

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Course web page: <http://www.uncw.edu/people/lowery/pls101>
Office Hours: [Spring 2012 Office Hours](#)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to improve your understanding of the structure, process, and principles of American national government and to enhance your ability to formulate and empirically test hypotheses about American politics. At the conclusion of the course you should have a better understanding of each of the following:

- the origin and consequences of the fragmentation of power and representation in our system of politics and government;
- the nature of individual liberties and how they are sometimes constitutionally abridged or denied by our government in order to secure collective order or to guarantee equal rights;
- the opportunities and obstacles confronted by persons and groups seeking changes in governmental processes and policies;
- and the importance of scientific methods of hypothesis formulation and empirical data analysis in drawing valid and reliable conclusions about all of these topics.

My *goal* is to help you master these knowledge and analytical-skill sets. My *method* is to be fair and to challenge and assist you to do your best. If you have not already done so, please read the Introduction to the Course, posted at:

http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls101/Course_introductions/PLS101_course_introduction_Spring_2012.pdf.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Both are available at the campus bookstore and the off-campus Seahawk bookstore; both are also available at online booksellers, (such as <http://amazon.com>); Amazon also offers a Kindle e-book version of the Wilson textbook.

- Wilson, James Q. 2009. *American Government: Brief Version*. [10th Edition]. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 0495906786
- *CPSr 2nd Generation Student-Response Keypad for Higher Education*. 2009. Denton, TX: eInstruction Corporation Classroom Performance System.
[see: [Student-response keypad instructions](#)]

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Many of our class sessions will illustrate empirical research in political science. This will give you a better understanding of American government by allowing you to explore our political system in ways impossible in standard textbooks. **Up to thirty percent of the questions in the daily quizzes and in the objective portions of the three exams will test your ability to interpret various forms of aggregate and survey data and to arrive at valid and reliable conclusions about political phenomena.**
- **This course also requires the use of your activated *Student Response Keypad* in every class – starting with the first class meeting.** You will use the keypad to anonymously respond to true/false or multiple-choice questions that arise during class discussion. The aggregated class responses are projected on an overhead screen as full-color bar- or pie-charts, so that the class and I can see and comment upon the distribution of class responses. I find that the anonymity and confidentiality of this feedback method encourages all students to enthusiastically participate in this interactive form of active learning. Students who rarely or never raise their hand in response to questions are comfortable in responding with their keypads and are more likely to join the resulting discussion of how and why the class divided in their collective responses. The keypad responses also give me immediate feedback regarding the extent to which students understand concepts being discussed. This allows me to make informed decisions about the pace and organization of class discussions.

TESTS AND GRADING

Your course grade will be based on a total of 400 points divided in equal fourths between 12 quizzes and three examinations.

- A series of 12 weekly, in-class, multiple-choice quizzes – keyed to the assigned readings in the Wilson textbook – will contribute a possible 100 points toward your course grade. **A 10-point quiz will be given before class discussion of each of the 12 Wilson reading assignments.** Your total quiz score will be computed by first deleting the lowest quiz score and then averaging the remaining quiz scores and multiplying that quiz average times 10. Ungraded practice quizzes for each of the 12 Wilson chapters are available on the course web page.
- The two hourly and one final examination will each contribute a possible 100 points toward your course grade. Each exam will be one-half essay (optional) and one-half multiple choice. Essay review guides are available on the course web page. If you choose not to submit the essay for grading, then the multiple-choice portion of each exam will be worth 100 points.

- Up to 25 bonus points can be added to your total course points, if you are the first to report to me (by email from your UNCW email account) any typographical or substantive errors in any course materials (available on the web, handed out in class, or included in a reading assignment). Each *typographical error* (spelling, punctuation, syntax, etc.) is worth 1 point added to your final course point total. Each *substantive error* (an error of fact or interpretation) is worth up to 3 points. **In order to earn bonus points, your email must come from your UNCW email account and include:**
 - where the error was found
 - if in a textbook, give the book title, page and paragraph number,
 - if on a Web page, then copy the URL and tell where on the page you see the error
 - what correction you suggest to replace the error.
- All components of the final course grade are combined before a course letter grade is determined, using the following scale:

• A	=	89.5 to 100.00% of total possible points	=	excellent performance on quizzes & examinations
• B	=	79.5 to 89.49% of total possible points	=	good performance
• C	=	69.5 to 79.49% of total possible points	=	average performance
• D	=	59.5 to 69.49% of total possible points	=	passing performance
• F	=	00.0 to 59.49% of total possible points	=	failing performance
- Any form of cheating on any graded work will result in an automatic grade of F for the course, no matter what the quality of all other course work.** You should read the UNCW statement on academic dishonesty by clicking the following link: [UNCW Student Academic Honor Code](#), which states that “No form of academic dishonesty is tolerated in our community.” Also, check out the U. of Bergen’s plagiarism video posted at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mwbw9KF-ACY>.
- Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555).
- Resources for students concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at: the [UNCW Women’s Studies & Resource Center](#).
- Use of cell phones (including texting) is banned during class. Use of laptops is allowed contingent on appropriate use (no email or Web surfing).

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

If you are a full-time, in-state student, the tuition and fees that you pay (**\$5,672 per year**) account for *less than one-third* of the annual cost of your education at UNCW (**more than \$19,967**).¹ The taxpayers of North Carolina pay much of the difference. This public assistance amounts to more than \$14,295 per year (think of it as tuition stamps) for each in-state, full-time student.² Out-of-state students pay **\$17,492 per year** in tuition and fees, so they are paying almost 99% of the annual cost of their education at UNCW. NC taxpayers (over three-fourths of whom are *not* college graduates) have a right to expect that you attend classes -- *their money pays for a significant portion of your public-university education*. UNCW’s in-state tuition & fees (2011-12) are lower than those at all 17 of our peer institutions:

• College of New Jersey	\$13,549	• Western Washington U.	\$7,758
• College of William & Mary	\$13,132	• U of Northern Iowa	\$7,350
• Rowan U. (NJ)	\$12,018	• SUNY Binghamton	\$7,216
• UT-Dallas	\$11,168	• Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo	\$6,920
• College of Charleston	\$9,616	• Cal St - Chico	\$6,890
• James Madison University	\$8,448	• Truman State U.	\$6,772
• U-W Eau Claire	\$8,024	• U of Maine	\$6,696
• U of Maryland - Baltimore	\$9,467	• Murray St. U. (KY)	\$6,576
• Towson University	\$7,906		

PENALIZED ABSENCES

- In the real (job) world, unforeseen circumstances (alarm clock doesn't go off, car trouble) are accepted as legitimate excuses for *short and infrequent* absences from work. Similarly, in this course *two un-penalized absences* will be allowed (equivalent to a full week’s worth of classes in a regular semester). **For each additional un-excused absence, your final course grade will be reduced one letter grade.**
- In addition, no makeup quizzes or exams will be given for un-excused absences occurring under normal circumstances. An un-excused absence will result in a grade of zero for any quiz, hourly, or final exam.**
- If late to class, it is your responsibility to ensure (*immediately after class*) that you are recorded present on the class attendance roll. Should you fail to ask to be marked present after class, you will have used up one of any remaining un-penalized absences. Your being late to class is not a problem *as long as this happens infrequently*. **If you are tardy, see me immediately after class to make sure that your name was counted on the roll — otherwise, you will be marked absent.**
- Once in class, it is expected that you will stay until dismissed or unless some foreseen or unforeseen emergency occurs. In the former case, please advise me ahead of class; in the latter case, leave class as quietly as possible and inform me as soon as possible of the circumstances that led to your unexpected departure. **Otherwise, you will be marked absent for that day.**

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- In the real (job) world, frequent or lengthy absences are excused only in cases of serious illness or injury, death in the immediate family, or other catastrophic events. Similarly, in this course, **truly extraordinary circumstances that rarely occur may warrant special arrangements that will be made on a case-by-case basis. Excused absences require written documentation.**
- The following circumstances do *not* constitute an excused absence: job conflicts, an alarm clock that doesn't go off, or an illness that was not serious enough to send you to a healthcare provider who can provide written documentation. Save your two "free cuts" for situations like these.**

¹\$261,000,000 UNCW 2011-12 operating budget (estimated) divided by 13,071 student FTEs (projected). Revenue sources for the University include state appropriations (39 percent); the other 61% comes from student tuition & fees, federal contracts & grants, auxiliary enterprises, etc. See: <http://uncw.edu/aboutuncw/documents/factsheet.pdf>

²This public assistance is actually greatly understated because it does not reflect the cost of the state’s capital investment in UNCW’s buildings and grounds – currently valued at approximately \$210,000,000.