UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
U.S. GOVERNMENT
POS 2041
COURSE CONTENT
Spring 2026
Dr. Bruce Farcau

I. Textbook (Required)

Ginsberg, Benjamin, et al., *We the People (13th Essentials Edition),* W. W. Norton, 2019.

II. Office hours will be announced, but students are welcome to find him before and after class or to set up an appointment. The instructor can also be reached at bruce.farcau@ucf**.edu**.

III. Course Description

POS 2041
U.S. GOVERNMENT
Theory, organization, principles and function of national government, stressing relationships of individual to all levels of government in the political system. This course includes a learning activity designed to ensure competence in the basic use of computers. Class will be held MWF 1030-1120 in MSB 360 from 8 January – finals week..

IV. Test and Grading Policy

A. There will be three (3) exams, none of which will be comprehensive. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. Each exam will consist of take-home exam consisting of only essay questions in which the student will also have some option of which questions to answer. Tests will be based on the text and explanations of that material provided in lecture. The dates of the first two tests will be announced at least two weeks before that date. Tests will be distributed in class and made available via email, with students having up to four days to complete them, submitting them either in class in hard copy, at the Social Sciences office in Bldg 8, or via email.

B. A term paper of a minimum of 8 pages of text (typed, double-spaced, with standard margins and Times New Roman 12-point font, with page numbers) besides any illustrations, plus bibliography, and footnotes. The paper will be on any subject related to American politics or government. There should be an analysis of the pros and cons of the issue making use of sources on both sides and a discussion of the results of the legislation or decision. The paper should draw on *at least* five sources, including at least one from

the internet (but some books as well), but not including the course text or general encyclopedias. As a rule of thumb, sources that do not include an author's name are not acceptable. The idea is to demonstrate that the student has learned something about the topic beyond what is contained in the class text. Direct quotes should be kept to a minimum. The paper will be worth 25% of your grade. Students should submit their topic for approval by January 25th. The term paper will be due on or before April 12th. Late papers will be accepted by April 19th, but will suffer a 10-point penalty. Really late papers will be accepted until April 26th, for a 25-point penalty, but **no papers will be accepted after that date**. Papers may be submitted in hard copy in class, in the Social Sciences office in Bldg 8, or via email.

C. Extra credit: Students will have the opportunity to earn up to 20 point to be added to any test grade by writing a 4-page, typed report on any of the books on the list provided (3 pages summarizing the book, and one page of the student's opinion of it.) Students are welcome to offer additional titles of politically related books for approval as well. This will be due by April 26th. No papers will be accepted after that date.

D. Each test (modified for extra credit) and the term paper are all worth the same weight toward the final grade. The percentage grade on each test will be averaged to result in the final grade. The grade scale will be:

59 below = F
60-69 = D
70-79 = C
80-89 = B
90 above = A

V. Competencies

Students will learn to analyze information about the American political system and relate it to current events under discussion. They will be able to argue and explain their conclusions about political events. Students will learn to recognize tactics of persuasion used by politicians and to evaluate their points of view. Students will learn to express their views both in writing and orally and defend their positions when questioned. Students will be able to apply what they have learned in daily life, both when reading about political events and when exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

SCHEDULE
(Subject to Change – Note that specific dates for tests are not given)

WEEK	TOPIC	TEXT CHAPTER

1	Logical Thinking	N/A
2	Theory of Government	1
3	The Constitution	2
4	Federalism	3
5	Civil Liberties	4
6	Civil Rights	4
	FIRST TEST	
7	Congress	9
8	Presidency Bureaucracy	10 11
9	SPRING BREAK	
10	The Judiciary SECOND TEST	12
11	Public Opinion Media	5 6
12	Political Parties	7
13	Interest Groups	8
14	Election Campaigns	7
15	Political Economy	13
16	Welfare Foreign and Defense Policy	13 14

THIRD TEST (Finals week.)

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Students are expected to attend every class, barring illness or true emergency. It is unlikely that a good grade can be earned without regular attendance in class. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain lecture notes from another student in case of need.

Between 10 and 20 extra credit points will be awarded for good attendance at the instructor's discretion.

B. Punctuality: Classes will start promptly as scheduled. If arriving late, please enter as discreetly as possible. Do not leave until class is dismissed.

C. Courtesy: Beepers and cell phones should be turned off during class. There should be no eating or drinking during class. Any questions should be directed to the instructor, and the only other talking should be in response to questions from the instructor or at his direction.

D. Cheating: All written work should be your own. Plagiarizing on term papers or otherwise cheating on tests will result in an automatic F grade for the entire course.

E. As your professor, I'm committed to giving you as many opportunities and resources to support your learning as possible. Therefore, you may find it beneficial to record class lectures to review later. Please keep in mind that you do not have your peers' permission to record them, and they have a right to privacy; your peers should not be in your recordings. You may not record class discussions, student presentations, labs, group work, and private conversations. These recordings are permitted for your own personal use; you should contact me to discuss sharing options. Note that while these recordings are useful for review, we want you to attend class for your insights and questions; these recordings are not substitutes for class participation and attendance. Should you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact me through Atlas email or Canvas message.

Students with Disabilities:
"Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a notification from the
Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and discuss specific needs with the instructor, preferably during
the first two weeks of class. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines accommodations based on
appropriate documentation of disabilities. The East Campus Office is located in Building 5, Room 216."
http://valenciacollege.edu/osd/

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT:
This syllabus may be altered, at the instructor's discretion, during the course of the term.
It is the responsibility of the student to make any adjustments as they are announced.

FURTHER READING FOR EXTRA CREDIT PROJECT

Anonymous, *Primary Colors* (novel)
Bailey, Ronald, *The End of Doom*
Bork, Robert H., *The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law*
Caro, Robert A., *The Path to Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*
Ceaser, James W., *The Perfect Tie: The True Story of the 2000 Presidential Election*
Cogan, John, *The High Cost of Good Intentions.*
Coulter, Ann, *Treason, High Crimes and Misdemeanors*
Crichton, Michael, *State of Fear* (novel)
Evans, M. Stanton, *Blacklisted by History*
Goldberg, Bernard, *Bias*
Granger, Bill, *Lords of the Last Machine: The Story of Politics in Chicago*
Greenstein, Fred I., *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Clinton*
Halberstam, David, *The Best and the Brightest*
Hayek, Frederick, *The Road to Serfdom*
Kissinger, Henry, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*
Kurtz, Howard, *Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine*
Levin, Mark, *Men in Black*
Moore, Michael, *Stupid White Men*
McCullough, David, *Truman*
Olson, Barbara, *The Final Days*
O'Rourke, P. J. , *Parliament of Whores, Eat the Rich*
Ravitch, Diane, *Left Back*
Riker, William H., *The Art of Political Manipulation*
Saffire, William, *Scandalmonger* (novel)
Sammon, Bill, *At Any Cost: How Al Gore Tried to Steal the Election*
Schlessinger, Arthur, *The Thousand Days*
Shlaes, Amity, *The Forgotten Man*
Smith, Hedrick, *The Power Game*
Sowell, Thomas, *A Conflict of Visions*
Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America* (either volume)
Woodward, Robert, *All the President's Men, Plan of Attack, The Choice, The Brethren*