POS2041 American National Government

School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs

College of Sciences

COURSE INFORMATION

- Term: Summer 2025
- Course Number & Section: POS2041-601
- Course Name: American National Government
- Credit Hours: 3
- Class Meeting Days: Mondays & Wednesdays
- Class Meeting Time: 11:00 AM - 12:50 PM
- Class Location: CB1 O107 (Get Directions).
- Course Modality: Face to Face (P)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- Instructor: Uchenna Okwara
- Office Location: HPH 215
- Digital Contact: **Please use the Webcourses@UCF messaging to contact me.** I aim to respond within 24 hours. If you need information on how to do this, please go to the Webcourses site: https://cdl.ucf.edu/support/webcourses/guides/conversations
- Office Hours (all times are EDT - Orlando time). Regular office hours will be held Mondays 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM at HPH 215 (Get Direction). For these office hours, you do not need an appointment. If you wish to meet at a different time, send me a message through Webcourses to arrange a meeting.

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 with others. Our activities this term will include a final project that will be conducted in groups. The objective of this is to apply what you learned in the course and to develop professional skills. The project is designed to introduce you to the career readiness competencies (competencies that

employers are requiring all graduates to demonstrate), the skills needed to demonstrate these competencies, and to prepare you to 'translate' your past and current experiences into employment search tools.

These competencies/skills are:

- **Career & Self Development:** Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual Personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.
- **Communication:** Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
- **Critical Thinking:** Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.
- **Equity & Inclusion:** Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to engage equitably and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.
- **Leadership:** Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
- **Professionalism:** Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.
- **Teamwork:** Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.
- **Technology:** Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

* Source: NACE Career Readiness Initiative: https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined
All of these competencies have been identified by employers as significant assets in hiring/promotion decisions.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (GEP) COURSE: WHY DO I HAVE TO TAKE THIS CLASS?

This class is part of UCF's General Education Program (GEP). UCF's General Education Program provides students with a cohesive, integrative learning experience. Students complete courses in five program areas, each with its own set of learning outcomes that enable them to plan, connect, and reflect as they move through their foundational classes.

Our integrative general education experience allows students to relate the knowledge and skills they learn across academic disciplines, connect foundational ways of knowing to their majors, and integrate those skills into new problem-solving contexts – all to prepare them for their academic, civic, and professional worlds.

The purposes of the UCF General Education Program (GEP) are

- to introduce students to a broad range of human knowledge and intellectual pursuits
- to equip students with the analytic and expressive skills required to engage in those pursuits
- to develop their ability to think critically

- to prepare them for life-long learning.

The GEP curriculum provides students with the intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic foundations necessary to make informed choices, to accept the responsibilities of working and living in a rapidly changing world, and to lead a productive and satisfying life.

POS2041 American National Government forms part of the "**Interpretation & Evaluation**" Foundation. As such, it focuses on developing the skills to assess and decipher information in a world full of conflicting sources. The secondary foundation incorporated in this course is "**Knowledge Application**," but, of course, all of the Foundations are incorporated in some way or another. See if you can identify the Foundation for your own major!

* Source: UCF General Education Program, College of Undergraduate Studies

MODALITY

This class will be held in person (P Modality). Please make sure you are on time. Give yourself extra time the first day to familiarize yourself with the classroom location (CB1 O107 Direction).

COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Required Textbook

Krutz, G., & Waskiewicz, S. (2024). *American Government 3e*. Dushkin Publishing Group.
See OpenStax and Lumen Learning: *American Government (2e)*, https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/pos2041ac/ Print: American Government from OpenStax, Print ISBN 1947172654, Digital ISBN 1947172662, https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e

Good news: your textbook for this class is available for free online! Your book is available in web view and in PDF format. You can use whichever format you wish. The web view is recommended -- the responsive design works seamlessly on any device. In addition, the web version may include end-of-chapter review questions not included in the print version. However, if you prefer, you can also get a print version at a very low cost. If you wish to buy a hard copy of the book, you can purchase it on Amazon, but make sure you use the link on your book page on openstax.org so you get the official OpenStax print version (https://www.amazon.com/dp/1947172654). (Simple printouts sold by third parties on Amazon are not verifiable and not as high-quality.)

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.

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 activities: class discussions, individual research, and short writing assignments. Each week, I will post one or more questions that 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:

Academic Engagement for Financial Aid Activity

All faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the academic activity indicated in the Week 1 Module by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course, but no later than Friday of the first week of class (11:59 pm). Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid. Please open Module 1 to see what you need to do to complete this requirement.

Professional Points

Professional 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 2.5 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 professional 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 ethical 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 cell phone or other electronic devices during class and/or use these devices during class time unless allowed by the professor. If any of this occurs, there will be one warning and after that, the penalty for each additional offense will increase.
5. Repeatedly ask a question that is obviously already stated either in the syllabus, class modules, or in an email that I have sent to the class.
6. You do not answer an email sent by your instructor within 48 hours.
7. Fail to observe the protocols set forth in this syllabus.

Please keep in mind that if you lose all the professional points, other disciplinary actions will ensue.

Classwork

Modules list and describe the topic(s) and the assignments for each week. Modules will open no later than Monday of each week at 9:00 AM. The classwork assignments will generally be based on questions derived from the week's topic and topics from previous weeks. This classwork will also serve as preparation for the exams. In order to do well in these class assignments, it is important that you complete all the work assigned in each week's module. This requires you to be very disciplined and organized.

Since each module will have a set of activities you need to complete, a good strategy is to log into the course as soon as it opens to see what is required for that week. This will enable you to plan and prepare for the class activities and assignments. If you have to miss a module due to illness you need to inform the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for an alternative assessment. There are 11 graded modules and only the 10 with the highest scores will count.

Please keep in mind that if you miss 5 or more classes *for any reason* without a valid excuse and/or discussing this with your professor, you will fail the class. Thus, please make sure that you keep up with the readings and assignments.

If you have to miss a module due to illness you need to inform the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for an alternative assessment.

Collaborative Project

To help bridge the gap from education to employment, the students will engage in a collaborative group project. To read more about the project, go to Final Collaborative Project. The project will account for 15 % of the grade, but these will be divided into several components (Final Project Proposal, Final Project Completion, and Final Project Presentation).

Examinations

There will be four examinations in this course - three midterms and a final exam. The final examination will be cumulative. Although there will be 4 exams, only the three 3 with the highest scores will count. Thus, if you are

satisfied with your grade in the first 3 exams, you do not need to take the final exam. However, **it is recommended to take all four (4) exams**. Please refer to the final module for instructions regarding the exams.

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.

Please note:

- Extra Credit: There will be no extra credit assignments offered in this course.
- Students 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 1 week 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 that 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 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.

Students should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible if they miss class for any illness reason to discuss reasonable adjustments that might need to be made. When possible, students should contact their instructor(s) before missing class.

In Case of Faculty Illness – If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course. Please look for announcements or mail in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email for any alterations to this course.

Course Accessibility and Disability Statement – Accommodations may need to be added or adjusted should this course shift from an on-campus to a remote format. Students with disabilities should speak with their instructor and should contact sas@ucf.edu to discuss specific accommodations for this or other courses.

Make-up 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 any of the exams, I will offer a reasonable opportunity for you to complete missed exams. The make-up exams and grading scale will be equivalent to the missed assignment and its grading scale, but its format may be different.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING PROCEDURES

Grading Item	Percentage
Academic Engagement	1
Participation and Professional Points	4
Modules Assignments (lowest two dropped)	20
Final Project	15
Examinations (4 - only the highest 3 count)	60

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. <u>After this time, grades become final</u>.

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 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 another type of emergency you should consult the UCF website for immediate information.

Summer 2025 Schedule

Date	**Topic**	**Assignments/Notes**
Week 1: May 12	Introduction: American Government and Civic Engagement	Week 1 Module Friday: Drop/Swap Deadline on myUCF
Week 2: May 19	The Constitution and Its Origins	Week 2 Module
Week 3: May 28	American Federalism	Week 3 Module **(May 26, Memorial Day: No Class on Monday)**
Week 4: Jun. 2	Review and First Exam	Week 4 Module **First Exam: Wednesday, June 4**
Week 5: Jun. 9	Civil Liberties	Week 5 Module
Week 6: Jun. 16	Civil Rights	Week 6 Module
Week 7: Jun. 23	Assignments and Exam Instructions	Week 7 Module **Second Exam: Wednesday, June 25**
Week 8: Jun. 30	Voting & Elections	Week 8 Module **Withdrawal Deadline: Friday, July 4, 2025, 11:59 PM**
Week 9: Jul. 7	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Week 9 Module
Week 10: Jul. 14	Government Institutions: Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary	Week 10 Module
Week 11: Jul. 21	Review and Third Exam	Week 11 Module **Third Exam: Monday, July 21** **Final Project submission: Friday, July 25**

Week 12: Jul. 28	Final Exam Week	Week 12 Module **Final Project Presentation: Monday, July 28** **Final Exam: Wednesday, July 30**

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

Webcourses:

Webcourses is an online course management system (accessed through my.ucf.edu and then the "Online Course Tools" tab) that 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,s 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: Uchennahillprieston.okwaray@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 **<u>may not</u>** 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 a loss of protocol points.

Notifications in Case of Changes in Class Modality:

If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be temporary changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course or going remote for a short time. Please look for announcements or mail in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email for any temporary alterations to this course.

COVID-19 and Illness Notification:

Students who believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 or who test positive must contact UCF Student Health Services (407-823-2509) so proper contact tracing procedures can take place. Students should not come to campus if they are ill, are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or have tested positive for COVID-19.

Students should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible if they miss class for any illness to discuss reasonable adjustments that might need to be made. When possible, students should contact their instructor(s) before missing class.

Course Accessibility and Disability:

Accommodations may need to be added or adjusted should this course shift from an on-campus to a remote format. Students with disabilities should speak with their instructor and should contact sas@ucf.edu to discuss specific accommodations for this or other courses.

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.

For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices".

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.

In-Class Recording Statement

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member, and invited guest speakers is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance, and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the University's Student Code of Conduct as described in the Golden Rule.

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 their 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
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.