POS 2041.0610: American National Government

School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs
College of Sciences
3 Credit Hours

Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Dr. Gary Smith	Term:	Fall 2019
Office Location:	302N Howard Philips Hall	Class Meeting Days:	Tuesday/Thursday
Office Hours:	Tues. & Thurs. 10:00AM – 12:00PM and by appointment.	Class Meeting Time:	1:30PM-2:45PM
Office Phone:	407-823-2608	Class Location:	BA 1 – 206
Email:	Gary.smith@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 to other countries, and what that structure means for the present and 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 two cats Bastilla and Soban. 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 develop the ability to conduct critical research about American political & policy issues.
- 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. During this discussion, simply reading a headline will not be sufficient for getting participation points. You should be able to discuss some of the details of the news story or ask questions about those details. Link: AP Newswire

Ungraded Survey (Required)

In the first week, you are asked to complete a survey in Webcourses that addresses certain unique questions. This survey is required as it will determine how the unit tests are conducted, so please complete the survey by Friday, August 30th before 5:00pm.

Attendance (5%)

Students are expected to attend class regularly in order to succeed. Our class meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30PM to 2:45PM. Roll call attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class and will be worth 5% of your overall grade.

In-Class 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. Your description must be precise and clear. In order to get full credit, you must submit **10** total slips. You can only submit one slip per class.

Webcourses Discussions (10%)
Each week, you will be expected to take part in discussions in Webcourses. You have all been placed into discussion groups that will debate and discuss issues relevant to our class materials. Each student will be expected to make his or her own original post addressing the prompt and at least one reply to a classmate's post. In order to get credit, replies should be substantive and relevant to the topic. You will be ineligible for full credit if you fail to complete both parts of this discussion assignment. These are due by 11:59PM each Sunday.

Unit Tests (15% Each, 45% Total)
During the semester, you will take three unit tests that cover the major themes addressed during the course. These tests will be administered in Webcourses and will be taken in a location that will be announced before the exam. Each test will ask a combination of multiple-choice current events questions, multiple-choice questions about content, written short answer questions about content, and written critical thinking questions.

Final Project (25%) & Presentation (5%)
In lieu of a formal final exam, this course will have a final individual research project. The project and its findings will be submitted to Webcourses by December 5th, before 11:59pm and presented by each student on the final exam day. Students will be expected to select a topic in **one** specific area that we cover throughout the course. Assignment guidelines will be different based on the area that the student chooses to research and the guidelines will be posted in Webcourses.

Important Dates

- Drop/swap deadline: Thursday, August 29th, 2019
- Add deadline: Friday, August 30th, 2019
- Labor Day holiday: Monday, September 2nd, 2019
- Withdrawal deadline: Friday, November 1st, 2019
- Veterans' Day: Monday, November 11th, 2019
- Thanksgiving Weekend: Wednesday, November 27th, 2019 – November 30th, 2019
- Classes end: Wednesday, December 4th, 2019
- Final exam day: Tuesday, December 10th, 2019

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

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, and 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. While students may sign documents allowing their educational records to be released to a particular third party, it is the policy of this instructor that I do not discuss academic records with third parties unless the circumstance is a documentable emergency. 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 and Sylvie Waskiewicz. 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 formatss through their website (link below) and will be provided as a PDF in Webcourses.

Link: Textbook Website

Policy Statements

Attendance Expectations

While attendance is not going to be enough to guarantee success in this course, it is a necessary condition for you to succeed. In addition to being present, you are expected to arrive **on time**. I understand that occasionally a late arrival cannot be avoided, but students who make a habit of arriving to class late may be asked to leave and return at the start of the next class. I will, of course, speak to a student whose attendance is becoming problematic before resorting to any disciplinary action.

Technology Policy

Laptops and Tablets
Most, if not all, of course materials will be made available through the Webcourses platform. As a result, students are welcome to bring laptops and/or tablets to class in order to take notes or interact with the material. However, if it becomes apparent that these technology tools are becoming disruptive, I reserve the right to disallow access to such technologies.

Cell Phones
Students should place their cellular phones on "silent" or "vibrate" modes. Students may not use cell phones to record or photograph lecture materials or notes without the express permission of the instructor. Students whose cellular devices disrupt the class may be asked to excuse themselves for the remainder of the class and may forfeit any participation points for the class period. In the event you are encountering a personal issue that requires you to be able to access your cell phone, please inform me at the beginning of class and seat yourself near an exit so you can step out of class with minimal disruption.

Class Preparation Expectations
Students are expected to complete assigned readings, videos, or podcasts **before** the start of the class for which they are assigned. Such preparation is essential for successful engagement with the class and successful participation. Such preparation will help ensure that I will not need to simply regurgitate what you were assigned to read and listen to. Therefore, you we will be able to engage in critical discussion, group thinking exercises, etc. If I am getting the impression that students have not done the assigned preparation before class, I reserve the right to administer **pop quizzes**. In the event that the pop quiz is necessary the result of the pop quiz will count for (or against) your participation grade for that class. This means that, should your answers demonstrate a lack of preparation, it **may result in the loss of up to one participation point earned in a previous class**. Therefore, be certain to stay on top of the assigned readings, podcasts, and/or youtube videos.

Reading, Podcasts, and Youtube Videos
Each class period has assigned readings from your textbook and, in some cases, readings from additional external sources (provided for you), podcast episodes (provided for you), and/or youtube videos (provided for you). If they are listed as required for a given class day, they must be reading/listened to/watched, before class begins.

Content Disclaimer
Occasionally, podcast episodes or youtube videos may contain strong language (i.e. vulgarity). In the event that censored versions are available, I will provide the censored version in the Webcourse. Conversely, if a censored version cannot be found, I will post a text disclaimer notifying if the media in question contains strong language, sensitive subjects, etc.

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.

Cheating
Any student who attempts to copy another student's work or works on individual projects with other students will be considered to be cheating. Additionally, if there is evidence that students have accessed answers or unauthorized materials from outside sources, and used those answers as their own, those students will also be considered to be engaged in cheating. As such, any student caught engaging in any of these behaviors will be subject to potential punishments as outlined in the next sub-section.

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.

Webcourses and The Syllabus
Much of the material will be accessible through Webcourses (unless otherwise noted). Additionally, the Webcourse shell will follow the schedule outlined in the syllabus. However, in the event that there is a discrepancy between any due dates or assignments listed in the syllabus and those presented in

Webcourses, you should **always defer to the syllabus** The syllabus is the course contract and should be your principal point of reference. In the event you notice a discrepancy, I encourage you to email me and bring such issues to my attention.

Email Policy

All course related emails should but sent via the **Webcourses inbox**. I prefer to keep all course related communications in one place. In the event you experience an emergency of some sort, you can of course send emails directly to my @ucf.edu email address listed at the top of this document. Emails **must follow a pattern of acceptable communication etiquette**. Therefore, any emails sent to the instructor should include a subject line, a proper salutation ("Dr. Smith" or "Professor Smith"), a signature that includes your full name and class section, and the body of the text should be respectful and clear. Any email that is inappropriate, disrespectful, or otherwise not consistent with professional standards of etiquette will not receive a response. All other emails will be answered within a maximum of two business days. A business day at UCF is Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Course Schedule

This schedule provides a comprehensive list of work required for adequate class preparation. This means that the readings assigned for a given day should be read **before** class begins and assignments should be completed **by the deadline listed**. Unless otherwise noted, when simply a chapter is listed, you should read **the entire chapter**.

Key Abbreviations

- "WC" – Webcourses
- "Rec" – Recommended

Date	Topic	Required Reading	Required Listening	Required Viewing	Assignments Due
Unit 1: The System and Its Origins					
Tuesday 8/27	Course Introduction	See WC for Rec. Reading	None	None	None
Thursday 8/29	The Constitution & Its Origins	Chapter 2	"Civics 101" podcast x 3 (see WC)	None	Ungraded survey, due 8/30, by 5:00pm; WC Discussion, due 9/1 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 9/3	Federalism	Chapter 3 (sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)	"Civics 101" podcast x 1 (see WC)	None	None
Thursday 9/5	Federalism	Chapter 3 (sections 3.4 and 3.5)	None	PBS *Frontline* Documentary (see WC)	WC Discussion, due 9/8 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 9/10	Civil Liberties	Chapter 4	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Ted Ed" (see WC)	None
Thursday 9/12	Civil Rights	Chapter 5	"Civics 101" (see WC)	None	WC Discussion due 9/15 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 9/17	Unit 1 Review	None	None	None	None
Thursday 9/19	**Unit 1 Test**	None	None	None	Unit 1 Test, location TBA.
Unit 2: Individuals & Mediating Institutions					

Tuesday 9/24	Public Opinion	Chapter 6	"Civics 101" and "Make Me Smart" podcasts (see WC)	"Ted Ed" and "Crash Course" (see WC)	None
Thursday 9/26	Voting & Elections, part I	Chapter 7 (sections 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	None	WC Discussion due 9/29 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 10/1	Voting & Elections, part II	Chapter 7 (7.4 and 7.5)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Crash Course" (see WC)	None
Thursday 10/3	The Media	Chapter 8	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Last Week Tonight" & "Crash Course" (see WC)	WC Discussion due 10/6 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 10/8	Political Parties	Chapter 9	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Crash Course" (see WC)	None
Thursday 10/10	Interest Groups	Chapter 10	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Crash Course" & "Last Week Tonight" (see WC)	WC Discussion due 10/13 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 10/15	Unit 2 Review	None	None	None	None
Thursday 10/17	**Unit 2 Test**	None	None	None	Unit 2 Test, location TBA
Unit 3: Government Institutions					
Tuesday 10/22	Congress, part I	Chapter 11 (sections 11.1, 11.2, 11.3)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Last Week Tonight" (see WC)	None
Thursday 10/24	Congress, part II	Chapter 11 (sections 11.4 and 11.5)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Last Week Tonight" (see WC)	WC Discussion due 10/27 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 10/29	The Presidency, part I	Chapter 12 (sections 12.1 and 12.2)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	None	None
Thursday 10/31	The Presidency, part II	Chapter 12 (sections 12.3, 12.4, and 12.5)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	None	WC Discussion due 11/3 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 11/5	The Courts, part I	Chapter 13 (13.1 and 13.2)	None	"US Law Essentials" (see WC)	None
Thursday 11/7	The Courts, part II	Chapter 13 (13.3, 13.4, and 13.5) & Supreme Court Opinion	"Civics 101" & "In the Dark" (see WC)	None	WC Discussion due 11/10 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 11/12	Domestic Policy, part I	Chapter 16 (sections 16.1, 16.2, and 16.3)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	None	None
Thursday 11/14	Domestic Policy, part II	Chapter 16 (sections 16.4 and 16.5)	"Civics 101" (see WC)	None	WC Discussion due 11/17 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 11/19	Foreign Policy	Chapter 17	"Civics 101" (see WC)	"Crash Course" (see WC)	None
Thursday 11/21	Unit 3 Review	None	None	None	WC Discussion due 11/24 by 11:59pm
Tuesday 11/26	**Unit 3 Test**	None	None	None	None
Thursday 11/28	**No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday**				
Tuesday 12/3	Project Workday (in-class)	None	None	None	None

Thursday 12/5	**No Class**	None	None	None	Research Projects Due in WC by 12/5 by 11:59pm
December 10th, 1:00pm – 3:50pm: Final Exam Day/Research Presentations					