



Course Syllabus

POS 2041—51824—Online
American National Government
E Session, Summer Semester, 2025
3 Credit Hours—Prerequisites: None

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

09 JUN 2025 – 01 AUG 2025

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 to the course's requirements and/or grading.

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 specific due dates. Refer to the schedule within this syllabus for more information.

Instructor Contact Information:

Dr. John W. Erickson, Jr., M.Div., J.D., Ph.D.
Social Sciences Division
(907) 841-1139 – iPhone
jerickso1@gulfcoast.edu

Please include your name and 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
M.S., Counseling, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, In-Progress

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 e-mail 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:

Dr. Robert Saunders, **Chair**
Office 210
(850) 872-3826
rsaunder2@gulfcoast.edu

Ms. Jody Walton, **Senior Administrative Assistant**
Office 209
850-872-3825
jwalton1@gulfcoast.edu

Required Textbook:

The required text for this course is *American Government 3e*. The text can be accessed for free and is downloadable here:

<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

Publish Date: Jul 28, 2021

Web Version Last Updated: Jul 18, 2024; PDF Version Last Updated: Jul 19, 2021

Hardcover: ISBN-13: 978-1-711493-96-1; Paperback: ISBN-13: 978-1-711493-95-4

Digital: ISBN-13: 978-1-951693-38-1

Technology Requirements for this Course: This course requires students to have regular and open computer access with Canvas, and maintain reliable internet service.

Technical Assistance: Technical support is available by phone 24 hours a day, seven 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 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 US Constitution and 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.”

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

Instructor-Specific Objectives and Broad Goals:

Upon successful completion of POS 2041, students should 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 United States;
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 (SLOs):

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, and objective and subjective test questions designed to gauge and reinforce critical thinking and communication skills. To facilitate your learning and prepare for exams, please review this list weekly to ensure you understand and remember the main ideas.

1. An understanding of the basic principles and practices of America's constitutional republic.
2. Knowledge of the nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and its amendments, and The Federalist Papers.
3. Knowledge of landmark US Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions.
4. Knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society.
5. An ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
6. An ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

6A-10.02413-1 Civic Literacy Competency

Civic Literacy, Course Competencies, and Outcomes: The State of Florida recently adopted a new rule regarding Civics Literacy. The old Civic Literacy rule required all students to complete either AMH 2020 or POS 2041 successfully.

The new rule requires students to successfully pass AMH 2020 or POS 2041 AND achieve a passing score on a Department of Education-approved civics exam, including the Florida Civics Literacy Exam (FCLE).

The Division of Social Sciences has created a Preparation Module for students wishing to prepare for the FCLE. The module is housed within a designated Canvas page. You can self-register for the Canvas Prep Module via the following link:

<https://gcsc.instructure.com/enroll/FNC8GL>

NOTE: the FCLE is NOT part of the grading scheme for this course.

The four competencies as required with the FCLE include:

1. an understanding of the basic principles of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government;
2. an understanding of the U.S. Constitution;
3. knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance; and
4. an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases and their impact on law and society.

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 e-mail or text me anytime. I will get back to you as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours. I am here for you!

All 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 overstate the importance of the video lectures);
2. Read all of the textbook pages assigned with each Learning Module;
3. Complete all exams **AS SCHEDULED**. See the course schedule below, and
4. Contact the instructor via e-mail at once with any problems or issues. I cannot handle problems unless you make me aware of them.

Social Sciences Policies

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 paraphrase or direct quotation of another person's published or unpublished work 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, 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.
- The use of **AI software** in any form to create class assignments may violate GCSC's Academic Integrity Policy. Before employing AI technology in any manner and to any degree, students should consult with their professors for all courses offered through the Social Sciences Division.

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 aspects of this course's instruction or design 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 or call 850-747-3243.

Recording Lectures - Under 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 student(s) paying damages, attorney fees, and court costs.

For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the GCSC Student Handbook:

<https://www.gulfcoast.edu/current-students/student-handbooks/2021-2022-student-handbook.pdf>

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 or 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.

Attendance - Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help promote college success. In face-to-face courses, students are required to be in class at the beginning of each class session, as attendance will be taken at this time. If a student arrives late, it is his/her responsibility to inform the instructor after class of his/her presence.

Failure to do so may result in the student being marked as “Absent.” Attendance in an online/hybrid CANVAS class is defined as the submission of complete written assignments before their posted deadline.

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. 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 (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:

- 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.
- 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 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 not be timed. Each exam is “opened book” and “opened notes.”
- E. None of the exams will be comprehensive, but all students MUST take the final exam.

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

The “**Biosketch Essay**” should be submitted as a Word document directly into Canvas no later than 11:59 p.m. on **Sunday, 15 June 2025**. This brief assignment requires you to draft a 300–500-word essay about yourself, being sure 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 (4) 300–500-word essays. All grammar, punctuation, and composition rules 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 must 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):

Occasionally, 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 will likely add no less than one point to your overall grade for each Zoom session you attended. Those who cannot participate in a live Zoom session may submit a 300-word essay summarizing the recording.

Grades will be available on Lighthouse the Monday after the term ends.

Method of Evaluation:

Biosketch Essay	(10%)
Exam # 1	(15%)
Exam # 2	(15%)
Exam # 3	(15%)
Exam # 4	(15%)
Essay # 1	(05%)
Essay # 2	(05%)
Essay # 3	(05%)
Essay # 4	(05%)
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)

