POS 2041.0604: American National Government

Department of Political Science, College of Sciences

3 Credit Hours

Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Dr. Gary Smith	Term:	Spring 2019
Office Location:	312 Howard Philips Hall	Class Meeting Days:	MoWed
Office Hours:	Friday 10:00AM – 12:00PM and by appointment.	Class Meeting Time:	3:00PM-4:15PM
Phone:	407-823-2608	Class Location:	BA 1 – 212
Email:	Gary.smith@knights.ucf.edu or Webcourses@UCF messaging	Course Modality:	Lecture

Course Description

POS 2041: American National Government: A study of the dynamics of American national government, including its structure, organization, powers, and procedures.

The structure and actions of the U.S. national government play a central role in the lives of most of us. The effects of government policy can be quite clear to us – in the form of tax law and healthcare legislation – or the effects can be more indirect – for example in the adjustments of interest rates by the federal reserve. Regardless of how it affects us, the government and its policies are all around us at any given moment. Therefore, it is necessary that we all possess a solid understanding of why our government was structured the way that it was, why that structure has persisted, how that structure compares of other countries, and what that structure means for the future of the United States.

This course presents challenges that may be somewhat unique to many early career college students. First, the structure of the U.S. government can be complex and difficult to wrap one's head around. Second, and most importantly, there is not always one right answer to the questions that are posed in this course. Two perfectly reasonable people can be presented with the same problem and come up with two completely different answers. Therefore, while some of the assignments in this course will ask black-and-white questions, many of the questions posed in your assignments are open-ended and will ask you to offer the "best" solution a propose problem. Through in-class discussion, critical thinking questions, and dutiful reading, I hope that many of you will become comfortable making competing arguments with the goal of addressing the same potential challenges that are a result of social changes in the face of an inflexible government structure.

Now, a little bit about me! I'm an Orlando native and a recent graduate of UCF's Security Studies Ph.D. program (December 2018). I completed my M.A. in Political Science here in August of 2014 and received my B.A. in Political Science from Louisiana State University in the Summer of 2012. When I'm not conducting research in the field of conflict studies and political psychology, or teaching undergraduate courses here and at Valencia College – Osceola, I'm growing veggies and tending to my butterfly gardens while playing with our dog Mildred and our three cats Bastilla, Soban, and Amber. I

love, love teaching undergraduate courses in political science and I'm very happy to help anyone who is struggling in the course. Please do not hesitate to ask me to make appointments or stop me in class if I'm going too fast, I don't want anyone left behind!

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course:

- Students will 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.
- Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.
- Students will develop and demonstrate knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.
- Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.
- Students will develop and demonstrate the ability to critically analyze current news events relevant to U.S. law & politics.
- Students will develop and demonstrate the ability to critically develop and assess individual arguments.
- Students will develop and demonstrate to propose logically constructed solutions to policy problems.
- Students will improve their oral and written communication skills.

Enrollment Requirements

This course does not have prerequisites.

Course Activities

Current Events Requirement

In order to adequately see the information we're learning in practice, you will need to stay engaged in current events that are happening around the U.S. Therefore, you will need to read the news headlines and details daily. In order to ensure uniformity, everyone should get their key news resources from the Associated Press (AP) Newswire services. There will be current events questions on both the midterm and final exams and they will be drawn from this service. You are, of course, welcome to continue to gather news information from multiple sources, but make sure that you are using this service to track key news of the day for exam purposes. We will start each class with a brief (approx.. 5-10 minute) discussion of current events. Link: AP Newswire

Attendance (5%)

Students are expected to attend class regularly in order to succeed. Our class meets every Monday and Wednesday from 3:00PM to 4:15PM. Roll call attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class and will be worth 5% of your overall grade.

Participation (10%)

Though attendance is a necessary component of success in this course, it is not sufficient. Simply being present does not mean that you are critically engaging in the material. Therefore, in order to demonstrate that you're following the assigned readings and following current events, you will need to take part in the in-class discussions. In order to get credit for participation, at the end of each class you will need to submit a slip of paper (preferably a 3x5 notecard) with your name, the date, and a brief description of your contribution to the class discussion. In order to get full credit, you must submit **15** total slips. You can only submit one slip per class.

Unit Quizzes (15%)
At the end of each chapter, you will need to complete a unit quiz in Webcourses. These quizzes will vary in length (depending on the amount of material covered that week) and be a mixture of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. These must be completed by 11:59PM on Friday (with the exception of units that take more than one week). These quizzes **cannot be made up if missed**.

Short Reaction Papers (15%)
There will be two short reaction papers this semester. These papers will present you with a problem that you need to propose a solution to. These papers will be between 1 and 2 single-spaced pages in length (not including relevant references) and should be written using standard 12pt Times New Roman font. These will be submitted through Webcourses as Microsoft Word documents by 11:59PM on the indicated deadline. Late papers will incur severe penalties (10pts per class period).

Midterm Exam (25%)
The midterm exam will include 20 current events questions (worth 0.5 points each), 20 multiple-choice questions (1 pt. each), and two short essay questions (15 pts. each). The exam will take place in class and students are expected to bring a **Brown Scantron and Green Book** as none will be provided you.

Final Exam (30%)
The final exam will be cumulative and include 20 current events questions (worth 0.5 pts. each), 40 multiple-choice questions (0.5 pts each), two essay questions (35 pts. each). This exam will take place in class on **Wednesday, April 24th, 2019 from 1:00PM to 3:50PM**.

Important Dates

- Classes begin: January 7th, 2019
- Last day to drop without "W": January 10th, 2019
- Add deadline: January 11th, 2019
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no class): January 21st, 2019
- Spring Break: March 11th – March 16th, 2019
- Withdrawal deadline: March 20th, 2019

Assignment Submission
All assignments (except exams) will be submitted and tracked in Webcourses. Demonstrations will be made during the first day of class.

Final Exam
According to UCF policy, all courses should have a final examination or assessment and should meet during their designated final exam period. This will take place on **Wednesday, April 24th, 2019 from 1:00PM to 3:50PM**

Assessment and Grading Procedures

Grading Methods

A: 90% - 100%
B: 80% - 89%
C: 70% - 79%
D: 60% - 69%
F: <59%

Make-up Exams and Assignments

Per university policy, students must be allowed to turn in make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for university-sponsored events, religious observances, or legal obligations (such as jury duty).

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." However, you **must let me know prior to the absence in these situations in order to guarantee you receive credit.**

Grade Dissemination

To comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), grades must not be released to third parties, which includes posting grades by name, SSN, or UCFID. This section can indicate how you will return graded assignments to the individual student. To ensure students have prompt feedback, and knowledge of their progress, faculty members must record all grades in Webcourses@UCF and follow student data classification and security standards.

Course Materials and Resources

Required Textbook

Krutz, Glen. 2016. *American Government*.

This textbook does not need to be purchased, it is free, and is available through OpenStax. You can download the text in multiple forms through their website (link below) and will be provided as a PDF in Webcourses.

Link: Textbook Website

Policy Statements

Academic Integrity

The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) defines academic integrity as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action. http://academicintegrity.org/

UCF Creed: Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

1. Integrity: I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.
2. Scholarship: I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.
3. Community: I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.
4. Creativity: I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.
5. Excellence: I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

The following definitions of plagiarism and misuse of sources come from the Council of Writing Program Administrators <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9> and have been adopted by UCF's Department of Writing & Rhetoric.

Plagiarism
In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledg-ing its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

Misuse of Sources
A student who attempts (even if clumsily) to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student should be considered to have failed to cite and document sources appropri-ately.

Responses to 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://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade.
For more information about UCF's Rules of Conduct, see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/.

Unauthorized Use of Class Materials
There are many fraudulent websites claiming to offer study aids to students but are actually cheat sites. They encourage students to upload course materials, such as test questions, individual assignments, and examples of graded material. Such materials are the intellectual property of instructors, the university, or publishers and may not be distributed without prior authorization. Students who engage in such activity are in violation of academic conduct standards and may face penalties.

Unauthorized Use of Class Notes
Faculty have reported errors in class notes being sold by third parties, and the errors may be contributing to higher failure rates in some classes. The following is a statement appropriate for distribution to your classes or for inclusion on your syllabus:
Third parties may be selling class notes from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.

In-Class Recording Policy
Outside of the notetaking and recording services offered by Student Accessibility Services, the creation of an audio or video recording of all or part of a class for personal use is allowed *only* with the advance and explicit written consent of the instructor. Such recordings are only acceptable in the context of personal, private studying and notetaking and are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the separate written approval of the instructor.

Course Accessibility Statement
The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who

need specific access in this course, such as accommodations, should contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss various access options. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 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.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, we will all need to work together. Everyone 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.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes from each of your classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency. (Insert class-specific details if appropriate)
- 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/AEDlocations-UCF (click on link from menu on left). (insert class specific information if appropriate)
- 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."
- If you have a special need related to emergency situations, please speak with me during office hours.
- Consider viewing this video (https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk) about how to manage an active shooter situation on campus or elsewhere.

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.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Week Ending 1/11/2019)

- Read Chapter 1, "American Government and Civic Engagement."
- Read Chapter 2, "The Constitution and Its Origins."
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 1/11/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 2 (Week Ending 1/18/2019)

- Read Chapter 3, "American Federalism."
- No weekly Quiz due.

Week 3 (Week Ending 1/25/2019)

- American Federalism Cont'd
- No Class Monday (MLK Day)
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 1/25/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 4 (Week Ending 2/1/2019)

- Read Chapter 4, “Civil Rights.”
- Read Chapter 5, “Civil Liberties.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 2/1/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 5 (Week Ending 2/8/2019)

- Read Chapter 6, “The Politics of Public Opinion.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 2/8/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 6 (Week Ending 2/15/2019)

- Read Chapter 7, “Voting and Elections.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 2/15/2019 by 11:59PM
- **Short Reaction Paper #1 Due: 2/15/2019 by 11:59PM**

Week 7 (Week Ending 2/22/2019)

- Read Chapter 8, “The Media.”
- Read Chapter 10, “Interest Groups and Lobbying.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 2/22/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 8 (Week Ending 3/1/2019)

- Read Chapter 9, “Political Parties.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 3/1/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 9 (Week Ending 3/8/2019)

- Midterm Review on Monday 3/4/2019
- Midterm Exam on Wednesday 3/6/2019
- No Weekly Unit Quiz

Week Ending 3/15/2019 – No School, Spring Break
Week 10 (Week Ending 3/22/2019)

- Read Chapter 11, “Congress.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 3/22/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 11 (Week Ending 3/29/2019)

- Read Chapter 12, “The Presidency.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 3/29/2019 by 11:59PM
- **Short Reaction Paper #2 due 3/29/2019 by 11:59PM**

Week 12 (Week Ending 4/5/2019)

- Read Chapter 13, “The Courts.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 4/5/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 13 (Week Ending 4/12/2019)

- Read Chapter 16, “Domestic Policy.”
- Weekly Unit Quiz Due: 4/12/2019 by 11:59PM

Week 14 (Week Ending 4/19/2019)

- Read Chapter 17, “Foreign Policy.”

- Final Exam Review, if there's time.
- No Weekly Unit Quiz

Wednesday, April 24th, 1:00PM-3:50PM

- **BRING A BROWN SCANTRON FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE & GREEN BOOK FOR SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**
- **THE EXAM IS CUMULATIVE**