POS2041-604: American National Government

School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs

College of Sciences

3 Credit Hours

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Instructor Information

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- Office Hours: Mondays: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM / Tuesdays: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
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Course Information

- Term: Fall 2019
- Course Number & Section: POS2041-604
- Course Name: American National Government
- Credit Hours: 3
- Class Meeting Days: Mondays and Wednesdays
- Class Meeting Time: 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM
- Class Location: BA1 O213
- Course Modality: Face to Face Instruction (P)

Enrollment Requirements

Course Prerequisites (if applicable): None
Course Co-requisites (if applicable): None
Other Enrollment Requirements (if applicable): N/A

Course Description

POS2041-American National Government has been designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the concepts and issues of the United States government. It examines the structure, philosophy, accomplishments and challenges 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. In addition, this course will provide you with the tools to understand, effectively participate in and influence the political process in order to address issues of importance to our communities.

The problems that we face as a society are multifaceted and, thus, require that individuals with different backgrounds, training and perspectives collaborate to elaborate and implement effective solutions. Thus, it is imperative that we learn how to do this effectively. This course includes several assignments geared towards developing teamwork skills and strategies

This course will be taught from a transdisciplinary and comparative perspective. This means that we will examine topics from a variety of angles and determine the linkages that exist between politics, society, culture, science and the arts. In addition, we will continuously compare and contrast the United States to countries around the world to try to understand why certain patterns and phenomena are present in some contexts and not in others. This is based on the assumption that we can understand our own country better if we compare it against others.

Course Materials and Resources

Required Materials/Resources

The textbook for this class is:

Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewicz, editors (2016): American Government . 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.

Student Learning Outcomes

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.

In addition, this course is designed as an introduction to and preparation for higher-level courses by developing skills such as oral presentation, writing, test-taking and teamwork skills.

Course Activities

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.

The course activities required in this course are:

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.

Classwork

Each week we will have class discussions and 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. In order to do well in these class assignments, it is important that you come well prepared to class. This means that you should keep up with the readings, review the previous lecture before coming to class and prepare the questions presented in each module.

Class Project

The final class project is worth 15 points of the final grade. It will consist of a combination of individual work and group collaboration. The class will work on the project incrementally, so different parts of the project will be due by different deadlines. This will be outlined in the respective modules.

Please note that you will not pass this course if you do not receive a passing grade in the final project. In other words, you must turn the project in and the topic must be cleared with the professor by the deadline to be specified in the respective modules.

Examinations

There will be 3 examinations in this course (2 midterm exams and one final exam). All exams have multiple choice and short answer questions. The final examination will be cumulative. You must take all three 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. Students who arrive after the first student to complete an exam has left the room, will not be permitted to take the exam. In this case, the student will have to reschedule the exam since the instructor will have to make up a whole different exam.

Please note that the final exam will take place in the same classroom as regular sessions but at a different time. Please consult the schedule to verify the correct time of the final 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.

- Extra Credit: There will be no extra credit assignments offered in this course.
- Student should have regular access to the internet and plan on logging into the course at least twice each week in order to get the class assignments.
- In addition, students should plan on at least five hours' worth of homework outside of class each week. This will consist of doing assigned readings and preparing for the in-class 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 by email specifying the 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.

Activity Submissions

In-class assignments will be submitted at the end of each class. There will not be make-ups for the in-class assignments.

Exams will take place in the same room as the regular class. The final exam will be in the same room but at a different time. Please take note of the time for the final exam.

Attendance/Participation

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.

Students are allowed **3** absences during the term unless. 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>. In the case of a serious medical or extenuating circumstance, it is the responsibility of the student to present evidence and talk to the instructor before or as soon as possible after the absence. 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.”

Make-up Exams and Assignments

Per university policy, you are allowed to submit make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for authorized university-sponsored activities, 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. In the case of an authorized university activity, it is your responsibility to show me a signed copy of the Program Verification Form for which you will be absent, prior to the class in which the absence occurs. In any of these cases, please contact me ahead of time to notify me of upcoming needs.

Assessment and Grading Procedures

Assignment	Points Possible*
Protocol Points	5
Participation	5

Classwork	23
Class Project	15
Exams (3)	60

* Please note that the total points exceed 100 because you are allowed to miss 3 classes without penalty (so you can miss three classes and still obtain 20 points for classwork, for example). The number of points you earn throughout the term will determine your final grade. To determine your grade compare the total number of points you earned with the table below.

Letter Grade	**Points**
A	94 – 100
A-	90 – 93.9
B+	87 – 89.9
B	84 – 86.9
B-	80 – 83.9
C+	77 – 79.9
C	74 – 76.9
C-	70 – 73.9
D+	67 – 69.9
D	64 – 66.9
D-	61 – 63.9

F	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.

Consult the latest Undergraduate or Graduate catalog for regulations and procedures regarding grading such as Incomplete grades, grade changes, and grade forgiveness.

Course Policies

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 (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) but keep in mind that the office staff do not take messages over the phone.

Electronic devices:

Laptops, tablets and cell phones **may not** be used during class unless indicated by the instructor. 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.

Course Schedule

The following is the preliminary course schedule. Although I make every effort to adhere to the dates set forth in the schedule, unforeseen events may make it necessary to change the dates. If this is the case, I will let you know as soon as possible. Please keep in mind that in case of a natural disaster or other type of emergency you should consult the UCF website for immediate information.

Date	Topic	Assignments/Notes
Part I: The Foundations of the American System		
Week 1: August 26	American Government and Civic Engagement	Week 1 Module
Week 2: September 2	The Constitution and its Origins	Week 2 Module Monday: **No Class (Labor Day)**
Week 3: September 9	American Federalism	Week 3 Module

Part II: Civil Liberties and Rights		
Week 4: September 16	Civil Liberties	Week 4 Module
Week 5: September 23	Civil Liberties (cont'd)	Week 5 Module
Week 6: September 30	Civil Rights	**First Exam:** **Monday, September 30** Week 6 Module
Week 7: October 7	Civil Rights (cont'd)	Week 7 Module
Week 8: October 14	Civil Rights (cont'd)	Week 8 Module
Part III: The Politics of Democracy		

Week 9: October 21	Public Opinion and the Media	Week 9 Module
Week 10: October 28	Voting and Elections	Week 10 Module
Week 11: November 4	Political Parties	**Second Exam:** **Monday, November 4** Week 11 Module ***Withdrawal Deadline: Friday, Nov. 1, 11:59 PM***
Week 12: November 11	Interest Groups	Week 12 Module ***Monday: No class (Veterans Day)***
Part IV: Formal Institutions		
Week 13: November 18	The Congress	Week 13 Module
Week 14: November 25	The Presidency and the Bureaucracy	Week 14 Module **Wednesday: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)**

Week 15: December 2	The Courts	Week 15 Module
Week 15-16: December 5 - 11	Final Exam Period	Tuesday, April 24: Study Day **Final Exam:** **Wednesday, December 11,** **1:00 PM – 3:00 PM** Exam will be in the usual classroom.

The following are important UCF guidelines and resources that you should be aware of.

University Services and Resources

Academic Services and Resources

A list of available academic support and learning services is available at UCF Student Services. Click on "Academic Support and Learning Services" on the right-hand side to filter.

Non-Academic Services and Resources

A list of non-academic support and services is also available at UCF Student Services. Click on "Support" on the right-hand side to filter.

If you are a UCF Online student, please consult the UCF Online Student Guidelines for more information about your access to non-academic services.

Policy Statements

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.)".

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.

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/workplacesafety.html (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 about how to manage an active shooter situation on campus or elsewhere. You CAN Survive an Active Shooter (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.

Please note that by continuing with the course, you are agreeing to abide by the stipulations set forth in this syllabus.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Fri Aug 30, 2019	Assignment	Week 1 Quiz
	Assignment	Week 1 Email
Mon Sep 30, 2019	Assignment	First Exam

Date	Details	
Mon Nov 4, 2019	Assignment	Second Exam
Mon Dec 2, 2019	Assignment	Class Project
Mon Dec 9, 2019	Assignment	Classwork
	Assignment	Participation
	Assignment	Team Evaluation Form
Wed Dec 11, 2019	Assignment	Final Exam
Mon Dec 16, 2019	Assignment	Protocol Points