POS2041– American National Government

Department of Political Science
College of Sciences, University of Central Florida

Syllabus

Instructor Information		Course Information	
Instructor	Dr. Annabelle Conroy	**Term:**	Spring 2017
Office:	HPH 302R	**Section**:	602
Phone	(407) 823-2608	**Credits**:	3
E-mail	Please use the Webcourses email to get in touch with me. However, if for any reason you are not able to use Webcourses, you can reach me at:annabelle.conroy@ucf.edu	**Class Time:**	Tuesday-Thursday 10:30am-11:45am
Office hours:	In my office (HPH 302R): Mon-Wed-Fri: 8:30am-10:30 am	**Classroom:**	BA1 0126

Course Overview

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. Have a thorough knowledge of American political institutions and processes.
2. Be able to describe and account for the ways in which the various political actors interact with other key actors in the American political system.
3. Understand the role of each one of the branches of government.
4. Grasp the ways in which the American political system has evolved over time.

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 an OpenStax textbook which means it is free to view and download. The link for each chapter is included in each week's module.

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.

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

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 a scale of 0-100 and it will have the following components:

Component	Points
Protocol Points	5
Class 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.
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.

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.

Classwork

Each week we will have discussion and writing 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. The grade for classwork will have a writing and presentation component. Missed classwork assignments due to illness can be turned in the next class meeting. If it is not, it will not be counted towards the final grade.

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 <u>**before**</u> 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.

Please take note of the following course stipulations:

- There will be no extra credit assignments.
- Late assignments will not be accepted unless valid medical documentation is presented and only when arrangements have been made before 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.

The grade distribution for the course will be as follows:

Points	**Letter Grade**
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	F

In general, grades for each assignment will appear one week after the submission deadline. 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 two weeks 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 grade, the grade can go up or down depending on the review.

Grade Dissemination

Graded tests and materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time by logging into your course through Webcourses. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades.

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. 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 may result in loss of protocol points.

Course Policies: Student Expectations

Diversity and Inclusion: The University of Central Florida considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics must be valued in our community.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options
at **www.shield.ucf.edu** and **http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/**.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact Student Accessibility Services.

Disability Access: The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Professionalism Policy: Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, *etc*. **must be silenced** during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment and will lose protocol points. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, *etc*., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Academic Conduct Policy: Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/) for

further details. As in all University courses, The Golden Rule Rules of Conduct will be applied. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Confirmation of such incidents can also result in expulsion from the University. In this class, if you are caught cheating during an assignment (quiz, exam or paper) you will receive a grade a zero for that assignment. If you are caught a second time, you will fail the course. Keep in mind that in cases of cheating, all parties involved will be penalized (those seeking and receiving answers).

Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating: UCF faculty members have a responsibility for your education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to infringements of academic integrity. 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://z.ucf.edu/. **In my class, the first incidence of cheating results in a warning and a zero for the assignment. The second incidence will result in an F for the course and a "Z designation" on your transcript.** Please keep in mind that cheating often involves more than one person (the person(s) getting the answers and the person(s) providing the answers. Thus, everyone involved will be equally penalized.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at http://www.uwc.ucf.edu, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

Religious Observances: Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second week of class. If any assignment falls on a day in which you observe a religious holiday, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor by the end of the second week of class. In addition, it is your responsibility to make alternative arrangements for completing that particular assignment.

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: Jan. 9	American Government and Civic Engagement	Week 1 Module
Week 2: Jan. 16	The Constitution and its Origins	Week 2 Module
Week 3: Jan. 23	American Federalism	Week 3 Module
Part II: Civil Liberties and Rights		
Week 4: Jan. 30	Civil Liberties	**First Exam: Tuesday, Jan. 31** Week 4 Module
Week 5: Feb. 6	Civil Liberties (cont'd)	Week 5 Module
Week 6: Feb. 13	Civil Rights	Week 6 Module
Week 7: Feb. 20	Civil Rights (cont'd)	Week 7 Module
Part III: The Politics of Democracy		
Week 8: Feb. 27	Public Opinion and the Media	**Second Exam: Tuesday, Feb. 28** Week 8 Module
Week 9: Mar. 6	Voting and Elections	Week 9 Module
Week 10: Mar. 13	Spring Break	Week 10 Module
Week 11: Mar. 20	Political Parties	Week 11 Module
Week 12: Mar. 27	Interest Groups	Week 12 Module
Part IV: Formal Institutions		
Week 13: April 3	The Congress	Week 13 Module **Third Exam: Tuesday, April 4**
Week 14: April 10	The Presidency	Week 14 Module
Week 15: April 17	The Courts	Week 15 Module
Week 16-17: April 24-May 1	Final Exam Period	**Final Exam: Tuesday, May 02, 10:00 AM – 12:50 PM** Exam will be in the usual classroom.