VALENCIACOLLEGE

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Title: POS 2041 24096
Course Name: US GOVERNMENT
Class Duration: Jan 12–May 3, 2026
Class Format: In-Person
Term: Spring 2026
Class Meetings: Mon/Wed 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM DPAC254

Course Description:

- 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 government's laws, policies, and programs. It also examines the ways in which citizens participate in their government and the ways their government responds to citizens. This is a Gordon Rule course, which requires demonstration of college-level writing skills through multiple assignments. Minimum grade of C required if used to satisfy Gordon Rule requirement.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Students will describe how the writing of European philosophers contributed to the concept of individual rights as found in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
2. Students will identify views of human nature as developed by key European philosophers who influenced the thinking of the writers of the U.S. Constitution and the Federalist Papers.
3. Students will explain the main ideas in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Perpetual Union, the U.S. Constitution, and the Federalist Papers.
4. Students will compare the Federalists' and Anti-Federalists' views and explain how they shaped the U.S. Constitution.
5. Students will describe why the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, the U.S. Constitution, and the Federalist Papers were written.
6. Students will describe how parts of the U.S. Constitution and its amendments apply to issues today.

Professor Information

Instructor: Olohi Pleasant Ogedengbe
Contact: pogedengbe@valenciacollege.edu
Office Hours/Engagement Hours:

- **In-Person (Valencia College Downtown Campus, DPAC 340N):**
  - **Mondays**: 1:30–2:30 PM (Walk-In)
  - **Tuesdays**: 1:00–2:00 PM (Walk-In)
  - **Wednesday:** 1:30–2:30 PM (Walk-In)

Online (via Zoom):

- **Thursday**: 8:00–10:00 AM
- **Fridays:** 8:00- 9:00 AM
  https://valenciacollege.zoom.us/j/92555716804?pwd=DNG1bFZEFDat9oJbEw8Yw0Cf4Zq2ak.1
  Meeting ID: 925 5571 6804
  Passcode: 578021

Asynchronous Engagement (6 hours weekly):
In addition to the above office and Zoom hours, I devote 6 hours each week (Monday–Friday) to:

- Course preparation and lesson planning
- Grading and providing feedback
- Responding to student emails and Canvas messages
- Maintaining and updating course materials on Canvas

This ensures students have both scheduled synchronous access and consistent asynchronous support throughout the week.

Required Materials:

We the People (15th Edition)

ISBN: 9781324085454
Authors: Benjamin Ginsberg, Caroline J. Tolbert, Theodore J. Lowi, Andrea L. Campbell, Margaret Weir, Megan Ming Francis, Robert J. Spitzer
Publication Date: 2025-01-14

Course Schedule/Calendar

Week	Dates (2026)	Topics & Readings	Assignments / Deadlines
Pre-Course / Week 1	**Jan 12 – Jan 17**	**Introduction: American Government, Civic Values & Political Culture** Reading: *Ch. 1 – Americans and Their Political Values*	Orientation activities; syllabus review.

Week	Dates (2026)	Topics & Readings	Assignments / Deadlines
Week 2	Jan 19 – Jan 24	**MLK Day – Mon Jan 19 (No Class)** **The Founding & the Constitution (I)** – The Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. Reading: *Ch. 2 – The Founding & the Constitution (Part I)*	**Quiz 1** (opens Fri Jan 30, due Sun Feb 1 @ 11:59 PM)
Week 3	Jan 26 – Jan 31	**The Founding & the Constitution (II)** – The Constitutional Convention, Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists, Ratification Debates, and the Federalist Papers.	**Writing 1 –**due **Fri Jan 30 @ 11:59 PM**
Week 4	Feb 2 – Feb 7	**Federalism** – The division of power between national and state governments; evolution of federal authority. Reading: *Ch. 3 – Federalism*	
Week 5	Feb 9 – Feb 14	**Civil Liberties (I)** – The Bill of Rights and Selective Incorporation. Reading: *Ch. 4 – Civil Liberties*	**Quiz 2** (opens Fri Feb 13, due Sun Feb 15 @ 11:59 PM)
Week 6	Feb 16 – Feb 21	**February 16 President day** **Civil Rights (I)** – The Struggle for Equality: Slavery, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement. Reading: *Ch. 5 – Civil Rights (Part I)*	
Week 7	Feb 23 – Feb 28	**Civil Rights (II)** – Modern Civil Rights Issues (LGBTQ+, Gender, Immigration, and Voting Rights). Policy outcomes and current debates. Supplemental Readings: Contemporary cases and articles on affirmative action and representation.	**Writing 2** due **Fri Feb 20 @ 11:59 PM** **Quiz 3** (opens Fri Feb 27, due Sun Mar 1 @ 11:59 PM)
Week 8 (Midterm Week)	Mar 2 – Mar 7	**Midterm Review & Exam** – Founding, Constitution, Federalism, Civil Liberties & Civil Rights. Introduction to Public Opinion.	**Midterm Exam (Mon Mar 2 – In Class)** **(Wed-Review: Mid Evaluation)**
Week 9 (Spring Break)	Mar 9 – Mar 14	**— Spring Break – No Class Meetings**	
Week 10	Mar 16 – Mar 21	**Public Opinion & Political Socialization** – How attitudes form and influence policy. Reading: *Ch. 6 – Public Opinion*	
Week 11	Mar 23 – Mar 28	**The Media and Political Information** – Agenda-setting, framing, and misinformation. Reading: *Ch. 7 – The Media and Political Information*	**Quiz 4** (opens Fri Mar 27, due Sun Mar 29 @ 11:59 PM)

Week	Dates (2026)	Topics & Readings	Assignments / Deadlines
Week 12	**Mar 30 – Apr 4**	**Political Parties and Elections** – Party systems, campaigns, and voter mobilization. Reading: *Ch. 8 – Political Parties and Interest Groups*	**Writing 3 –**due **Fri Apr 3 @ 11:59 PM**
Week 13	**Apr 6 – Apr 11**	**Congress – Representation and Law-Making** Reading: *Ch. 10 – Congress*	**Quiz 5** (opens Fri Apr 10, due Sun Apr 12 @ 11:59 PM)
Week 14	**Apr 13 – Apr 18**	**The Presidency & the Bureaucracy** – Executing and Implementing the Law; Accountability and Oversight. Readings: *Ch. 11 & 12*	**Quiz 6** (opens Fri Apr 17, due Sun Apr 19 @ 11:59 PM)
Week 15 (Final Week)	**Apr 20 – Apr 25**	**The Federal Courts & Constitutional Interpretation** – Judicial review and checks and balances. Reading: *Ch. 13 – The Federal Courts* **Final Review Wed Apr 23**	**(Extra Make-up Quiz 7** (opens Fri Apr 24, due Sun Apr 26 @ 11:59 PM)
Week 16 (Wrap-Up)	**Apr 27 – May 2**	Course Reflection and Grades Finalization. **No Class Wed Apr 29.**	**Final Exam (Mon Apr 27 – In Class)**.

Assessment Breakdown (100%)

1. Attendance – 15%
Consistent attendance is essential to success in this course. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and arrive on time.

- **Approved and excused absences** will not count against your grade.
- Excessive unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures may lower your score.
- Attendance reflects professionalism, reliability, and commitment to learning.

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2. Participation – 15%
Active participation is a vital part of the learning experience. Students are expected to:

- Engage respectfully in class discussions and activities.
- Arrive prepared, having completed assigned readings.
- Contribute meaningfully to group or peer-based learning, both in class and online (for mixed-mode sections).
  Participation is evaluated on the quality of engagement, consistency, and collaboration.

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3. Writing-Based Discussions – 25%
Throughout the semester, you will complete **college-level writing-based discussions** that connect course materials to constitutional themes and current political issues. These assignments fulfill the **college-level writing requirement**.

- **Initial posts:** 300–500 words demonstrating depth, clarity, and direct application of course concepts.
- **Peer responses:** At least 150 words each, engaging thoughtfully with classmates.
- Graded on critical analysis, organization, use of evidence, and writing quality.

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4. Open-Book Quizzes – 15%
Short, open-book quizzes will assess comprehension of key ideas, constitutional principles, and Supreme Court cases.

- Administered every two weeks.
- Each quiz remains open for 48 hours but is **timed (10–15 minutes)** once started.
- Designed to reinforce understanding rather than memorization.

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5. Midterm Exam – 15%
An **in-class, writing-based exam** covering constitutional foundations, historical developments, and major cases from the first half of the course.

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6. Final Exam – 15%
An **in-class, cumulative writing-based exam** that assesses synthesis of major constitutional themes and application to real-world governance issues.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required and essential for your success in this course. You are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions, arrive on time, and participate actively. More than two unexcused absences may negatively impact your participation grade.

If you must miss class due to illness, emergency, or religious observance, please notify me in advance when possible. It is your responsibility to catch up on any missed material. Excessive absences may result in being withdrawn from the course according to Valencia College policy.

You are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which you are registered. Regular attendance and regular class participation are significant factors that promote success in college. For online courses, attendance is determined by consistently logging in and accessing the course content and completing courses in accordance with the course schedule.

Grading Scale

Total Percentage	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89.9%	B
70% - 79.9%	C
60% - 69.9%	D
0% - 59.9%	F

Academic Honesty

All forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited at Valencia College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, acts or attempted acts of plagiarism, cheating, furnishing false information,

forgery, alteration or misuse of documents, misconduct during a testing situation, facilitating academic dishonesty, and misuse of identification with intent to defraud or deceive.

If a faculty member concludes a student in their class has violated this policy, the faculty member can choose to assign academic penalties that include, without limitation, one or more of the following: loss of credit for the assessment (assignment, examination, project, paper, etc.); a reduction in the course final grade; a grade of "F" as the final grade in the course. The faculty member may also refer the violation for action in accordance with Policy 6Hx28:8-03, Student Code of Conduct.

Student Code of Conduct

Valencia is dedicated not only to the advancement of knowledge and learning but also to the development of responsible personal and social conduct. As a registered student, you assume the responsibility for conducting yourself in a manner that contributes positively to Valencia's learning community and does not impair, interfere with, or obstruct the orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the college as described in the Student Code of Conduct.

Policy Statements with Links

Academic Calendar (make sure to keep this updated)	2025-2026 Important Dates & Deadlines
Privacy Act (FERPA)	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Attendance/No-Show	Class Attendance
Students with Disabilities	Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)
International Students	International Student Services
Valencia Core Competencies	Student Core Competencies
Student Conduct	Student Code of Conduct
Academic Honesty	Academic Integrity
ID Cards	Student ID Cards
Parking Permits	Parking
Title IX - Equal Access/Opportunity	Notice of Non-Discrimination
Campus Computer Labs	College Computer Lab Locations
Grading and Incompletes	Incompletes
Withdrawals	Course Attempts & Course Withdrawal
Student Counseling	BayCare Student Assistance Services

Valencia Student Core Competencies:

The faculty of Valencia College has identified four core competencies that define the learning outcomes for a successful Valencia graduate. These competencies are at the heart of the Valencia experience and provide the context for learning and assessment at Valencia College. You will be given opportunities to develop and practice these competencies in this class. The four competencies are:

· Think - think clearly, and creatively, analyze, synthesize, integrate and evaluate in the many domains of human inquiry.

· Value - make reasoned judgments and responsible commitments.

· Communicate - communicate with different audiences using varied means.

· Act - act purposefully, effectively and responsibly.

No Show Period Policy:

In compliance with Title IV federal financial aid regulation for course attendance, we are required to certify attendance and report any student who either does not attend and/or complete an approved attendance activity as a "no-show."

You are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which you are registered. Class attendance is required beginning with the first-class meeting. If you do not attend class or complete an attendance activity within the no-show period, you will be withdrawn from the class as a "no show."

The No-Show Period for this class is found in the Important Dates and Deadlines.

Withdrawal Policy:

As a student, you can withdraw yourself from a course until the specified withdrawal date. To withdraw from a course(s) you must access registration through the Student Portal. The Withdrawal Deadlines for each term are published in the Important Dates and Deadlines document. All requests for withdrawals must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the Withdrawal Deadline date.

- **Before you withdraw:**
  - You should talk with your professor to discuss your progress in the course.
  - See a Student Services staff member to discuss how a withdrawal will affect your career and education plans and/or the status of your financial aid.

- **After the Withdrawal Deadline:**

  - If you do not withdraw from the class by the deadline, you will receive the grade you earned.

  A student who has documented major extenuating circumstances may petition to be dropped after the published deadlines. Major extenuating circumstances are defined as, and limited to, the following:
  - Death of an immediate family member.
  - Documented medical emergencies resulting in medical confinement or incapacitation of a defined length.
  - Military call or recall to active duty.

Students wishing for more information about the petition process should review the procedure published with the "Late Drop (Administrative Refund)" form, available via the Student Portal.

Office for Students with Disabilities:

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines reasonable and appropriate accommodations for qualified students with documented disabilities based upon the need and impact of the specific disability. If you qualify for accommodations or believe you may need to, based on your situation, please contact OSD for more information at Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review their education records
2. The right to request an adjustment to the education record if the student finds the record to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of their privacy rights.
3. The right to provide written consent to disclose or withhold personal information about the student.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the college to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Academic Integrity:

Valencia College ("College") is dedicated to engaging in intellectual activity and maintaining an academic environment consistent with high academic standards including a shared commitment to transparency, integrity, and creating the right conditions for learning. In all areas of academic and instructional endeavors, the College expects your work to be the result of individual knowledge, thoughts, research, effort, and self-expression or that appropriate citation/credit is given for the origin of the work.

This means that you should:

- **Produce your own original work**. Ensure all assignments reflect your individual efforts and original ideas.
- **Cite Your Sources Properly**: Always give credit to the authors of any ideas or information you reference.
- **Complete exams honestly**. Only use authorized resources and submit your own work in accordance with the exam guidelines.

- **Be Transparent**. Do not provide false information related to absences, level of effort on projects, or data collection.
- **Maintain Security**: Never share your login credentials or use someone else's credentials to access online classrooms.

What are the consequences for violating the academic integrity policy?

If you violate the academic integrity policy in this course, the following actions can be taken by your professor in relation to the severity and frequency of the violations

1. **Discussion with Your Professor:** You will meet with your professor to discuss the violation.
2. **Loss of Assignment Credit:** You may receive no credit for the assignment, potentially earning a zero (0).
3. **Reduction in Final Grade:** Your final course grade may be lowered.
4. **Final Grade of "F":** You may receive an "F" for the entire course.
5. **Referral to the Student Conduct Committee:** This can lead to additional sanctions, including possible removal from the college.

Penalties will be determined by the professor based on the severity of the violation and the number of occurrences.

How may I dispute an academic integrity violation?

A student may dispute an issued academic penalty(ies) in accordance with College Policy 6Hx28: 8-10 Student Academic Dispute and Administrative Complaint Resolution.

Artificial Intelligence Policies

The use of artificial intelligence tools, including, but not limited to, automated essay generators, content generators/synthesizers (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.), translation tools, external grammar checkers (e.g., Grammarly), and plagiarism detection algorithms, may be authorized for specific assignments within this course with instructor notice and approval. Content generated by such tools must be acknowledged and cited correctly. Approval of the use of AI for one assignment does not provide blanket approval for other assignments. The instructor will provide clear instructions about assignment requirements.

Student Code of Conduct:

(College Policy: **6Hx28: 8-03 Student Code of Conduct**)

As a registered student, you assume the responsibility for conducting yourself in a manner that contributes positively to Valencia's learning community and that does not impair, interfere with, or obstruct the orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the college as described in the Student Code of Conduct.

Student ID Cards & Parking Permits:

Student ID cards can be obtained in the Security office on any Campus, except Downtown Campus, once you have registered and paid for your classes.

Parking Permits:

Registration of Vehicles and Parking Permits operated by students in connection with attendance at Valencia College must display a current parking permit. An application for a parking permit must be filled out online through the Student Portal and a copy, along with the Valencia ID and current vehicle registration, must be submitted to a campus Security Office during the time of registration for classes.

Parking Decals are issued at no cost to students. Lost, stolen or damaged decals must be replaced. Emergency or temporary permits for short-term periods may be obtained at all campus Security Offices from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM Monday through Friday, and at West Campus from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Saturday.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

Valencia College is an equal opportunity institution. We provide equal opportunity for employment and educational services to all individuals as it relates to admission to the College or to programs, any aid, benefit, or service to students or wages and other terms, conditions or privileges of employment, without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, marital status, sex/gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, pregnancy, and any other factor prohibited under applicable federal, state, and local civil rights laws, rules and regulations.

BayCare Behavioral Health Student Assistance Program:

Valencia College is interested in making sure all our students have a rewarding and successful college experience. To that purpose, Valencia students can get immediate help with issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. Valencia is committed to making sure all our students have a rewarding and successful college experience. To that purpose, Valencia students can get immediate help that may assist them with psychological issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. Students have 24-hour unlimited access to the BayCare Behavioral Health's confidential student assistance program phone counseling services by calling (800) 878-5470. Three free confidential face-to-face counseling sessions are also available to students.

Disclaimer Statement

Changes to this syllabus, schedule, and/or policy may be made at any time during the course per instructor discretion. These changes will be reasonable and made in the best interest of student learning. Students will be notified of any changes either in class, through Announcements, and/or via

the Canvas Inbox conversations tool. Students with any concerns about any changes should discuss it with the instructor as soon as possible.