POS 2041 - American National Government

Section: B001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2025
Class Meeting Days: Mo-Tu-We-Th
Class Meeting Time: 3:00 - 4:50
Class Meeting Location: CB2 O106
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Christopher Spinale, Ph.D.
Office Location: Howard Phillips Hall, Rm. 102-D
Office Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 1:00pm-2:00pm; by appointment
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Students are encouraged to communicate often with the instructor. To assist the instructor in understanding individual student needs, a quick discussion inventory will be completed during the first day of class.

Course Description

POS 2041 COS-POLS 3(3,0) American National Government: In this course, students will investigate how the national government is structured and how the American constitutional republic operates. It covers the philosophical and historical foundations of American government, including but not limited to the declaration of independence, the United States constitution and all its amendments, and the federalist papers. The course examines the branches of government and the governments laws, policies, and programs. It also examines the ways in which citizens participate in their government and ways their government responds to citizens. Student Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of Americas constitutional republic. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the nation's founding documents, including the declaration of independence, the U.S. constitution and its amendments, and the federalist papers. Students will demonstrate knowledge of landmark U.S. supreme court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society. Students will demonstrate an ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates. Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view. Fall, Sum, Spr.

Course Materials and Resources

American Government
ISBN: Paperback Print: 1947172654 Digital: 1947172662
Authors: Glen Krutz & Sylvie Waskiewicz
Publisher: OpenStax/Rice University and Lumen Learning
Publication Date: Digital: January 5, 2024 Print/PDF: July 19,2021
Edition: Second
Notes: Your textbook for this class is available for free online, as a web view (embedded in the course modules) and as a downloadable PDF. The web view is recommended -- the responsive design works seamlessly on any device. 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.

Course Readings and Lectures

Primary sources will also be used to augment the textbook. Most of the readings will be excerpts from the U.S. Constitution, speeches, executive orders, veto messages, articles of impeachment and U.S. Supreme Court syllabi (syllabi are short case opinion summaries written by justices' law clerks). Students will also read legal analyses of various aspects of the U.S. Constitution, along with a few other readings of varying lengths. All assigned readings are provided as weblinks in the Canvas course.

The Canvas course modules are set up as an outline of topics that will be covered during the semester. The modules are laid out in weeks of study, so from the main modules page, you will always know the content topics that will be discussed prior to coming to class by clicking the introduction and assignments link. Here you will find a list of learning objectives that highlight the specific content that will be covered during each class.

As taking notes can be fast and furious during lecture, a fill-in-the-blank outline (word document) is posted at the beginning of each module. Further, PowerPoint slides of my lecture notes are provided in the Canvas course. Consider comparing the posted notes to what is discussed in class as material/information will be shared during lecture that is not included in the posted material.

Hardware/Software Requirements

The following hardware and software technologies needed to complete assignments:

- Desktop or laptop computer
- Either speakers or headphones
- Reliable access to the internet
- Access to Webcourses@UCF

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of America's constitutional republic.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and its amendments, and the Federalist Papers.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation and landmark executive actions.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

General Education Program (GEP)

This course is a GEP core course (black diamond) for the Social Foundation and fulfills the requirement for GEP 10. Another way of saying this, is why do I have to take this course?

As part of UCF's General Education Program (GEP), this course 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.

UCF's 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.

POS 2041 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.

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Assignment Type	Description	Possible Points
Interactive Discussions	Students will share ideas about assigned readings with course colleagues. Discussions are completed in three parts where students will respond in substantive paragraphs to a question posted by the instructor as well as two responses to that same initial course by course colleagues.	100 x 3 interactive discussions = 300 points 10 x 1 introductory discussion post = 10 points
Essays	Students will address core issues included in assigned readings and reflect on the impact of those issues in an 800-word essay.	300 x 3 essays = 900 points
Weekly Mini-Quizzes	In person, consists of multiple-choice or short answer questions.	200 x 5 = 1000 points
Final	In person, consists of multiple-choice questions.	1000 x 1 = 1000 points
Total		3210 points

All assignments are due no later than the day and time posted; however, sometimes life gets in the way, so late assignments may be submitted with prior arrangement with the instructor and submission of documentation explaining why submitting the assignment on time was not possible. The instructor must be notified within 48 hours of the missed assignment (unless doing so is impossible and the reason is documented) to be eligible to submit that assignment late.

Access to assignments and due dates, except for the midterm and final exams, is available the first week of class. Assignments are found under the assignments tab in Canvas, as well as the course modules. This tab provides an ‘at-a-glance’ view of all assignments, due dates, and point value.

All assignments must be double-spaced and typed in Times New Roman 12- point font. Furthermore, all assignments require a title page (include name, assignment, and date). Points will be deducted for spelling, punctuation, grammatical, and format errors for all typewritten work.

Understanding assignment expectations is important, so a scoring rubric is included with each assignment.

Missing the midterm and/or final exam **without a valid excuse** will incur a penalty of no less than 30 percent of the point value of said exam. The midterm and final will assess the material covered in the first and second halves of the semester respectively, meaning the final is not a cumulative exam. Study guides and review questions are included at the end of each module to support your learning. Further, you will never have an unannounced assessment. I will always share the date, time, and content to be assessed so you may prepare adequately for your academic success.

Per university policy, you are allowed to submit make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for authorized university-sponsored activities, religious observances, military service, 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. No grading penalty will be applied to students requesting these accommodations.

Grading Scale

The plus/minus system will be used for calculating final grades. Final grades are determined based on the total number of points accumulated (Note: Percentages are not rounded):

Final Grade	**Total number of Earned Points**	**Percentage of Earned Points**
A	3018-3210	94-100%
A-	2857-3017	89-93%
B+	2761-2856	86-88%
B	2633-2760	82-85%
B-	2536-2632	79-81%
C+	2440-2535	76-78%
C	2312-2439	72-75%
C-	2215-2311	69-71%
D+	2119-2214	66-68%
D	1991-2118	62-65%
D-	1894-1990	59-61%
F	1893 and below	58% and below

Policies for Course Grade

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.

In accordance with state requirement, there will be regular opportunities to engage in "political discussions and civil debates" throughout the semester.

Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance for each class is expected. Because you cannot participate when you are not present, poor attendance may adversely affect your Class Preparation and Participation grade. Additionally, missing five (5) or more classes without approval from the instructor may result in a failing grade for the course. Late arrivals are distracting, so please be on time for class.

Students are expected to be prepared to actively participate in class or online discussions (which are typed, not oral) and class activities. All assignments must be attempted and submitted to earn credit for attendance and participation. Please note, you are not required to speak during class. I will only call on you to answer questions if you raise your hand. I will never put you on the spot to answer something I have asked or to address a point made by another student. You will never be required to present in front of the class, all assignments are individual.

Reading Assignments and Discussion Board Posts:
Students are responsible for completing all reading assignments prior to the class meeting for which the readings are assigned.

The discussion boards are used to deepen understanding and reflect on various course topics. Prompts, guidelines and due dates are provided. Be sure to read the directions for each discussion board assignment.

Interactive Discussion Requirements:

Discussions are completed in three parts:

A. PART ONE-INITIAL POST: A one paragraph response to the posted question. Each paragraph must include at least three substantial sentences. The Initial Post must reference (including an appropriate citation) the readings assigned for this discussion at least once each.
B. PART TWO-RESPONSE POST ONE: A one paragraph response to one other student's Initial Post. Each paragraph must include at least three substantial sentences.
C. PART THREE-RESPONSE POST TWO: A one paragraph response to a second student's Initial Post. Each paragraph must include at least three substantial sentences.

Note: A substantial sentence contributes to the discussion by reinforcing or raising new ideas or alternate perspectives and provides evidence of those perspectives such as with references to the assigned reading. Statements that do not add substance to the discussion (e.g., "I agree"/"I disagree", "great post", etc.) or excerpt the document material without analyzing it do not add substance to the discussion and will not earn credit.

Class Schedule

Tentative Course Calendar Topics (subject to change)

Week	Topic	Assignment/Notes
1-June 23-26	Introduction What is Government	• In class mini quiz; 6/26 • Discussion Inventory in class
1-June 24-26	The Constitution and its Origins	

		• Introduction Discussion Post due 6/27 • Academic Engagement Activity; due 6/27 • Essay #1; due 6/27
2-June 30 – July 1	The U.S. Constitution and Federalism	• In class mini quiz; 7/3 • Interactive Discussion Post #1; due 7/4
2-July 2-3	The Politics of Public Opinion	
3-July 7-8	Voting, Elections, Political Parties, and Interest Groups	• In class mini quiz; 7/10 • Essay #2; due 7/11
3-July 9-10 & 14	The Congress	
4-July 15-17	The Presidency & The Bureaucracy	• In class mini quiz; 7/17 • Essay #3; due 7/18
5-July 21-22	The Courts	• In class mini quiz; 7/24 • Interactive Discussion Post #2; due 7/25 • Interactive Discussion Post #3; due 7/25
5-July 23-24	Civil Liberties	
6-July 28-29	Civil Rights	• Final Exam; 7/31- (3:00pm-4:50pm) Regular Classroom
6-July 30	Final Exam Review	
6-July 31	Final Exam	

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.
b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

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 respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Use of AI only with acknowledgement.

Students are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools on assignments if the usage is properly documented and credited. For example, text generated from CoPilot should include a citation such as: "Copilot. Accessed 2023-12-03. Prompt: 'Summarize the Geneva Convention in 50 words.' Generated using Copilot-Web"

if AI is used, you must include the generated content as part of your submission, submit a word document that tracks all changes you make to the generated content as you develop your own writing submission of assigned work that is an authentic reflection of your thinking. Failure to attribute in any way will result in a zero of the scored material.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.

    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.