

Syllabus

Instructor	Year	Semester	Course Number	Course Title	Section
Robert E. Kelly	2025	1	PD 21553	American Politics	024
Instructor's contact information: rekelly@pnu.edu ; robertkelly260@hotmail.com Office: Social Science Building, #217 Political Science Department: Social Science Building, #124 Instructor Website: http://RobertEdwinKelly.com Instructor Twitter: @Robert_E_Kelly					
1. Course Objectives & Description a) Course objectives Students should leave the course with the ability to conceptually analyze contemporary policy disputes in US institutions . Given close US-Korea ties, such knowledge will ideally improve your ability to make informed choices as voters. More practically, students should take away the critical abilities to read moderately difficult American periodicals such as the New York Times , the Washington Post , or the Wall Street Journal . For more challenging reading on US foreign policy, try Foreign Affairs or Foreign Policy . It is recommended that the students read these regularly the semester to prepare for the paper. b) Course Description This course introduces students to the basic institutions and issues of American politics. We will cover the tripartite division of power based in the US Constitution, and you will read that document in its entirety. Beyond the formal constitutional organs, we will examine the party system as well the large federal bureaucracy. The institutions will be examined in their historical evolution, but our stress will be on their contemporary functioning since 1945. Special stress will be placed on the creation of US foreign policy, particularly its increasing presidentialization, and on issues of importance between the US and Korea. 2. Required Textbooks James Wilson, et al., American Government: Institutions and Policies , 16th, 2019 3. Requirements & Grading Attendance will be taken every day. Students who miss more than 3 days unexcused will lose 1% off of their final grade for each missed day. Outlines, review sheets, etc. will not be distributed. The reading and the class sessions serve that purpose. You will read much of the book, although we will not cover all of it in class. We will watch a movie or documentary in the weeks before the midterm and final to take a break before the exams. That will occur via PLATO-Zoom. Cell phones must be turned off at the beginning of every class. You are required to place your cell phone on your desk where I can see it and shut it down. Students who sit together and chat or pass notes will be separated. Please do not sit in the back and corners if there is open space in the front. If you do so consistently to avoid attention, then I will move you. You are responsible for properly communicating with me via email. Use one email account consistently under your own, clearly					

identifiable name. Provide your name, in English and Korean, and student identity number in all correspondence and evaluations.

For the midterm and final, you will complete two in-class, multiple choice exams, with 33 questions each. You will be required to answer questions about all the assigned book chapters, whether discussed in class or not. Make-up exams will not be given without a documented excuse. Written make-up exams will not be given. Any make-up exams will be a 1,500-word term paper similar to that assigned below.

You will also write one **1,500 word paper on a topic of your choosing related to the course material**. The term paper is to be an examination of a live issue in US politics – such as abortion, race, or gun control. Explain why the issue divides Americans and give you opinion about a solution. You must use the tools and concepts developed in the course. Research outside of the course text is required. The paper makes some kind of claim or argument; it is **not** to be a case study or travelogue. For example: ‘Abortion has divided Americans, because it was decided through the courts rather than through the legislatures.’ You might then examine anti-abortion groups who protest the involvement of the Supreme Court on this issue. **The paper may not be about Korea, Koreans in United States, or the US alliance with Korea.**

Use bibliographic footnotes, not endnotes or a separate bibliography. I highly recommend you come to see me to discuss your topic before you submit your paper. In general, I recommend you come to see me at least once in the semester to introduce yourself. Your term paper is due, by email, not paper, on the final day of class. Every day the paper is late will reduce your grade.

Your course grade will be determined by the following:

33% Midterm	A+ 95~100	A0 90~94
33% Term Paper	B+ 85~89	B0 80~84
33% Final	C+ 75~79	C0 70~74
1% Given	D+ 65~69	D0 60~64 F 0~59

Grades are final. Please do not email me insisting that I change your grade for your scholarship, because your friend in class got a different grade, because you tried very hard, etc. PNU quality demands that students work hard for As or Bs. I will not ‘socially promote.’

Writing is fundamental to your grade in this class. The exams are in essay format, and your term paper should be a lucid, organized and edited product. I am aware that most of you speak English as a second language. That will be accounted for in the grading. Nonetheless, this is not an English grammar or style course. I do assume that you can produce a basic product in English. I will help you.

4. Schedule

Day	Topics and Activities	Reading
1-2	Introduction: US Politics in Political Science	Ch. 1
3-6	Foundations of American Government	Chs. 2, 4
7-9	US Federalism	Ch. 3

10-12	Elections	Chs. 8, 10
13-15	Parties	Ch. 9
16-19	Presidency	Ch. 14
20-23	Congress	Ch. 13
24-26	Federal Bureaucracy	Ch. 15
27-29	The Supreme Court	Ch. 16
30-32	Future of US Politics	Ch. 20

5. References

American News Outlets

[Los Angeles Times](#)

[Real Clear Politics](#)

[Time](#)

[Newsweek](#)

[Slate](#)

[The Atlantic](#)

[New York](#)