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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

**School of Arts and Humanities
POL497
Senior Seminar for Political Science
3 Credit Hours
8 Weeks
Prerequisite(s): None**

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Course Description (Catalog)

This capstone course provides an analysis of specific issues addressed at the national level that includes a review of American political institutions and decision-making; policymaking in the economic, social, and security arenas; instruments of foreign and defense policy; federalism and democratic political theories; and the electoral process. This course will also provide students with the opportunity to complete an approved academic research exercise that demonstrates their knowledge of their selected field of study. This is a capstone course to be taken after all other political science courses have been satisfactorily completed. Students must have submitted a graduation application and have been cleared by the graduations department prior to registering for this course.

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Course Scope

POLS497 – Senior Seminar in Political Science provides the student with a capstone experience at the conclusion of core and required courses in the degree path. The course presents contemporary issues and emerging concepts in the Political Science field of study. The primary purpose of *POLS497* is to allow the student to explore in greater depth a particular topic of interest in political science within the broad thematic topics addressed in the course.

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Course Objectives

Course Objectives:

CO-1: Implement appropriate methods of research and analysis in the field of political science.

CO-2: Evaluate the political elements of representative democracy.

CO-3: Compare and contrast the organization and powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the US federal government.

CO-4: Explain lobbying in the democratic process.

CO-5: Analyze contemporary issues in public policy.

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Course Delivery Method

This course will offer the student a highly interactive virtual classroom. Each week's lesson will have a course announcement, assigned readings, a discussion group question based on either course readings or an internet-based project, and lecture notes provided by the instructor. The course will provide the student with the necessary knowledge of Public Policy and Public Administration to better appreciate and comprehend the behavior and motivations of the numerous public actors involved in policy-making.

Since the student is expected to fully participate in discussions and interact with the instructor and other students, reading assignments and assigned projects should be completed in a timely manner.

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Course Materials

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1. Miller, William J., *Taking Sides, Clashing View on Political Issues*, 19th Edition. Dubuque, IA: McGraw Hill, 2014. The VitalSource e-book is provided via the APUS Bookstore. Please visit <http://apus.libguides.com/bookstore> for more information.
2. Additional assigned readings provided in the *Weekly Lessons*.

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Evaluation Procedures

Grades for this course will be based upon eight grading instruments. There are eight **weekly discussion questions** that are provided in the **forums**. The student is expected to respond to the question and reply to at least two postings of other students. The **mid-term exam** will consist of two short essay questions. The final grading instrument will be a 15-25 page (4000-6500 words) **research paper**. The grade scale for each of the evaluations is provided below:

<u>Grade Instruments:</u>	<u>% of final grade</u>
Forum Discussions	30%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Research Paper	<u>50%</u>
	100%

Submission of Assignments:

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due by Sunday evening at 11:55 p.m. ET (Eastern Time) as outlined in the course outline below. Any assignments submitted late will receive a late penalty of 5% each day, unless the student contacts the instructor ahead of time about an extenuating situation and receives permission to submit work after the established course deadline. Repeated late submissions may result in failure of the course.

Forums:

Though there is no single time all students must be signed into the course, this class is not an independent study course. Students will work through each week together. The forum is a weekly assignment that will allow all students to engage with others in the course in an academic and scholarly dialogue of the week's topic. Students will post one well developed response to the instructor's prompt for the week and reply to posts left by other students in order for the assignment to be considered complete. See the rubric for more details on scoring.

Keep in mind these tips for success:

- 1) Posting the minimum requirements guarantee a passing grade of a C or higher (A, B, or C). Please do not expect scores of 100% simply because minimum expectations were met regardless of the quality of work. Students

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are expected to be engaged in the discussion throughout the week. Posting all in one sitting does not show engagement, nor does posting at the end of the week. Every student should have the main response posted in the forum by each Friday of the week no later than 11:55 pm ET.

- 2) Quality and content will also be taken into consideration. Engaging in an active dialogue with other students means more than a limited exchange of a few words, but rather posting conversations that further the debate for all sides. Postings that give peer review, praise, or add simple agreement without explanation are not counted towards the assignment minimum.
- 3) Students should always follow up to posts that ask for clarification or more information regarding their original posts.
- 4) Always include the resources used and use correct Turabian citation rules. This includes in text documentation as well as a listing of sources used.
- 5) Posting opinions and antidotal evidence are not prohibited in your replies to classmates, but it does not offer any substantive or scholarly evidential support. Also, double check your supporting facts with a second source. Wikipedia and other encyclopedia sources do not serve as academic sources.
- 6) Posts are insightful, well-thought out, considerate of other points-of-view, reflective of high levels of critical thinking.

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Grading Scale

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) (click here) to reference the university's grading scale

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Course Outline

8 Week Course

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>	<u>Learning Objective(s)</u>	<u>Reading(s)</u>	<u>Assignment(s)</u>
1	Research Tools	CO-1: Implement appropriate methods of research and	Lesson Notes Week 1: Using the Online Library Resources at APUS POLS Program Guide http://apus.libguides.com/friendly.php?action=82&s=politicals	<i>Forum:</i> Virtual Introduction & Discussion Question Lessons:

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		analysis in the field of political science.	cience	Week 1
2	Congress and the President	<p>CO-2: Evaluate the political elements of representative democracy.</p> <p>CO-3: Compare and contrast the organization and powers of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches of the federal government.</p>	<p>Lessons Notes, Week 2 The Three Branches of Government: Congress and the Presidency</p> <p>John Yoo, From <i>Memorandum Opinion for the Deputy Counsel to the President</i> (September 25, 2001) Karen Greenberg and Joshua Dratel. <i>The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib</i>. 2005. http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=129348&site=ehost-live&scope=site</p> <p>Michael Cairo, from "The Imperial Presidency Triumphant" in Christopher Kelly's, ed. <i>Executing the Constitution</i> (SUNY, 2006) /access/content/group/arts-and-humanities-common/Political%20Science/POL_S497/Content/Cairo_Executing%20the%20Constitution%20-%20Ch%20%2010.pdf</p> <p>Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, from <i>The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get Back on Track</i> (Oxford University Press, 2006) http://site.ebrary.com/lib/apus/Doc?id=10160577</p> <p>Lee Hamilton, from <i>How Congress Works</i> (Indiana University Press, 2004) http://site.ebrary.com/lib/apus/Doc?id=10160577</p>	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p> <p><i>Web Resources:</i> Access http://thomas.loc.gov American Government: The Three Branches</p> <p>Lessons: Week 2</p>

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			<p>oc?id=10091973</p> <p>Miller, William, "Is Congress a Dysfunctional Institution?" (Ezra Klein) in the eBook <i>Taking Sides</i> (2014) on pp. 85-90.</p> <p>-</p> <p>vitalsource ebook http://www.apus.edu/Online-Library/course-materials/bookstore.html</p>	
3	Supreme Court	<p>CO-3: Compare and contrast the organization and powers of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches of the federal government.</p>	<p>Lesson Notes, Week 3: The Judiciary In the eBook <i>Taking Sides</i> (2014) you will find the following articles on pages 75-83: Antonin Scalia, from Remarks at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (March 14, 2005)</p> <p>-</p> <p>vitalsource ebook http://www.apus.edu/Online-Library/course-materials/bookstore.html</p> <p>Stephen Breyer, from <i>Active Liberty: Interpreting our Democratic Constitution</i> (Knopf, 2005)</p> <p>-</p> <p>vitalsource ebook http://www.apus.edu/Online-Library/course-materials/bookstore.html</p>	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p> <p><i>Web Resources:</i> Access American Government: The Three Branches</p> <p>Lessons: Week 3</p>
4	Selecting a Research Topic	<p>CO-1: Implement appropriate methods of research and analysis in the field of political science.</p>	<p>Lesson Notes Week 4: Choosing a Paper Topic Wilfred M McClay, from "The Founding of Nations," <i>First Things</i> (March 2012) http://www.firstthings.com/article/2006/03/the-founding-of-nations</p> <p>Howard Zinn. from "The Power</p>	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p> <p><i>Web Resources:</i> Access American Government: Political Participation</p>

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			<p>and the Glory: Myths of American Exceptionalism," <i>Boston Review</i> (Summer 2005) http://bostonreview.net/zinn-power-glory</p> <p>Seymour Martin Lipset, from "American Exceptionalism: A Double Edge Sword" <i>The Washington Post</i> (1996) http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/americanexceptionalism.htm</p>	<p>Lessons: Week 4</p> <p>Mid-Term Exam</p>
5	Policy-Making	<p>CO-5: Analyze contemporary issues in public policy.</p>	<p>Lesson Notes Week 5: Policy Making Ezra Klein, from "The Health of Nations," <i>The American Prospect</i> (May 2007) http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/201132074?accountid=8289</p> <p>John C Goodman, from "Health Care in a Free Society: Rebutting the Myths of National Health Insurance," <i>Policy Analysis</i>, (Jan. 27, 2005) http://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/health-care-free-society-rebutting-myths-national-health-insurance</p> <p>Charles Krauthammer, from "The Truth about Torture," <i>The Weekly Standard</i>, (December 2005) http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/233010280?accountid=8289</p> <p>Andrew Sullivan, from "The Abolition of Torture." <i>The New</i></p>	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p> <p><i>Web Resources:</i> Access www.ncpa.org</p> <p>Lessons: Week 5</p>

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			<p><i>Republic</i> (December 2005) http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=19138752&site=ehost-live&scope=site</p> <p>Glenn C Loury, from <i>The Anatomy of Racial Inequality</i> (Harvard University Press, 2012) http://site.ebrary.com/lib/apus/detail.action?docID=10328826</p> <p>Walter E. Williams, from "Affirmative Action Can't be Mended," in David Boaz, ed. <i>Toward Liberty: The Idea that is Changing the World</i> (Cato Institute, 2012) http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/195588274?accountid=8289</p>	
6	Annotated Bibliography	CO-1: Implement appropriate methods of research and analysis in the field of political science.	Lesson Notes Week 6: Annotated Bibliographies	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p> <p>Lessons: Week 6</p>
7	Lobbying and Interest Groups	CO-4: Explain lobbying in the democratic process.	<p>Lesson Notes, Week 7: Lobbying and Interest Groups</p> <p><i>Guide to the Lobbying Disclosure Act</i>, Office of the Clerk, House of Representatives, January 1, 2008 http://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/amended_lda_guide.html<i>Guide to the Lobbying Disclosure Act,</i></p>	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p>

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8	Peer Review	<p>CO-1: Implement appropriate methods of research and analysis in the field of political science.</p> <p>CO-5: Analyze contemporary issues in public policy.</p>	Lesson Notes Week 8: Sharing Research	<p><i>Forum:</i> Discussion Question</p> <p>Research Paper Submission</p>
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Policies

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked question about policies are listed below.

- [Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Extension Process and Policy](#)

PLAGIARISM PENALTY

The instructor has the option of awarding any assignment that has been found to have been plagiarized a zero. Subsequent violations may result in an F in the class.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

All written submissions should be submitted in a font and page set-up that is readable and neat. It is recommended that students try to adhere to a consistent format, which is described below.

- Typewritten in double-spaced format with a readable style and font and submitted inside the electronic classroom (unless classroom access is not possible and other arrangements have been approved by the professor).
- Students must proof their work for spelling and grammar errors.

CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE

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All assignments for the School of Security and Global Studies (papers, essays, exams, and Discussion Boards) must follow the Chicago Style guidelines. Students should refer to the APUS On-Line Library Chicago/Turabian Style Manuals for the correct citation method.

All submitted work should include citations in the correct format.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

This institution complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. In compliance with federal and state regulations, reasonable accommodations are provided to qualified students with disabilities.

A request for accommodation is deemed reasonable if the request:

- is based on documented individual needs.
- does not compromise essential requirements of a course or program.
- does not impose an undue financial or administrative burden upon APUS.

A qualified student can, with or without reasonable accommodations, perform the essential functions of program or course requirements. The essential requirements of an academic course or program need not be modified to accommodate an individual with a disability.

Final responsibility for selection of the most appropriate accommodation rests with the University's Disability Support Services Committee and is determined on an individual case-by-case basis, based on the nature of the student's disability. Students are encouraged email registrar@apus.edu to discuss potential academic accommodations and begin the review process. It is the student's responsibility to:

- follow the accommodation procedure outlined in this section,
- identify the disability to the staff and/or faculty of the university,
- provide (and incur expense for) current appropriate documentation of disability and accommodation needed from a qualified medical or other licensed professional, and

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- request specific accommodations or services.

NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add "emoticons" to help alert your readers: ;-), :), ☺

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

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Academic Services

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES

The online library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open web. In addition, the online library provides access to special learning resources, which the university has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to librarian@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** APUS provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.

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- **Turnitin.com:** [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to APUS' standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an originality report to instructors and/or students.
- **Tutor.com:** Students have access to ten free hours of tutoring service per year through [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com). Tutoring is available in the following subjects: math (basic math through advanced calculus), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), accounting, statistics, economics, Spanish, writing, grammar, and more. Additional information is located in the online library. From the online library home page, click on either the "Writing Center" or "Tutoring Center." All login information is available.

Library Guide

The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the open web and licensed resources on the deep web. These are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:

- Program portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name or navigate by school.

Selected Bibliography

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Cronin, Thomas E. *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

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De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, ed. Phillips Bradley. New York: Vintage, 1954.

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Lowi, Theodore J. *The End of Liberalism*, 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979.

Madison, James, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc. 1987. [First published in 1788.]

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

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Schumpeter, Joseph. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 3rd ed. New York: Harper, 1950.