



University of
Pittsburgh

College in the High School

Bradford

American Political Process
PS 0102
3 credits

Description: An introductory course focusing on American politics and government. Emphasis is on political processes and institutions on the national level, including Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, political parties, pressure groups and elections.

Prerequisite: None

Textbook: The recommended text for the course is *“We the People,”* 2015, 11th Ed., by Thomas E. Patterson. Other textbooks will be considered by the faculty liaison on case-by-case basis.

The following topics should be covered in this course:

1. The Articles of Confederation and The Constitution.
2. Federalism.
3. Political Socialization and the Media.
4. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.
5. Congress and Congressional Processes.
6. The Presidency and Presidential Authority.
7. The Judiciary and Judicial Review.
8. Political Parties and Elections.
9. Interest Groups and Lobbying.
10. Political Ideologies.

Course objectives:

What should you “learn” about American government and the political process over the course of this semester? As is true in most introductory classes, the amount of information presented may seem to be so much that it appears overwhelming; sorting out the more important from the less important is no easy task. I suggest that you focus on two fundamental questions.

First, how does American government and politics really work? As you read the text and we discuss the subject matter, try to develop an understanding as to “what” American government and politics is and “why” it is what it is. As you will soon learn, while there is more agreement on the “what,” not everyone agrees on the “why” – this is not mathematics, this is politics.

Second, I want you to ask yourselves, what should American government and politics, be like. Here I would like you to move beyond description (the “what is”) and begin some evaluation (the “what ought to be”). You will find that there is even less agreement on the “what ought to be.”

This class will, for the most part, focus on description (the “what is”). This class is designed to provide you with the fundamentals of American government and processes.

However, a large part of the class will also deal with the “what ought to be.” In other words, I want to know your thoughts and opinions on such things as the influence of interest groups, the direction of public policy, the role of the media, the various influences on elections etc... In this class, as in life, there is often a great difference between “what is” and “what ought to be.” My (our) objective in this class will be to explore the information so as to provide you with a way of understanding both.

Grading: The final grade will be determined using a variety of assessment methods including multiple choice exams, short-answer and essay assessments, a term paper, and other methods of class participation.

Pitt Grading System:

All courses required to satisfy associate and baccalaureate degree requirements-including all courses required for a major, a minor, or general education-must be taken for letter grades, with the exception of those courses designated as graded S and NC only. Pitt-Bradford uses 13 earned letter grades. They are listed below with their equivalent quality point values.

A+	4.00
A	4.00 superior achievement
A-	3.75
B+	3.25
B	3.00 meritorious achievement
B-	2.75
C+	2.25
C	2.00 adequate achievement
C-	1.75
D+	1.25
D	1.00 minimal achievement
F	0.00 failure

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Members of a university community, both faculty and students, bear a serious responsibility to uphold personal and professional integrity and to maintain complete honesty in all academic work. Violations of the code of academic integrity are not tolerated. Students who cheat or plagiarize or who otherwise take improper advantage of the work of others face harsh penalties, including permanent dismissal. The academic integrity guidelines set forth student and faculty obligations and the means of enforcing regulations and addressing grievances.

Grades: Grade criteria in the high school course may be different from the University standards. A CHS student could receive two course grades, one for high school and one for the University transcript. In most cases, the grades are the same. Grading standards should be explained at the beginning of the course.

Transfer Credits: Grades earned in CHS courses appear on an official University of Pittsburgh transcript and the course credits may be eligible for transfer to other colleges and universities. Students should contact potential colleges and universities in advance to be sure their CHS credits will be accepted. If students will attend any University of Pittsburgh campus, grade earned in the course will count toward the student grade point average at the University. At the University of Pittsburgh, the CHS course supersedes any equivalent AP credit.

Drops and Withdrawals: Students should monitor their progress in a course. A CHS teacher can contact the program administrators to request a drop or withdrawal. Dropping or withdrawing from the CHS course has no effect on enrollment in the high school credits.