Political Science 2041.0003: American National Government
University of Central Florida
Spring 2021
Instructor: John Hanley
Syllabus

Class Meetings: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:30-11:20, Visual Arts Building 132
Office Hours: via Zoom MWF 1:30-3:30pm; or by appointment. Email via webcourses

Overview

This is a survey course is designed to provide students with a foundation for understanding and critically assessing American political processes, institutions, and public policies. The course proceeds in four major sections: first, we will situate the institutions of American government in the context of their creation and understand the objectives of the Founders and the tradeoffs inherent in institutional design. Second, we will observe and evaluate the performance of governmental institutions. Third, we will examine the relationships between government and individuals, groups, and corporate entities. Finally, we will consider American public policy.

Throughout the course, we will learn to assess and decipher information in a world full of conflicting sources and to employ social sciences models to produce knowledge. (**Interpretation and Evaluation Objective**) We will then consider how to synthesize what we have learned, as it might be conveyed to political practitioners (in the form of strategy or analysis) as well as to the general public (in the form of advocacy or civic education). Our study of the backgrounds and beliefs of citizens and political elites will assist us in tailoring our writing to the requirements and preferences of audiences. (**Communication Objective**)

Prerequisites, Co-requisites, other enrollment requirements

None.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. 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.
2. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Validation and Grading

The maximum points available for assignments will be as follows:

Intro and Closing Quizzes	20	Weekly Quizzes (14)	180 (15 per)
Short Assignments (6)	150 (25 per)	Final	100
Group Project	50 points		

Total: 500 points

I reserve the right to award students up to 10 bonus points at the end of the semester for participation during class.

Weekly quizzes will take place on Fridays during class, and will be conducted via webcourses. The lowest quiz will be dropped.

Late short assignments will be deducted 2 points (out of 25) for each day late or portion thereof. Missing an exam without a valid excuse will incur a penalty of no less than 20 percent of the point value of the exam. This deduction may be raised to 50 percent if a student fails to reply promptly to emails about an exam delinquency, or otherwise obstructs scheduling of the makeup.

The final will consist of multiple-choice questions and an essay.

The plus/minus system will be used in calculating final grades.

A > 466	B+ > 433	C+ > 384	D > 300
A- > 450	B > 417	C > 367	F < 301
	B- > 400	C- > 351	

Text

Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewicz. OpenStax American Government, American Government. OpenStax CNX. Dec 17, 2018 http://cnx.org/contents/5bcc0e59-7345-421d-8507-a1e4608685e8@18.13

This is a free, open-source, online textbook. There are links through the OpenStax website to obtain a print copy should you wish (approximate cost $38).

There are other readings, all of which will be available through webcourses. Textbook readings should be done before the applicable lecture. Whether you do the other readings before or after lecture is up to you. All readings mentioned in lecture are fair game for examinations.

Additional Policies

Incomplete grades, changes in exam dates, and extensions of written assignments will be approved only by the instructor, and only upon evidence of extenuating circumstances.

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 acknowledging 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 appropriately.

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
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.

Schedule of Material

Part I. Introduction and the Constitution. In recent years, the meaning of the Constitution has taken on increased relevance in political debates. We will study the problems which the Constitution was created to address, the struggles to reach agreement and achieve ratification, obvious and lurking defects in the document, and its legacy today.

Monday, January 11 Introduction – Logistics, what is politics and what we hope to gain by studying it.
Readings:
Textbook, Chapter 1
Robert Dahl, "What is Politics"

1/13-15 Early America and the Constitution – How did our system of government come into being? We will look at the principal debates from the Constitutional convention and the explanations made in *The Federalist*; and we will look at what the Framers missed.
Textbook, Chapter 2
James Madison, Federalist 10 & 51– *the language in these will take some time to digest*.

January 18 NO CLASS (MLK, Jr. Day)

1/20-25 Federalism – does "limited government" mean one with narrow powers, strictly enumerated; or with specific limits on broad powers? How has the operation of federalism changed over time?
Textbook, Chapter 3

Part II. The Elected Branches and the Electoral System. We examine the Framers' work in Articles I-III, the development of these institutions over time, how they appeal to the public, and how they are influenced by it.

1/27-2/1 Congress (Article I) – Introduction to the legislative branch, and how it has changed over time. The mechanics of legislating, starting with how a bill becomes a law. Who ends up in Congress, and what motivates them.
Textbook, Chapter 11
Jay Newton-Small, "The Last Politicians" *Time*, October 28, 2013.

2/3-8 President and "the Presidential Branch" (Article II) – emergence of the President as a national leader despite limited institutional power; advisors and Cabinet as policymakers
Textbook, Chapter 12

2/10-12 Bureaucracy – growth of the executive branch over time; expertise, institutional loyalty and problems for democratic accountability; Congress's attempts to re-gain influence.
Textbook, Chapter 15

2/15-19 Judiciary (Article III) – the "least dangerous branch" is today the most respected branch of government. Introduction to the federal court system and the Supreme Court; the genius of *Marbury v. Madison*; the Court's struggles with legitimacy in the 19th and 20th centuries.
Textbook, Chapter 13
Antonin Scalia. 2005. "Constitutional Interpretation the Old Fashioned Way."

Part III. The Supporting Cast. Having set up the operations and interactions at the core of American democracy, we move to consider four institutions which greatly affect outcomes and which themselves frequently become the subject of debate and political struggle.

2/22-26 Political Parties – Parties are important for linking elected officials and the public, organizing activity in the legislature, and structuring competition among aspiring politicians. The Founders tried—and failed—to prevent them. Here, we'll look at the emergence of American political parties and their importance to Presidential nominations.
Textbook, Chapter 9

3/1-3/5 Public Opinion – In a republic, public opinion plays a critical role in what governmental institutions do. We will look at how public opinion is measured, and what it is like.
Textbook, Chapter 6

3/8-12 Campaigns and Elections – At first glance, political campaigns appear to respond very effectively to popular demands. However, specific choices of electoral institutions—in the US, plurality voting, primary elections, and private financing of campaigns—shape the political landscape.
Textbook, Chapter 11

3/15-19 Interest Groups (Associations, lobbies, unions, and PACs) – the "seamier" side of political organizations, the "special interests." We will talk about how the U.S. political system facilitates interest group activity, theories about why groups form, and the history of campaign financing.
Textbook, Chapter 10

3/22-26 The Media – Political actors frequently complain about "media bias," but what basis is there to believe that journalists affect what people think? What drives changes in how we receive news?
Textbook, Chapter 8
Pew. "Newspapers Fact Sheet." June 1, 2017. http://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/newspapers/

3/29-4/2 Public Policy and Current Challenges – Who wants what? Are they likely to get it? When? How? Where do you fit into the picture?
Textbook, Chapter 16

4/5-4/9 Group Presentations
4/19-26 Remainders and Review