

Political Science 101 (Sections 001–010)

# American Government

Fall 2017

### Bulletin Course Description

A survey of national government and the political process in the United States, with emphasis on the Constitution, the President, Congress, and the judicial system.

<b>Lecture Times:</b>	Monday & Wednesday, 2 - 2:50 pm		
<b>Lecture Location:</b>	#118 White Hall Classroom Building		
<b>Lecturer:</b>	Professor D. Stephen Voss		
<b>Office Address:</b>	1639 Patterson Office Tower (POT)		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Mondays 11 – 11:50 am & Fridays 12 – 1 pm, or by appointment		
<b>Office Phone:</b>	(859) 257 – 4313		
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<b>Twitter Account:</b>	@DStephenVoss		
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Office:	1602 POT	1606 POT	1606 POT
Office Hours:	M 11:45 am – 12:45 pm, W 10:45 – 11:45 am, or by appt	M 3 – 4 pm, F 12:30 – 1:30 pm, or appt.	F 10 – 10:50 am, F 12 – 12:50 pm, or appt.
Email:	<a href="mailto:gargi.vyas@uky.edu">gargi.vyas@uky.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:peter.lynch@uky.edu">peter.lynch@uky.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:travisntaylor@uky.edu">travisntaylor@uky.edu</a>
Section:	001	004	006
Section Time:	M 1 - 1:50 pm	W 3 – 3:50 pm	F 11 – 11:50 am
Location:	#333 White Hall CB	#237 White Hall CB	#003 Donovan Hall
Section:	002	005	007
Section Time:	M 3 – 3:50 pm	F 11 – 11:50 am	F 1 – 1:50 pm
Location:	#237 White Hall CB	#101 Miller Hall	#342 White Hall CB
Section:	003	008	009
Section Time:	W 1 – 1:50 pm	F 2 – 2:50 pm	F 2 – 2:50 pm
Location:	#B3 Funkhouser Bldg.	#243 White Hall CB	#339 White Hall CB

**Contact Information:** The preferred method of contacting the PS 101 teaching team *depends on the nature of the communication*.

- If you have a question about course content or course policy, you should post it to Discussions on our online learning environment, Canvas, so that other students can see the query and response. Questions of this sort sent directly to your instructors may be ignored, or instead posted and answered there. Subscribe to each forum for alerts!
- If you have a question involving a personal matter that would be of no concern to your fellow students, then send an email message to Prof. Voss. He typically checks email multiple times each day, with the occasional exception for weekends or holidays.
- If you have a personal question related to your section, section meetings, or section attendance/participation grade, you should contact your Teaching Assistant.

## Course Objectives

- PS 101 may resemble courses taken in secondary school because, in terms of content, it surveys the same terrain as high-school Civics and American History courses (not to mention Social Studies classes in lower grades). However, PS 101 is not, and is not supposed to be, merely a slightly harder or more-detailed treatment of the same content that most students have encountered before. Rather, the primary purpose of PS 101 is to introduce you to the *science* of American politics – to teach you how to think critically and analytically about the relationship between Americans and their government. From the outset, the emphasis will be on developing a conceptual approach to the subject matter, trying to solve puzzles or challenge myths, questioning why political and governmental actors behave as they do and evaluating those behaviors in light of the difficult challenges facing the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- PS 101 comes with a secondary purpose. Students who enroll in the course often lack skills needed to succeed in a college curriculum. They may be good at jotting down notes from a Powerpoint slide, jumping into a textbook chapter to pull out answers for a homework assignment, or memorizing facts from a Study Guide – but they often have not tried to learn from complex material (whether delivered through oral presentations, the written word, or interpersonal discussions). As the only freshman-level course in the Political Science major, PS 101 requires students to develop or cultivate these essential skills, and a central goal of the teaching team will be to help students learn how to learn.
- Thirdly, PS 101 comes with a set of externally imposed goals. It is one of the courses fulfilling the UK Core’s “Community, Culture, and Citizenship in the USA” requirement. If one looks closely at the obligations of this CCC requirement, it is not only about citizenship (as commonly understood) but also about acquainting students with the diversity of cultures and communities found in the United States now and over time, and it also emphasizes a host of other priorities such as conflict/compromise, ethics, and research methods. Along the way of pursuing our course-specific objectives, therefore, we also will try to pay special attention to how the institutions, processes, and policies we are studying represent both the conflicts and compromises growing out of U.S. diversity.

## Learning Outcomes

Following on the course objectives described above, students who meet all of their obligations and requirements in PS 101 will leave the course with a college-level understanding of...

- (1) ...core concepts employed in social sciences such as Political Science;
- (2) ...the way scholars employ scientific methods to understand political outcomes;
- (3) ...how the nation’s historical experience molds current events,
- (4) ...how the public communicates values, opinions, and attitudes to public officials, &
- (5) ...how political institutions connect public policies to public demands.

Students will be able to exhibit knowledge about each of those processes if asked.

Secondarily, students who earn respectable marks in PS 101 also should leave the course able to:

- (6) listen to complex presentations, extract information from them, and take good notes;
- (7) read sophisticated written materials, then extract and synthesize the contents;
- (8) employ facts and concepts in an analytical discussion of current events.

Consistent with UKCore's CCC requirement, students who attend regularly, read the assigned material, and participate fully in our UKCore projects should be able to:

(9) demonstrate an understanding of historical, societal, and cultural differences arising from an individual's personal background and core belief system;

(10) demonstrate a basic understanding of how these differences have influenced the political process and the civic life created through that process;

(11) demonstrate an understanding of the cultural context in which both historical and contemporary political processes play out and how culture helps shape an individual's perceived responsibilities in civic life;

(12) demonstrate an understanding of how the American political system varies across states and across regions as well as how it has varied over time.

## Required Reading

Prof. Voss does not intend to require a costly textbook this semester. Textbooks tend to contain more content than students will process in a single semester, and certainly more content than the professor and Teaching Assistants would have time to develop and assess in class. Instead, PS 101 will develop most course objectives through free materials available online (including parts of Prof. Voss' *Parts of the Machine* manuscript currently under development).

The specific readings and videos will not be listed in this syllabus. They unfold each week on the course Canvas site as part of topical modules. The main reason for the delayed rollout is so the contents of the course can adapt in real time, with articles added and taken away based on what's happening in the world – so the precise number of articles, videos, and writings may shift between now and the end of the semester. In lieu of a detailed list, you receive this guaranteed maximum to help assess the overall workload of the course: Required readings will not exceed a combination of 9 book chapters, 15 videos, and 135 online articles/videos written by others.

While some of the online materials will be free, most of them come **the Dow Jones/Wall Street Journal online archive**, which give students access to half a decade of educational materials. Having access to the printed *Wall Street Journal* newspaper will not be sufficient, because few of the articles we will use come from this semester; most are older articles, columns, and book reviews protected by a paywall. Students gain access to the archives by purchasing a student subscription to the *Journal*, which costs \$15 for 15 weeks when students subscribe online at this location: <http://r.wsj.net/hS2ws>

## Required Resource

For the first time this semester, Prof. Voss will require attendance in PS 101 lecture-hall meetings, a result of unprecedently poor student attendance in recent semester. After considering different approaches for confirming student attendance, Prof. Voss settled on **the TopHat system**, because in addition to an attendance-taking system, it comes with numerous other features that can enhance the lecture-hall learning environment. Students will need to gain access to this subscription service. Most will have received an invitation to subscribe before the course starts, but if they failed to receive such an invitation, they should alert Prof. Voss. This service costs \$26 per semester, but the price does not increase if students use it in multiple courses within a semester, and they have the option to subscribe more cheaply for a longer time period (i.e., for an entire year, or for their entire college careers).

## Evaluation

Each student's final grade will consist of a weighted average of these components:

10% **Module Homework** – Online multiple-choice questions to assess reading attentiveness/comprehension

Topical modules in PS 101 typically end with homework assignments, with a total of nine planned (because Module 1 does not come with one). Each assignment usually will consist of multiple-choice questions taken from the module's required readings, videos, and activities. As shown by the tentative homework and reading grid below, the assignment typically opens up on Canvas two days after the module content itself appears, giving students several days to complete the work. Students may try the assignment at least three times – although questions will vary each time – before the final deadline, with the highest score retained. (Each will be set up to allow five attempts, but students may lose one or two due to computer issues, leaving only three valid opportunities.) Failing to complete an assignment by the deadline will result in a zero, unless the student offers a university-recognized excuse that spans more than half of the available work time. Note that the teaching team reserves the right to combine module assignments (for double credit) or to reschedule them, as long as students have at least one work day and one weekend day to complete the work.

15% **Section Attendance & Participation** – Students are required to attend weekly discussion sections led by the teaching team. Each section instructor will indicate the grading policy operating in that section.

Students are required to attend 13-14 discussion-section meetings organized and led by a Teaching Assistant. (The number depends on whether a student is in a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday section.) Part of this course grade will come from the percentage of required sections that a student attends (which depends on when a student joined the course and how many excused absences the student had). Students who arrive late to section meetings or who leave early may suffer penalties. The remainder of this score depends on students completing all required readings and showing up in section meeting ready to participate helpfully in discussions or activities centered on that material. The specific policies for each section appear in the syllabus supplement handed out during the first section meeting. However, note that students who violate norms of civil behavior in lecture, such as by fiddling with a cell phone or tablet, may lose participation points as well – and if such behavior interferes with the learning of others, a student may even be asked to leave the class (forfeiting both attendance and participation credit).

10% **Lecture-Hall Quizzes** – Students must subscribe to TopHat and secure an electronic device that functions with the system. (Contact Prof. Voss if you do not think you have access to an adequate device, because TopHat will provide a solution.) Starting on August 30, Prof. Voss will begin using TopHat to evaluate student attendance, student attentiveness during presentations, and student mastery of required readings due before the meeting date. Half of this grade will reflect attendance, and half will depend on a student's answers. Note that because students will be allowed to miss at least ten attendance checks during the semester without excuse, no adjustments will be made due to technological difficulties or excused absences unless the student documents an excuse that interferes with five or more lecture-hall meetings.

10% **UK Core Projects**, related to citizenship, diversity, conflict, and compromise (as per the requirements of the UKCore CCC requirement). Most students will meet this requirement by participating in, and then learning about, a pair of research projects on politics and policy – which will involve completing a pair of brief surveys, hearing presentations on research design/methodology, and then learning how the results were used in actual research. Exact dates for these projects are still being determined, because they must be approved by the relevant university office, but students will receive advance warning of the surveys and will have at least a week to complete each. Alternative assignments for those who do not wish to participate also will be offered.

16% **First Midterm Exam**, to take place at 2 pm on Wednesday, 27 September 2017, in the regular lecture-hall classroom. This 45-minute exam covers all lectures, readings, and videos scheduled for before that

test. *Re-Take Option*: In the student's subsequent section meeting – that is, the meetings scheduled for 29 September through 4 October 2017 – students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by re-answering some of the exam questions. Each instructor will indicate the details of the re-take policy in that section.

17% **Second Midterm** Exam, to take place at 2 pm on Wednesday, 1 November 2017, in the regular lecture-hall classroom. This 45-minute exam covers all lectures, readings, and videos scheduled after the first exam. Students again get the *re-take option* in sections meetings scheduled for 3-8 November 2017.

22% **Final Exam**, which will take place on Monday, 11 December 2017, from 3:30 – 5:30 pm in the regular lecture-hall classroom. It covers lectures, readings, and videos scheduled since the last midterm (worth 17 percentage points), but also includes a cumulative section on core social-science concepts (worth 5 points).

### ***Grading (aka The Mystical Voss Curve)***

Each evaluation item will be scored on the traditional 100-point scale, representing the percentage of available points earned by the student in each grading category. Combining these percentages into an average, with each one weighted by the percentage of the final course grade that it represents, results in the student's final course average. At a minimum, that weighted average guarantees the letter grade associated with that average in the conventional **10-point scale** to which students are accustomed:

A = 90-100  
B = 80-89  
C = 70-79  
D = 60-69  
E = 0-59

That being said, Prof. Voss is widely known as a “hard teacher,” and in one sense his reputation is accurate: PS 101 demands a lot from pupils. The course is designed so that a student with typical skills and typical background should devote 8 hours per week to the course, including an average of 5 hours per week outside of class for reading, organizing notes, studying, etc. Presentations are complex; readings are demanding; content does not get repeated over and over; no study guides tell students what to memorize; exams consist almost entirely of challenging questions that require students to think and understand. This approach allows students who are bright and/or hard working to learn a ton from PS 101 and permits them to document that superior level of learning, but it also means that the course does not exhibit common levels of grade inflation (e.g., half the class crammed above an 85% average).

However, Prof. Voss is not a “hard teacher” in a different sense, the sense in which students often mean that phrase: one who tends to give students poor letter grades and harm their GPA. Why? He judges student performance relatively rather than absolutely. In other words, he grades “on the curve.” What matters is not a student's raw score, but a student's class rank. What matters is not how students perform compared to some arbitrary expectation of how many points they should have earned, but instead compared to how many points have been earned by other students completing the same assignments after encountering the same material from the same instructors under the same circumstances. By grading students according to their relative ranking in the class, Prof. Voss ensures *fairness across time and across different teaching teams*.

How is this curve implemented? Officially, nothing changes in the PS 101 gradebook until the end of the semester – although, along the way, Prof. Voss will give students information about where they stand on each exam as well as when submitting **midterm grades** (which will incorporate the first exam as well as attendance, participation, and homework to date). The official curve happens at the end of the

semester. Prof. Voss sorts all of the students assigned *to a particular Teaching Assistant* according to their final course averages. Thus, Prof. Voss ensures that students receive neither an advantage nor a disadvantage from taking PS 101, either in general or with a specific T.A.

This curve does not adhere to a strict quota. Generally, the curve distributes letter grades so that they mimic the grade distribution seen in comparable introductory social-science courses (i.e., about 20% A's, 44% B's, 23% C's, 13% D's & E's). However, this is a rough approximation only, because the exact results depends on how individuals and how sections perform in a given semester; independent information about the performance, ability, and work ethic of individual sections might lead to a curve that is more or less generous than usual. Students do have this guarantee: No matter how well their section performs, under no circumstances will they be curved downward rather than upward. If every student earns at least an 80%, then every student would receive at least a "B" grade, and if every student in a section earned above 90%, then the section would receive all A's. Midterm grades, submitted by midnight on 20 October 2017, will reflect the curve to show the student's relative performance, rather than indicating the student's raw average ... those grades "include the curve," as students sometimes ask.

### ***A Scientific Approach to Student Evaluation (aka The Legendary Voss Exams)***

Prof. Voss believes strongly in the scientific measurement of student performance, a conviction that shapes his approach to evaluating and grading students. Specifically:

- Students in PS 101 will be graded based on a **variety of evaluation methods**, not just in-class exams. That way, grades in PS 101 do not depend on whether students are good test takers to the same extent they do in many introductory college courses do.
- Even the three **examinations exhibit variety**, offering numerous questions in varied formats: multiple choice, identification, short answer. That way, test scores in PS 101 do not depend on how a student processes and organizes information to the same extent as the more-uniform exams employed in other introductory courses.
- Usually PS 101 exams employ challenging **questions that require real understanding** rather than just memorization in order to receive full credit. That way, grading in PS 101 rewards real learning that might persist, not short-term cramming.
- Even the handful of Multiple Choice exam questions are **answered on paper** rather than using a fill-in-the-bubble format, so that students are allowed (if not encouraged) to "talk back" to the grader to explain why no answer or multiple answers seem correct. That way, students are in less danger of "overthinking" a question and losing points for the wrong reasons, which can happen on fill-in-the-bubble multiple-choice exams.
- Teaching Assistants grade each student's exam closely to detect variations in knowledge, commonly granting **partial credit** as justified. That way, test scores can show meaningful variation, with some students performing much better and some students performing much worse than average – which means that how one student compares to another student is much less likely to depend on luck than in other introductory courses.

This scientific approach to evaluation comes with a cost, though: Rather than get instant gratification, students concerned or curious about their exam scores must wait until the T.A.'s have had enough time to grade them properly (i.e., about two weeks for the midterms).

So no, PS 101 as taught by Prof. Voss is not easy. Both the comments you will see on public Web sites and the comments contained in his written evaluations at UK say the same thing: “hard but worth it.” Obviously you may decide on the “worth it” part yourself, but you should assume the “hard” part from the outset. The reading load is not light by UK standards. The sophistication of the lectures will challenge students, forcing them to learn how to listen critically, take quality notes, and study efficiently. The exams sample student knowledge at varying levels of depth, with some questions relatively obvious but some hard enough that only the best students can handle them. If you won’t work, this course may not be for you.

## **Lecture-Hall Attendance & Decorum**

For the first time this semester, Prof. Voss will begin **taking attendance** in the PS 101 lecture-hall meetings. He delayed implementing such a policy for years, even though other instructors had long ago moved in that direction, because he preferred to think of college-age students as adults able to make their own decisions and choose their own priorities. However, for the last couple of years, poor student attendance has begun to harm the learning environment even for students doing their jobs properly. Absentees would disrupt class meetings to ask about policies or content they missed, and their irresponsibility created headaches for the Teaching Team – shortchanging the hard-working students who deserved such close attention.

That being said, a wise student would not skip class even if Prof. Voss neglected to take attendance. Why? Students who miss more than a few PS 101 presentations are almost guaranteed to perform poorly, even without a penalty for poor attendance:

1. The presentations do not mimic the readings. Most of the information presented in the lectures does not appear in the assigned readings (just as most of the information you’ll gain through reading will not appear again in the lectures).
2. Important organizational policies may be announced during class meetings, and ignorance of those policies can result in bad mistakes.
3. A habit of missing class increases the risk that you’ll miss an exam day, when attendance is required. Earning a zero on an exam can torpedo a student’s average.

Students who do wish to attend a lecture meeting must plan to arrive before the start of the presentation. Unavoidably, a student may be late once or twice, and that’s okay as long as you slip into the room quietly and take a seat unobtrusively. Once class starts, students should not expect to leave unless there’s an emergency, nor should students start packing up until the presentation is done. Students may face rare circumstances that require early departure on a given day, in which case inform Prof. Voss ahead of time and then sit near the rear.

Because the lecture-hall portion of PS 101 uses TopHat, students will need to bring some kind of electronic device. Turn off the audio before class starts, however, and refrain from using them for purposes unrelated to PS 101. (Unless they are sitting in the back three rows of the classroom, students witnessed using devices for purposes unrelated to PS 101 may be penalized.) Note that Prof. Voss even discourages the use of electronic devices for taking notes; research fairly unambiguously shows that students learn better when they take notes in their own hand.

Students should be respectful not only to members of the teaching team, but also to other classmates who ask questions or who express opinions. Information elicited by student

comments, and sometimes even points made by students, may appear on an examination.

Should a student engage in activities that detract from the learning environment, we reserve the right to punish violations by *deducting up to 5 percentage points from the final course grade.*

## Course Organization & Outline

The schedule below provides a tentative outline of what will take place in lecture hall, what will take place in section meetings on a given day, when each learning module will open, and when each module homework assignment will open and close. Alterations in this schedule may, and likely will, become necessary.

DATE	DAY	PS 101 LECTURE-HALL ACTIVITY	SECTION CONTENT				MODULE Schedule		
			Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Honors (010)	OPENS UP	HW OPENS	HW DUE
23-Aug-17	Wed.	0. Prologue: Parts of the Machine		Introductions			Module 1		
25-Aug-17	Fri.	n/a			Introductions	Introductions	Module 0		
28-Aug-17	Mon.	1. M1 - P.S. Concepts (& TopHat)	Intro & Mod. 1					Module 0	
30-Aug-17	Wed.	2. M2 - Constitution part I		Module 1			Module 2		
1-Sep-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 1	Module 1		Module 2	Module 0
4-Sep-17	Mon.	LABOR DAY							
6-Sep-17	Wed.	3. M2 - Constitution part II		Module 2			Module 3		Module 2
8-Sep-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 2	Module 2		Module 3	
11-Sep-17	Mon.	4. M2 - Constitution part III	Module 2						
13-Sep-17	Wed.	5. M3 - Legislative Branch part I		Module 3					Module 3
15-Sep-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 3	Module 3			
18-Sep-17	Mon.	6. M3 - Legislative Branch part II	Module 3						
20-Sep-17	Wed.	7. M3 - Legislative Branch part III		Review					
22-Sep-17	Fri.	n/a			Review	Honors Focus			
25-Sep-17	Mon.	8. M3 - Focus on Domestic Policy	Review						
27-Sep-17	Wed.	<b>MIDTERM EXAM #1</b>		n/a					
29-Sep-17	Fri.	n/a			Re-Take Day	Re-Take Day	Module 4		
2-Oct-17	Mon.	9. M4 - Executive Branch part I	Re-Take Day					Module 4	
4-Oct-17	Wed.	10. M4 - Executive Branch part II		Re-Take Day					
6-Oct-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 4	Module 4	Module 5		Module 4
9-Oct-17	Mon.	11. M4 - Executive Branch part III	Module 4					Module 5	
11-Oct-17	Wed.	12. M4 - Focus on Foreign Policy		Module 4					
13-Oct-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 5	Module 5	Module 6		Module 5
16-Oct-17	Mon.	13. M5 - Judicial Branch part I	Module 5					Module 6	
18-Oct-17	Wed.	14. M5 - Judicial Branch part II		Module 5					
20-Oct-17	Fri.	<b>Midterm Grades Submitted</b>			Module 6	Honors Focus			Module 6
23-Oct-17	Mon.	15. M5 - Focus on Civil Rights & Liberties	Module 6						
25-Oct-17	Wed.	16. M6 - Political Subdivisions part I		Module 6					
27-Oct-17	Fri.				Review	Module 6			
30-Oct-17	Mon.	17. M6 - Political Subdivisions part II	Review						
1-Nov-17	Wed.	<b>MIDTERM EXAM #2</b>			Review or n/a				
3-Nov-17	Fri.	n/a				Re-Take Day	Re-Take Day	Module 7	
6-Nov-17	Mon.	18. M6 - Focus on Educational Policy	Re-Take Day					Module 7	
8-Nov-17	Wed.	19. M7 - The American People part I		Re-Take Day					
10-Nov-17	Fri.	<b>Last Day to Withdraw from Course</b>							
13-Nov-17	Mon.	20. M7 - The American People part II	Module 7			Module 7	Module 8		Module 7
15-Nov-17	Wed.	21. M8 - Linking Institutions part I		Module 7				Module 8	
17-Nov-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 8	Module 8	Module 9		Module 8
20-Nov-17	Mon.	22. M8 - Linking Institutions part II	Module 8						
22-Nov-17	Wed.	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY							
24-Nov-17	Fri.	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY							
27-Nov-17	Mon.	23. M8 - Linking Institutions part III	Module 9					Module 9	
29-Nov-17	Wed.	24. M9 - The Election Connection part I		Module 8					
1-Dec-17	Fri.	n/a			Module 9	Module 9			Module 9
4-Dec-17	Mon.	25. M9 - The Election Connection part I	Review						
6-Dec-17	Wed.	26. Conclusion		Module 9					
8-Dec-17	Fri.	n/a			Review	Honors Focus			
11-Dec-17	Mon.	<b>FINAL EXAM 3:30 - 5:30 PM</b>							

## INTRODUCTION TO UNIVERSITY BOILERPLATE

Courses at the University of Kentucky operate within the bounds of a wide variety of regulations, some issued originally by the federal government or the university administration, some issued internally through faculty governance. These regulations have resulted in lengthy boilerplate that most faculty stick straight into their syllabi, content that students rarely process – partly because it is rather bureaucratic in tone and unpleasant to read. This plain-English version of the rules is not intended to contradict or replace what appears in the boilerplate, only to make it more accessible to students. Should anything appearing in the next two pages be judged contrary to university rules and regulations, then official university policy trumps anything here.

### Extensions and Excused Absences

Generally, students *must* submit all assignments by the communicated deadline and take all tests at the official date/time. Late assignments lose 7 points per day, starting *the minute an assignment is late*. Personal issues, computer problems, excessive workload, and other such considerations will not result in extensions, extra credit, or waived penalties. There are two exceptions, however, and students should inquire with Prof. Voss if either circumstance seems to apply. First, if students have three final exams scheduled on the same day, they have the right to demand that one exam be rescheduled (although it is unlikely that the PS 101 exam is the one that must move, because the course with the highest number is the one that must accommodate the student). Second, a student may have an “excused absence” as defined by university policy, assuming the student can provide sufficient evidence (e.g., “Tier 2” and “Tier 3” notifications from University Health Services) to document the excuse.

**Students with Excused Absences** Students may not need to follow the deadlines and policies announced earlier in this syllabus if certain rare circumstances arise: a death in the immediate family, a serious illness or debilitating injury, an obligation growing out of a recognized extracurricular event, a major religious holiday, an interview for a graduate school or full-time job opportunity, or some other circumstance in which being asked to meet syllabus requirements would result in what Prof. Voss considers an undue burden on the student. Even in these exceptional cases, students must meet certain conditions to avoid negative consequences:

- Students who must miss a section meeting due to an excused absence still must attend one of the section meetings for that module, preferably one led by the same Teaching Assistant. Students may skip a module’s section meeting only if the nature and/or timing of the excuse precludes attending any of the sections for that subject matter.
- Because students have many days in which to complete a homework assignment, they may avoid penalties for missing a deadline only if the nature of the excuse would consume most of the time during which a student could have completed the requirement.
- The timing for when students must inform Prof. Voss that they have an excuse depends on the nature of the excuse. In general, students must inform Prof. Voss as soon as possible that they will miss an exam or submit a late assignment. For example, few illnesses and injuries are so debilitating that they prevent sending an email message before an exam begins, so unless a medical problem represents a sudden emergency, Prof. Voss must be notified ahead of time; students may not wait until after they have failed to meet course obligations. Similarly, as per university policy, students who need an excused absence for a major religious holiday must inform the professor in advance by writing by at least a week, or the holiday does not represent an excuse. Failure to notify

Prof. Voss in advance that an excused absence will be necessary, when nothing about the circumstances of your excuse required such a delay, forfeits the right to have penalties for an absence or late submission waived. Students who miss an exam due to an unexpected or debilitating emergency that prevented giving advance notice still must document the official excuse no later than a week after returning from the absence.

For more information, see Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 at <http://www.uky.edu/universitySenate/>

## **Individual Student Needs**

Prof. Voss believes strongly in helping students achieve their best work in PS 101. Sometimes that means helping students academically or working with them when they have unexpected excused absences, but for some individual students, it may mean recognizing and adapting to long-term needs or circumstances. Specific regulations help govern course policy when a student's needs grow out of a university-recognized disability, but even if your situation falls outside of the formal rules, you should never hesitate to reach out to Prof. Voss if you find that you could use some help – whether specifically with the course or with something outside of the course that is hampering your ability to thrive academically.

**Disabled Students** Some students have disabilities that must be accommodated if they are to take full advantage of the learning opportunities in PS 101. The Teaching Team in PS 101 is dedicated to helping students with disabilities – and, in the case of university-recognized disabilities, to following UK policy with regard to accommodating those conditions. That recognition process begins with UK's Disability Resource Center, located in Suite 407 of the Multidisciplinary Science Building, 725 Rose Street, directed by David T. Beach ([dtbeac1@uky.edu](mailto:dtbeac1@uky.edu)), 257-2754. Students seeking disability accommodation should provide Prof. Voss with their DRC notification in both electronic and hard-copy form if possible, and should arrange to visit Prof. Voss during his office hours (or to make a mutually agreeable appointment outside of those hours) to discuss in private the necessary accommodations.

**Other Cases** Note that university policy allows the Teaching Team to accommodate individual student needs that do not rise to the level of a recognized “disability” and/or do not grant them the right to an official “excused” absence. Although we must use our discretion when dealing with circumstances outside of those established categories, and we will ensure that all students are treated as equally as possible, we also are willing to work with students so that external impediments are not allowed to undermine their performance in the course. When in doubt, visit Prof. Voss and discuss your circumstances with him.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

All of the material that students submit for class must reflect their own work and use their own words. Students who copy work or words from someone else are guilty of cheating, and specifically of plagiarism, and can face serious disciplinary action. We intend to pursue any such cases of academic dishonesty to the full extent allowed by university procedures. We encourage students to visit the Ombud's Office or its Web page to learn more about UK's policies as regards **academic dishonesty**.