



## Course Syllabus

POS 2041—83894—Online  
American National Government  
CB Session, Fall Semester, 2023  
3 Credit Hours—Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Dr. John W. Erickson, Jr., J.D., Ph.D.

Fall 2023 C Session Dates: 10/16/2023 – 12/15/2023

**Note:** For any syllabus posted before the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes before or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail or Canvas announcement when changes are made in the requirements and/or grading of the course.

**Online Courses at Gulf Coast State College:** All online courses at GCSC utilize the Canvas Learning System. Students should read all information presented on the Canvas course site and should periodically check for updates--at least every 48 hours.

**Remember:** This course is not one in which students may work at their own pace. Each week there are learning modules, assignments, online lectures, online discussions, and/or online exams with due dates. Refer to the schedule within this syllabus for more information.

### Instructor Contact Information:

Dr. John W. Erickson, Jr., J.D., Ph.D.  
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Please include your name and the course title in the subject line of your e-mails. Thank you!

### Instructor Education:

B.A., Justice, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1992  
B.A., Speech Communication, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1993  
J.D., J. Rueben Clark School of Law, Provo, Utah, 1999  
M.A., Administration of Justice, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska 2004  
M.M.O.A.S., Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama, 2009  
M.S., Forensic Psychology, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 2015  
Ph.D., Criminal Justice-Behavioral Science, Nova Southeastern University, Florida, 2016  
M.Div., Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado, 2022

Office Hours: I am typically available between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. (Central Time), Monday through Friday. Notwithstanding, please do not hesitate to email or text me anytime. I will get back to you as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours. I am here for you!

### Social Sciences Office Contacts:

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### Required Textbook:

The textbook for this course, titled *We The People, 13th Essentials Edition*, ISBN-13: 978-0-393-42702-8, is available in the College Book Store. You may also buy an e-copy of the 13th edition at [www.wwnorton.com](http://www.wwnorton.com).

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**APA Citation for Required Textbook:**

Ginsberg, B., Lowi, T. J., Weir, M., Tolbert, C. J., Campbell, A. L., & Spitzer, R. J. (2021). *We the people: An introduction to American politics*. W.W. Norton & Company.

**Technology Requirements for this Course:** This section of POS 2041 requires that students have regular and open access to a computer and that they maintain reliable internet service.

**Technical Assistance:** Technical support is available by phone 24 hours a day 7 days per week by calling (850) 913-3303. Technicians are also available on the Panama City Campus from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**POS 2041 Catalog Description:** A comprehensive examination of the theory, practice, ideals, and realities of government and politics in the United States. Major areas of study include behavior and participation, the legislative process, the presidency, the judicial process, and the administrative state.

**Course Content:** The academic content for this section of POS 2041 will be covered primarily via digital lectures, textbook readings, discussion board contributions.

**Instructor-Specific Objectives and Broad Goals:** Upon successful completion of POS 2041, students will be able to:

1. Compare-contrast major political/economic ideologies and identify their ideology or ideologies;
2. Describe the foundations and development of the U.S. government;
3. Describe the development and content of the Constitution;
4. Describe and evaluate the structure, roles, and powers of the three branches of our government;
5. Describe and analyze relationships between the people and the government, specifically political processes, and institutions,
6. Explain and demonstrate appreciation for civil rights protections and individual liberties in the U.S.;

7. Outline contemporary public policy issues and identify key players in the economy, domestic programs, and foreign affairs policy domains; and
8. Demonstrate ability to “access” government officials and services, including voter registration and voting.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

The successful POS 2041 experience will result in the student’s ability to correctly describe, analyze, and evaluate the following concepts as demonstrated by student performance in written assignments, research, collaborative learning projects, objective and subjective test questions designed to gauge and reinforce critical thinking and communication skills. To facilitate your learning & prepare for exams, please get in the habit of reviewing this list every week to ensure you understand and remember the main ideas.

- Describe and analyze the foundations and development of the US government by examining historical events leading up to the Revolutionary War, the failure of the Articles of Confederation, and evaluating the content of the United States Constitution and its primary principles;
- Discuss the political significance of civil rights protections and individual liberties in the US by describing the content and relevance of the Bill of Rights and other Constitutional Amendments, and by applying Constitutional principles to historical and contemporary issues;
- Describe and evaluate the structure, roles, and powers of the institutions of American government, including contemporary public policy-making in economic, domestic, and foreign policy domains; and,
- Describe and analyze relationships between the people and the government, specifically the role of civil society and political processes like elections, and identify one’s own ideological perspective(s).

### 6A-10.02413-1 Civics Literacy Competency

Before the award of an associate in arts or baccalaureate degree, first-time-in-college students entering a Florida College System institution in the 2021-2022 school year, and thereafter, must demonstrate competency in civics literacy by completing (a) and (b) before graduation:

a. Successfully passing either POS 2041 American Government or AMH 2020 United States History Since 1877. Each of the courses must include the following competencies:

(1) Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government;

- (2) An understanding of the United States Constitution and its application;
  - (3) Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-government; and
  - (4) An understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.
- b. Achieving the standard score on one of the following assessments:

Assessment / Standard Score

AP Government and Politics, US / 3

AP United States History / 4

CLEP: American Government / 50

Florida Civics Literacy Exam / 60

**Student Expectation Statement:** The student is expected to participate in the course via e-mail exchanges with the instructor, by listening to and taking thorough notes on all digital lectures, reading the assigned readings, submitting the “Biosketch Essay,” contributing to the discussion board, submitting as due four 300-word essays, and by completing all four exams as scheduled.

I am typically available between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. (Central Time), Monday through Friday. Notwithstanding, please do not hesitate to email or text me anytime. I will get back to you as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours. I am here for you!

All of the course content and graded assignments will be delivered and conducted on Canvas.

Students enrolled in this course will be expected to:

1. Listen to and take thorough notes on the video lectures assigned with each weekly Learning Module—I cannot overstress the importance of the video lectures;
2. Read all of the textbook pages assigned with each Learning Module;
3. Complete both exams AS SCHEDULED, see the course schedule below; and
4. Contact the instructor via email at once with any problems or issues. I cannot handle problems unless you make me aware of them.

**Academic Integrity Policy** - Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college’s mission. Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. Social Science professors report every

instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion in the student's records. "Cheating" includes but is not limited to the use of any unauthorized assistance in completing coursework. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrasing or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment as well as the purchase of papers or projects. "Self-plagiarism" occurs when a student submits the same or considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion, that they originally wrote for an English class, this is "self-plagiarism." Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class. Sanctions for incidences of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incidence and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an "F" grade (or "0") for the test, assignment, or activity, to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

**Student Accessibility Statement** - Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Before receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. For information regarding the registration process, email [sar@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:sar@gulfcoast.edu) or call 850-747-3243.

**Recording Lectures** - By federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students' having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines on pages 36-38 in the GCSC Student Handbook at: <https://www.gulfcoast.edu/current-students/student-handbooks/2021-2022-student-handbook.pdf>Links to an external site.

**Attendance Policy:** Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive learning activities is required. Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Attendance in an online/hybrid CANVAS class is defined as the submission of complete written assignments before their posted deadline.

**Make-Up Work Policy:** Missing any part of this schedule may prevent completion of the course. If you foresee difficulty of any type (e.g., an illness, employment change, etc.), which may prevent completion of this course, notify the instructor as soon as possible. Failure to do so may fail an assignment and/or a failure of the course. If I have not heard from you by the deadline dates for assignments, exams, or forums, make-up work may not be allowed (unless extraordinary circumstances exist, such as hospitalization). Requests for extensions must be made in advance and accompanied by an "acceptable

excuse.” For example, “I partied too hard this weekend, is typically not an “acceptable excuse.”

**Social Sciences Division Policies Regarding COVID-19** - The health and safety of students and faculty are a priority. If you are sick with COVID symptoms, please stay home to protect others. Notify your professor of your condition by phone or email. If you test positive for the COVID virus, please inform your instructor(s) to make arrangements for course requirements, and David Thomasee, Campus Safety & Security, at 850-873-3582. You will receive additional instructions at that time. Confidentiality will be maintained.

This information is subject to change. For the most recent information, please refer to the Gulf Coast State College website regarding COVID-19 at: <https://www.gulfcoast.edu/covid-19-coronavirus.html> **Links to an external site.**

**Email & Voicemail Response Time** - Instructors will check and respond to messages sent to their gulfcoast.edu email within 48 hours during scheduled workdays, barring illness or emergencies. The instructor may not check email during holidays or weekends. This policy also applies to messages sent via Canvas, as well as voicemails left on a provided phone number.

**Withdrawals** - Students may withdraw themselves from any course until the published withdrawal deadline for that term in the Gulf Coast State College catalog. Students wishing to withdraw from a course and receive a “W” must complete a withdrawal form and submit this to the Office of Enrollment Services before the scheduled withdrawal date as published on the college calendar. Social Sciences instructors do not withdraw students from their courses under any circumstances. If you feel you have a unique situation that warrants removal from all of your courses for a term after the withdrawal deadline has passed, you may contact the Vice President of Student Affairs to discuss your situation.

**Consequences of Withdrawals** - Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. After that, a grade will be assigned. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. It is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (e.g., financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.).

**Incomplete Grades** - Grades of incomplete in any Social Sciences course can only be assigned to students who have an emergency arise during the last two weeks of the course.

To receive an incomplete, students must:

1. Submit a written request to the instructor before the last face-to-face class meeting. For online courses, a written incomplete request must be received no later than the week before the Final Exam period begins.
2. Have completed no less than 60 percent of the course requirements and be passing the course at the time the request for an incomplete is submitted.



**Important Note:** The incomplete option provides 30 days from the date grades are due to make up any missing work; if work is not submitted during this period, the incomplete grade will automatically change to an “F” in Lighthouse.

### **Assessment Instruments:**

#### **I. Exams (15% each = 60% of the final grade):**

- A. Each exam will be comprised of multiple-choice, true-false, and matching questions.
- B. Each exam will be available for a specific period. See the Course Schedule in this syllabus for the dates during which the exams will be available.
- C. The exams will be delivered online via Canvas.
- D. The exams will be timed. Each exam is “opened book” and “opened notes.”
- E. None of the exams will be comprehensive, but the final exam **MUST** be taken by all students.

#### **II. Biosketch Essay (10% of the final grade):**

The “Biosketch Essay” should be submitted as a Word document directly into Canvas no later than 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday, XX XXX 2023. This brief assignment requires you to draft a 300–500-word essay about yourself, being certain to include items such as career aspirations, educational background, previous college-level history courses, etc. **YOUR ESSAY SHOULD BE GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT WITH NO MISSPELLINGS OR “TYPOS.”**

#### **III. Essays (20% of the final grade):**

All students will submit four 300–500-word essays. All rules of grammar, punctuation, and composition apply and will be graded. See the due dates and the Canvas page for further details.

#### **IV. Discussion Board Contributions (10% of the final grade):**

Each student will be required to participate in the course’s Discussion Board at least three times in each module. All contributions should add substantively to our discussion and generate further discussion and additional in-depth analysis.

#### **V. Extra Credit (Points to be Determined):**

From time to time, I will hold live Zoom sessions to review material, provide additional guidance, discuss current events, etc. Attendance at these Zoom sessions is **NOT** mandatory. But, if you attend them, I am likely to add no less than one point to your overall grade for each Zoom session you attended. Those who cannot attend a live Zoom session may submit a 300-word essay that summarizes the recording of the same.



## COURSE OUTLINE OF LEARNING MODULES

Week of: MOD Module Assignments

XX XXX	1	"Biosketch Essay" (Due: Wednesday, XX XXX); Discussion Board (DB) and Essay No. 1 (Due: Sunday, XX XXX)
XX XXX	2	DB (Due: Sunday, XX XXX); Exam No. 1: Modules 1 and 2 (Available: XX-XX XXX)
XX XXX	3	DB and Essay No. 2 (Due: Sunday, XX XXX)
XX XXX	4	DB (Due: Sunday, XX XXX); Exam No. 2: Modules 3 and 4 (Available: XX-XX XXX)
XX XXX	5	DB and Essay No. 3 (Due: Sunday, XX XXX)
XX XXX	6	DB (Due: Sunday, XX XXX); Exam No. 3: Modules 5 and 6 (Available: XX-XX XXX)
XX XXX	7	DB and Essay No. 4 (Due: Sunday, XX XXX)
XX XXX	8	DB (Due: Friday, XX XXX); Exam No. 4: Modules 7 and 8 (Available: XX-XX XXX)

ALL GRADES WILL BE AVAILABLE ON LIGHTHOUSE ON OR AFTER XX XXX 2023

### Method of Evaluation:

Biosketch Essay (10%)  
Exam # 1 (15%)  
Exam # 2 (15%)  
Exam # 3 (15%)  
Exam # 4 (15%)  
Essays (4) (20%)  
Discussion Boards (10%)

Assignment of Grades: All grades will be posted in the student grade book in Canvas and will be assigned according to the following scale:

A (90%-100%)  
B (80%-89%)  
C (70%-79%)  
D (60%-69%)  
F (59% and below)