readings:

This class has one required textbook. It is available for purchase at the [West Virginia University Book Store](#) on the downtown campus.

Richard A. Brisbin, Jr., Robert J. Dilger, Allan S. Hammock, and L. Christopher Plein, *West Virginia Politics and Government, Second Edition* (University of Nebraska Press, 2009) ISBN 978-0-8032-6243-0.

Relevant supplemental readings for the course will be released as PDFs throughout the semester in the eCampus classroom as we progress through the course topics. See the "Course Schedule and Assignments" section of this syllabus for when to look for supplemental readings in the eCampus classroom.

I have sometimes been asked if a previous edition of the textbooks will contain everything needed for the class. Understand that this newest text does contain additional information and chapters not found in previous editions. If you purchase a previous version of the text(s), all of the material covered will not be included the older version. It is your responsibility to make certain you have the required texts and subscriptions.

Faculty Presence and Office Hours:

My office is located in Woodburn Hall 301H. My office hours are Wednesdays from 10 AM to 12 noon and from 1 PM to 3 PM and by appointment. I am generally available weekday mornings and Monday through Thursday evenings in the e-classroom for private, real-time chats. Use the "Who's Online" feature, select my name, then invite me to a live chat session. You may also contact me by sending an e-mail message using the e-mail tool in the eCampus classroom. I will respond to such e-mails within two working days at most (and generally within 24 hours). If you need to speak with me but cannot see me during my office hours, please call me for an appointment at 304-293-9668 or send me an e-mail using the WVU eCampus e-mail tool.

If you have questions about the syllabus or about any aspect of the class this semester, I hope you will talk with me. In addition to my office hours, I will be glad to set up an appointment if you give me 48 hours notice. Also, I will always try to respond to your e-mail or voice mail within 24 hours (often sooner). I am generally not online before 8 AM or after 8 PM; please be patient! One request: do not count on an immediate response on weekends or on University holidays.

Students are my top priority. Do not hesitate to call, to e-mail, or to drop by the office to discuss class business.

Student Evaluation of Instruction:

Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will be provided later.

Academic Integrity:

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/integrity.html>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Statement on Social Justice:

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

I will foster a learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Any person that feels that this commitment is not being met should contact me immediately. Also, if you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation to participate in this class please advise me and, if necessary, make any appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

Class Cancellation for Weather and Other Emergencies:

At some time during the semester it may be necessary for the University to cancel all or some classes due to poor weather, power failures or other emergencies. Because of the very nature of an online class in which students are participating from all over the world, a University class cancellation or closure will not automatically apply in this course. The WVU eCampus will still be operational in times of a University shutdown. In times of a power outage or system wide failure, the instructor will make an announcement in the WVU eCampus classroom as soon as information becomes available. **Assignment due dates are firm and will not automatically change if the University is closed.**

Special Note about Extended Learning Courses:

Students enrolled in extended learning web-based courses at West Virginia University are subject to special fees. Please see the Office of Extended Learning web site at <http://www.elearn.wvu.edu/> for further information.

POLS321 COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 August 20-24 **West Virginia Political Culture & History**

Read "Introduction: Mountain State Politics" (see the PDF in Readings folder if you do not have a text yet)

Run the "browser check up" for the WVU eCampus

WIMBA: Review the materials about WIMBA at <http://www.wimba.com/> . Review WIMBA's "getting ready" guide at http://www.wimba.com/support/assets/free_resources/WC_Getting_Ready_Guide.pdf

View the demos for WIMBA classroom <http://www.wimba.com/products/wimbaclassroom/> and WIMBA voice at <http://www.wimba.com/products/wimbavoice/>

WIMBA #1 Introduction to this class lecture will become available by the end of the day on **Thursday August 23**; listen by the end of the day on **Tuesday September 4** to earn attendance points (NOTE: the deadline is on a Tuesday rather than a Sunday due to the Monday holiday)

Discussion: Introduce yourself to your classmates using the discussion tool in the WVU eCampus virtual classroom by **Friday August 24**

FIRST DAY OF CLASS Monday August 20

LAST DAY TO ADD A CLASS Friday August 24

Week 2 August 27-31 **West Virginia Political Culture (con't) and the State's Political Agenda**

Read Chapter 1 "Sources of the Political Agenda"

WIMBA #2 lecture will become available by the end of the day on **Thursday August 30**; listen by the end of the day on **Sunday September 9** to earn attendance points

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Practice Writing Assignment due by Wednesday August 29 at midnight

Week 3 September 3-7 **The Polity, Parties & Elections**

Read Chapter 2 "Participation, Parties & Elections"

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Writing assignment #1 due by midnight on Tuesday September 4 (NOTE: the deadline is on a Tuesday rather than a Monday due to the Monday holiday)

WVU HOLIDAY Monday September 3

Week 4 September 10-14 **Interest Groups**

Read Chapter 3 "Interest Group Politics"

WIMBA #3 lecture will become available by the end of the day on **Thursday September 13**; listen by the end of the day on **Sunday September 23** to earn attendance points

Discussion: The **first quarterly discussion grade** based on participation through the end of the day on **Sunday September 16** will be issued at the end of this week; remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Week 5 September 17-21 **Public Opinion**

Read "PAR Volume 23 Number 1" (PDF in Readings folder)

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Writing assignment #2 due by midnight on Monday September 17

Week 6 September 24-28

Intergovernmental Relations

Read Chapter 4 “Intergovernmental Relations & the Political Agenda”

WIMBA #4 lecture will become available by the end of the day on **Thursday September 17**; listen by the end of the day on **Sunday October 7** to earn attendance points

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Week 7 October 1-5

The West Virginia Constitution

Read Chapter 5 “Constitutional Politics”

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Writing assignment #3 due by midnight on Monday October 1

MIDSEMESTER Friday October 5

Week 8 October 8-12

The Legislature

Read Chapter 6 “The Legislature”

Discussion: The **second quarterly discussion grade** based on participation through the end of the day on **Sunday October 14** will be issued at the end of this week; remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Week 9 October 15-19

The Governor

Read Chapter 7 “The Governor and Executive Offices”

WIMBA #5 lecture will become available by the end of the day on **Thursday October 18**; listen by the end of the day on **Sunday October 28** to earn attendance points

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Week 10 October 22-26

The Judiciary

Read Chapter 10 “The Judiciary”

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Writing assignment #4 due by midnight on Monday October 22

LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS Friday October 26

Week 11 October 28-November 2

The Bureaucracy

Read Chapter 8 “The Administration of State Policies”

Discussion: Remember to read and respond to the graded discussions

Week 12 November 5-9

Read “DMV” (PDF in Readings folder)

WIMBA #6 lecture will become available by the end of the day on **Thursday November 8**; listen by the end of the day on **Monday November 26** to earn attendance points (NOTE: The deadline is extended due to Thanksgiving Break)

