POS 2041 - AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Section: 0601

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Class Meeting Days: MW
Class Meeting Time: 01:30PM - 02:50PM
Class Meeting Location: VAB 0109
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Steven Smallpage
Title: Associate Professor
Office Location: Howard Phillips Hall 311E
Office Hours
10:30-12:30pm, MW and by appointment
Email: steven.smallpage@ucf.edu

Name: To Be Announced
Office Location: TBD
Email: TBD

Office Hours

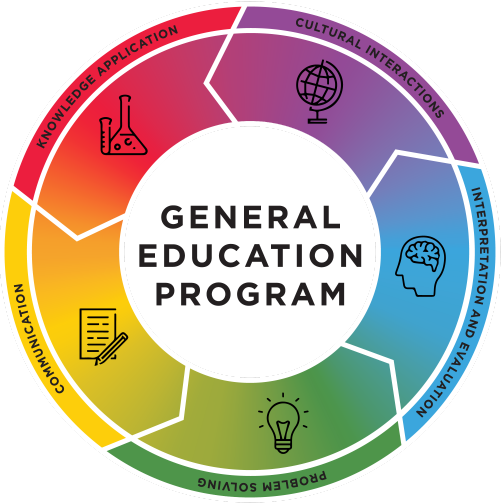
Mondays and Wednesdays: 10:30am-12:30pm, and by appointment. While I will be in my office, students can also schedule virtual meetings with me.

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 nations 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.

This is a survey course designed to provide students with a foundation for understanding and critically assessing American political processes, institutions, and public policies. The course proceeds in three 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.

General Education Program (GEP)



UCF's General Education Program (GEP) provides a cohesive learning experience across five key areas. Each course is designed to help students build essential skills and knowledge that connect across disciplines, preparing them for success in their academic, civic, and professional lives. This foundation equips students to make informed decisions and navigate a rapidly changing world.

Specifically, the GEP is intentionally designed to:

- Introduce students to a broad range of foundational knowledge.
- Provide students the opportunity to explore potential academic majors, minors, and careers.
- Equip students with the analytic and expressive skills required to engage in chosen pursuits.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
  Encourage lifelong learning.

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 Object).** 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 engagement). 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)**

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.

Required Course Materials and Resources

OpenStax American Politics
Publisher: Rice University
Edition: 3e
Online Access: https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Assessment and Grading

Grading Item	Points
Intro and Closing Quizzes	10
Short Assignments (6)	150 (5 x 30, 1 drop)
Midterm	100
Final	140
Total	400

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

Late short assignments will be deducted 2 points (out of 30) 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.

The midterms and final will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions.

Grading Scale

The plus/minus system will be used for calculating final grades. Zeroes for unsubmitted assignments may not be entered on Webcourses. The number of points earned, not the Webcourses "average" determines grade.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Points
A	>373
A-	>359
B+	>346
B	>333
B-	>320
C+	>306
C	>293
C-	>279
D	>239
F	<240

Policies for Course Grade

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.

In accordance with state requirement, there will be regular opportunities to engage in "political discussions and civil debates." I will signal these opportunities during class.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

- **Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is governed on an assignment-by-assignment basis**. For each assignment, you must carefully review the instructions to determine whether AI-generated content is permitted. In some cases, you may be permitted (though not required) to use GenAI. When using GenAI, you must disclose specifically where and how it was used in the process of completing the assignment. Unless explicitly allowed, all components of your work must be fully prepared by you. Any attempt to represent GenAI output inappropriately as your own work will be treated as plagiarism. Ultimately, students are responsible for the accuracy and veracity of submitted work whether AI-generated or not.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to

facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

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.

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 access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF’s complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & 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.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF

cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

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.

Class Schedule

Class Schedule

Week	Lecture Topic
1	Introduction Early America and the Constitution
2	Early America and the Constitution
3	Federalism
4	Congress (Article I)
5	Congress (Article I) President and "the Presidential Branch" (Article II)
6	President and "the Presidential Branch" (Article II) Bureaucracy
7	Bureaucracy
8	Judiciary (Article III)
9	Judiciary (Article III) Public Opinion
10	Public Opinion
11	Campaigns and Elections
12	Political Parties
13	Interest Groups
14	The Media
15	The Media
16	Review