POS2041-602: American National Government

Department of Political Science, College of Sciences

3 Credits

Instructor Information

Instructor	Dr. Annabelle Conroy
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Class Information

Term	Fall 2018
Course # and Section	POS2041-602
Course Name	American National Government
Credit Hours	3
Class Meeting Days	Mondays and Wednesdays
Class Meeting Time	1:30 PM - 2:45 PM
Class Location	CB1 O113
Course Modality	P (Face-To-Face Instruction)

Introduction to the Course

Course Description

POS2041-American National Government has been designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the concepts and issues of the United States government. As such, it examines the structure, philosophy, accomplishments and failings of the American government. Students will examine and analyze why the American political system operates as it does, who wins and who loses in the process and why this system endures.

Course Objectives

The main objectives of this course are:

1. To provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the American system of government.
2. To provide students with an understanding of the ways in which the various branches of the government, as well as other political actors, operate in the context of the American political institutions and processes.
3. To show how the main political actors and institutions have changed over time.
4. To develop key skills required for the successful study of political science and for the graduate job market.
5. To provide students with the tools to become active and engaged citizens and to have the ability to make informed political decisions.

By the end of the course students should:

1. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.
2. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.
3. Develop and demonstrate knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.
4. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.

Course Prerequisites

This is an introductory course and, thus, there are no prerequisites for this course.

Required Texts and Materials

The textbook for this class is:

Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewicz, editors (2016): American Government (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.. OpenStax. ISBN-13-978-1-938168-17-8

This textbook is an OpenStax textbook which means it is free to view and download. The link for each chapter is included in each week's module. To access each chapter you just have to click on the link provided in each module. To navigate through the chapter, you may use the "Next" or "Back" buttons located at the top and bottom of each chapter's screen. In addition, if you wish to download the whole book at time and begin looking through it, click on the title and then click on the "Download PDF" link on the right of the screen.

Format of the Course

This course will consist of a combination of lectures, class discussions, individual research and short in-class writing assignments. Each week I will post one or more questions which you should consider and prepare for that week's discussion. The questions, readings and assignments for each week can be found on the modules for each week. To see which module corresponds to each week, please consult the class schedule.

Grading

The final grade will be calculated on the basis of points earned and it will have the following components:

Component	**Points**
Protocol Points	5
Attendance and Participation	15
Four Exams	80
Total	**100**

Protocol Points:

Protocol points are points that are given to you at the beginning of the course and will remain with you as long as you observe and abide by the class protocols and the UCF student code of conduct. In other words, you start off with 5 points and you will only lose some or all of them if you somehow violate any of the protocols set forth in the syllabus.

You can lose protocol points if you do any of the following:

1. Use rude, disrespectful, intimidating or unprofessional language in any communication or discussion assignment in this course. Please make sure to review the email protocols in the Course Policies section of the syllabus.
2. Violate the ethics standards set forth by UCF (see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/).
3. Repeatedly arrive late to class.
4. Fail to turn off or turn to silent your cellphone or other electronic device during the class.
5. Fail to observe the protocols set forth in this syllabus.

Attendance and Participation Policy:

Participation is a very important requirement of the course, since it is only by exchanging ideas that we can deepen our understanding of the material covered and of the different interpretations and possible solutions to the issues raised. Thus, students are expected to have done the readings before coming to class and to come prepared with any questions or issues they want to raise. Keep in mind that it is not enough to just come to class. Rather, students are expected to actively contribute to class discussions. Each week we will have discussions and sometimes we may also have written assignments to be completed in class. The assignments will generally be based on questions derived from the week's topic. This classwork will also serve as preparation for the exams.

Students are allowed 3 absences during the term unless, of course, there is a valid medical or emergency reason that prevents them from coming to class. If this is the case, students are responsible for presenting supporting documentation. Each additional absence beyond the 3 allowed absences will be penalized by the loss of 5 points. <u>However, if a student is absent for more than 8 classes ***for any reason***, this will result in failing the class</u>. Please keep in mind also that repeated late arrivals will result in loss of attendance and participation points.

The Undergraduate Catalog states, "Reasons for acceptable absences may include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligations, severe weather conditions, and religious holidays."

Examinations

There will be 4 examinations in this course. The final examination will be cumulative. You must take all four exams. Failure to take any of the exams will result in a grade of "F" for the entire course. Also, please come to the exams on time. <u>Students who arrive after the first student to complete an exam has left the room, will not be permitted to take the exam.</u> In this case, the student will have to reschedule the exam since the instructor will have to make up a whole different exam.

As with any other course, I urge you not to fall behind on the readings. Each week we will be covering a lot of new information and if you do not keep up, it can become overwhelming the day before the exam. In addition, keep in mind that the final examination will be cumulative.

In case of a serious extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from taking any of the exams, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor **before** the examination. In addition, the student is responsible for providing valid and convincing medical documentation. Please note that the format of any makeup examination may be different from that administered to the rest of the class.

Make-up Exams and Assignments

Per university policy, you are allowed to submit make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for university-sponsored events, religious observances, or legal obligations (such as jury duty). If this participation conflicts with your course assignments, I will offer a reasonable opportunity for you to complete missed assignments and/or exams. The make-up assignment and grading scale will be equivalent to the missed assignment and its grading scale. Please contact me ahead of time to notify me of upcoming needs.

Please take note of the following course stipulations:

- There will be no extra credit assignments.
- Late assignments <u>will not</u> be accepted unless valid medical documentation is presented and only when arrangements have been made <u>before</u> the due date. Make-up assignments will have a different format than those assigned to the rest of the class.
- Make sure to check the "Grades" section in Webcourses often. Please be aware that no grade will be changed 2 weeks after the grade for a particular assignment has been posted.
- If you have a particular concern about a grade received, you need to make an appointment with me and bring specific points which you wish to address. Keep in mind that if you ask me to read the disputed assignment/test again, your grade may go up or down.

- Please do come and see me if you are having trouble understanding a topic or concept. Also, I encourage you to ask questions during class if something is not clear.

Grade Distribution

The grade distribution for the course will be as follows:

Grade Distribution	
Letter Grade	**Points Needed**
A	94 -100
A-	90.0- 93.9
B+	87.0 – 89.9
B	84.0 – 86.9
B-	80.0 - 83.9
C+	77.0 – 79.9
C	74.0 – 76.9
C-	70.0 – 73.9
D+	67.0 – 69.9
D	64.0 – 66.9
D-	61.0 – 63.9
F	0.0 – 60.9

Grade Dissemination

In general, grades for each assignment will appear two weeks after the submission deadline. You can access your scores at any time by logging into your course through Webcourses. Mistakes can be made while entering the grades, so you are responsible for monitoring your grades and making sure that they are accurate. You have one week after the grades are posted to challenge or request a correction to your grades. After this time, grades become final.

If you wish to challenge your grade you must make an appointment with the professor and present the evidence to show that your grade is incorrect. Keep in mind that if a review has to be made of your graded assignment, the grade can go up or down depending on the review.

Grades of "Incomplete":

The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the “I” will automatically be recorded as an “F” on your transcript.

Course Policies

Technology and Media

Webcourses:

Webcourses is an online course management system (accessed through my.ucf.edu and then the "Online Course Tools" tab) which will be used as a medium for turning in assignments and a forum for communicating with your professor. The Webcourses site will have up-to-date information on topics, class assignments, schedule and so on. In addition, each class module will include useful tools for exam preparation and to add to the material presented in class. My recommendation is to check Webcourses regularly for updates.

Email:

In this class our official mode of communication is through email located inside Webcourses. All communication between student and instructor and between student

and student should be respectful and professional. When sending an email be sure to observe the protocols set out in the syllabus. If you are unsure of how to write an email with the proper salutation and closing, you might want to consult the following site: Email Etiquette Links to an external site.(by Ali Hale in *Daily Writing Tips*). It is the student's responsibility to check Webcourses frequently. You may also wish to create a Knight's Email account at www.knightsemail.ucf.edu for separate official communication from the university. If for any reason you cannot log into Webcourses, you may use my office email address which is: Annabelle.conroy@ucf.edu. You may also call or come to my office (information provided above).

Electronic devices:

Laptops, tablets and cell phones **may not** be used during class. Please make sure that they are all either turned off or set to "silent" during class. A violation of this request will result in loss of protocol points.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

- *Unauthorized assistance*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
- *Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means*: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
- *Commercial Use of Academic Material*: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
- *Falsifying or misrepresenting* the student's own academic work.
- *Plagiarism*: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.
- *Multiple Submissions*: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.
- *Helping another violate* academic behavior standards.

For more information about Academic Integrity, students may consult The Center for Academic Integrity Links to an external site.

For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, The Golden Rule. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to academic misconduct. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade.

In this class, the first incident of cheating will result in a "0" for that particular assignment and an "F" in the course for a second incident.

Course Accessibility Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need disability-related access in this course should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone (407) 823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable.Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of the surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Please make a note of the guide's physical location and consider reviewing the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, we may need to access a first aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those items are located in this building, see http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/workplacesafety.html (click on link from menu on left).

- To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to my.ucf.edu and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the tool bar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on your Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert," fill out the information, including your e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video.You CAN Survive an Active Shooter (Links to an external

  site.)Links to an external site.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact your instructor to discuss your circumstances.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need not make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

Make sure you read the syllabus in its entirety before proceeding with the course. By proceeding with the course, you are implicitly agreeing to be bound by all the conditions set forth in the syllabus.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignments/Notes
Part I: The Foundations of the American System		
Week 1: Aug. 20	American Government and Civic Engagement	Week 1 Module
Week 2: Aug. 27	The Constitution and its Origins	Week 2 Module
Week 3: Sept. 3	American Federalism	No class on Monday: Labor Day Week 3 Module
Part II: Individual Agency and Action		
Week 4: Sept. 10	Civil Liberties	**First Exam: Monday, Sep. 10** Week 4 Module
Week 5: Sept.17	Civil Liberties (cont'd)	Week 5 Module
Week 6: Sept. 24	Civil Rights	Week 6 Module
Week 7: Oct. 1	Civil Rights (cont'd)	Week 7 Module

Week 8: Oct. 8	Public Opinion	**Second Exam: Monday, Oct. 8** Week 8 Module
Week 9: Oct. 15	Voting and Elections	Week 9 Module
Part III: Toward Collective Action: Mediating Institutions		
Week 10: Oct. 22	The Media	Week 10 Module Note: Friday, Oct 26: Withdrawal deadline
Week 11: Oct. 29	Political Parties	Week 11 Module
Week 12: Nov. 5	Interest Groups and Lobbying	**Third Exam: Monday, Nov. 5** Week 12 Module
Part IV: Delivering Collective Action: Formal Institutions		
Week 13: Nov. 12	The Congress	No class on Monday: Veterans Day Week 13 Module
Week 14: Nov. 19	The Presidency	Week 14 Module Thanksgiving Break: Nov.24-26
Week 15: Nov. 26	The Courts	Week 15 Module
Week 16: Dec. 3	Final Exam Period	**Final Exam:** **Monday, Dec. 3, 1:00 PM – 3:50 PM** Exam will be in the usual classroom.

Please make sure that you read the syllabus in its entirety (all the sections above) before proceeding with the course. By proceeding with the course, you are implicitly agreeing to be bound by all the conditions set forth in the syllabus.