POS 2041 - AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Section: 0003

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Class Meeting Days: TR
Class Meeting Time: 04:30PM - 05:45PM
Class Meeting Location: CB2 O206
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Christopher Spinale, Ph.D.
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Office Hours
Tuesday and Thursday: 9:00am - 10:00am, 1:00pm - 2:00pm; by appointment
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Inclusive Design

This course has earned the College of Science's Learner-Centered Design Badge

What is the Learner-Centered Design Badge?

The College of Sciences' Learner-Centered Design designation recognizes individual courses and the COS faculty who teach them. It identifies a faculty member's commitment to creating a learning environment that promotes educational best practices, which accommodate a wide range of student needs, foster a less stressful learning environment, and help students better understand and meet faculty expectations.

Learner-Centered Design Best Practices

I. ***Practices designed to create a welcoming environment for students with a variety of communication and learning style preferences:***

   A. ***Students will have the ability to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways. For example, a variety of assignment types will be assigned such as written work, projects, videos, audio files, Prezi, etc.***

   B. ***Students will be able to opt to work alone during any group work assignments. Any student who chooses to work in a group will be given***

the option of choosing their own group or being assigned to a group. The method of communicating that choice should be clearly stated.

C. ***Students will have access to recorded lectures with transcripts or closed captioning or class notes.***

D. ***Students will have access to all assignments with due dates in the first week of the semester so students can work ahead or plan ahead. The assignments do not need to be open for submission but should be accessible to students to review requirements.***

E. ***Students will have at least 5 opportunities for in-class or interactive learning activities during the semester.***

F. ***Students will have options, beyond simply posting office hours, of how they can communicate with the instructor and other students including in-person, virtually, or via email/Inbox or other written communication.***

G. ***Faculty posts or presents information about themselves (beyond their academic background) so students can get to know them as a 'real person' and not merely as their professor. This presentation can take many forms (e.g., module page, video introduction, in-class presentation, etc.).***

II. ***Practices designed to create a welcoming environment for students with a variety of personal and academic needs:***

A. ***Students will be able to use non-electronic earplugs for testing. If a test is being proctored online with video feed (i.e., Respondus Monitor), students may also use non-electronic earplugs.***

B. ***Students taking a synchronous class that is over 75 minutes will be provided with at least one announced break; no instruction will take place during the break.***

C. ***The instructor will offer flexibility for students' personal and academic needs following careful consideration of its impact on the learning environment for the entire class. The method for requesting such flexibility will be clearly stated in the syllabus. Note: This is separate from the course accessibility options that Student Accessibility Services provides.***

D. ***No timed in-class assessments, such as planned quizzes and writing activities or unannounced pop quizzes or notecard responses, will occur during the class period. Timed assessments followed by or embedded in instruction or other activities pose challenges in meeting accommodations for students who receive extra time.***

III. ***Creating a less-stressful environment for students:***

A. ***The instructor will spend 5 minutes on the first day of class discussing different learning strategies and encourages students to communicate their needs to the instructor. This could take the form of a video, module page, or other posted resource.***

B. ***No single item in the class (assignment or test) will be worth more than 20% of the final grade.***

C. ***Students will not be required to speak or present in-person or in virtual environments. For example, students are provided the option of submitting a pre-recorded presentation in lieu of a live presentation. This criterion is not applicable to asynchronous courses without a presentation component.***

D. ***Students will be provided with an agenda and/or class outline for each class period. For online modules, students will be provided with an agenda for each module.***

E. ***Students are allowed two options to complete an assignment. For example, students may submit a weekly reflection on their learning either in writing or via video. Some students process information and express their ideas better in speech than in writing.***

IV. ***Helping students understand and meet faculty expectations:***

A. ***Students will be provided access to curated background information or relevant knowledge for the class (from earlier in the semester or from prerequisite courses). Examples of such resources are paper-writing tips, background information, math knowledge needed for the class and other relevant information or techniques/strategies.***

B. ***Students will be provided with granular learning objectives and a list of important concepts covered on each test. For example, module or unit study guides are provided.***

C. ***A rubric will be provided for each graded assignment.***

D. ***Students will be provided with a one-page executive summary of the syllabus with all due dates and assignments. For example, a grading summary, list of modules/topics, related assignments, and due dates are presented in a single table.***

E. ***Students will be able to resubmit some assignments to be regraded. The syllabus will clearly indicate which assignments are eligible for resubmission and under what conditions.***

F. ***Students will have at least weekly self-assessment opportunities such as non-graded practice assessments, non-graded concept checks etc.***

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.

Required 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: Third
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 text book. 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.

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.

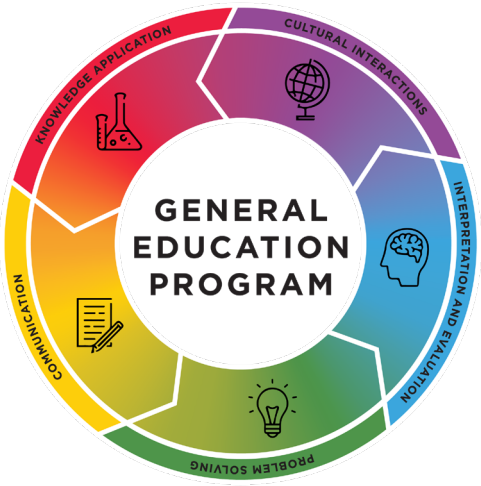
As taking notes can be fast and furious during lecture, a fill-in-the-blank outline (word document) is posted at the beginning of each module. Further, PowerPoint slides of my lecture notes are provided in the Canvas course. Consider comparing the posted notes to what is discussed in class as material/information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

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

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.

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.

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	3337-3550	94-100%
A-	3195-3336	90-93%
B+	3089-3194	87-89%
B	2947-3088	83-86%
B-	2840-2946	80-82%

C+	2734-2839	77-79%
C	2592-2733	73-76%
C-	2485-2591	70-72%
D+	2379-2484	67-69%
D	2237-2378	63-66%
D-	2130-2236	60-62%
F	2129 and below	59% and below

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 6 interactive discussions = 600 points 20 x 1 introductory discussion post = 20 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 50 x 1 gerrymandering = 50 points
Mini-Quizzes	In person, consists of multiple-choice and short answer questions .	200 x 6 = 1200 points 30 x 1 Political Typology Quiz = 30 points
Final	In person, consists of multiple-choice questions.	700 x 1 = 700 points
Attendance	Come to class and get the points. Don't come to class and lose the points.	50 x 1 = 50 points with no unexcused absences, 5

		points lost for every unexcused absence
Total		3550 points

All assignments are due no later than the day and time posted; late assignments may be submitted with permission from the instructor and submission of documentation explaining why submitting the assignment on time was not possible. The instructor must be notified as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours of the missed assignment to be eligible to submit that assignment late.

Access to assignments and due dates, except for the mini quizzes and final exam, 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.

Missing the mini quizzes 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 mini quizzes and final will assess the material covered during the term. 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 when made in accordance with the university's policies.

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.

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 three (3) 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 to class.

To ensure compliance, I will be using the iClicker system to take attendance. You are required to check into class using the iClicker student app on your smartphone, tablet, or laptop. It is your responsibility to set up an iClicker account and properly register in my course (instructions for doing so are located in the canvas). It is also your responsibility to regularly check your iClicker records for any discrepancies and bring them to my attention by the following class meeting.

Students are expected to be prepared to actively participate in discussions, activities, and class group work. Individuals and groups will be required to do various 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 scored 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:

Write a 350-word reflection that addresses the prompt. Use your own insights and critical thinking to develop your response. Post your response in the discussion forum and respond to at least two peers, offering constructive feedback or expanding on their points with additional questions or perspectives.

Discussions are completed in three parts:

PART ONE-INITIAL POST: A 350 word response to the posted question. The initial post must reference (including appropriate citations) the readings assigned for this discussion.

PART TWO-RESPONSE POST ONE: A one paragraph response to one other student's initial post. Each paragraph must include at least five substantial sentences that offer constructive feedback or expand on their points with additional questions or perspectives.

PART THREE-RESPONSE POST TWO: A one paragraph response to one other student's initial post. Each paragraph must include at least five substantial sentences that offer constructive feedback or expand on their points with additional questions or perspectives.

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-Aug. 19	Introduction	Week 1 Module

	What is Government	
2-Aug. 24	The Constitution and its Origins	Week 2 Module
3-Sept. 1	The Constitution and its Origins	Week 3 Module
4-Sept. 8	The U.S. Constitution and Federalism	Week 4 Module
5-Sept.15	The Politics of Public Opinion	Week 5 Module
6-Sept. 22	Voting, Elections, Political Parties, and Interest Groups	Week 6 Module
7-Sept. 29	Voting, Elections, Political Parties, and Interest Groups	Week 7 Module
8-Oct. 6	The Congress	Week 8 Module
9-Oct.13	The Congress	Week 9 Module
10-Oct. 20	The Presidency & The Bureaucracy	Week 10 Module
11-Oct. 27	The Presidency & The Bureaucracy	Week 11 Module
12-Nov. 3	The Courts, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights	Week 12 Module
13-Nov.10	The Courts, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights	Week 13 Module 11/11-Veterans Day- No Class
14-Nov.17	The Courts, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights	Week 14 Module
15-Nov.24	Final Exam Review	Week 15 Module 11/27-Thanksgiving Break No Class
16-Dec. 1	Final Exam	12/4-4:00pm-6:50p Regular Classroom

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.

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.

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 who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools on writing assignments must properly document and credit its use. 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"

Further, when using AI as part of your writing assignment, you must include the generated content as part of your submission by submitting 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 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.

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.