



COURSE SYLLABUS

POS 2041 CRN# 10089 American National Government

Spring Semester, A-Session

January 9, 2026 – May 8th, 2026

Semester Hours: 3 • Prerequisites: None

Semester Dates: January 9, 2026 – May 8th, 2026

Instructor Information:

David Fistein, PhD

BA, Sociology, SUNY Buffalo State College

MS, International Relations, Troy University, European Division

MA, Political Science, University of Missouri – St. Louis

PhD, Political Science, University of Missouri – St. Louis

Instructor's office phone: (850) 769 -1551 extension 2826

Instructor's email: dfistein@gulfcoast.edu

Division Chair Information:

Dr. Robert Saunders, Jr., Chair

Social Sciences Division

211 SS Bldg.

Gulf Coast State College

850-872-3826

rsaunder2@gulfcoast.edu

Social Sciences Senior Administrative

Assistant:

Ms. Jody Walton

Social Sciences 210

850-872-3825

jwalton1@gulfcoast.edu

Required Textbook:

Glen Krutz (2021)

American National Government 3e (3rd edition)

Publisher: OpenStax

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

B& W paperback ISBN: 978-1-711493-95-4

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

POS 2041 Catalog/Course Description and Broad Goals:

- This course is primarily lecture and reading based, with opportunities for discussions every day in face-to-face classes and once weekly via discussion board for online classes.
- The broad goals of the course include students learning and retaining a significant amount of factual information about the U.S. Constitution, how the U.S. government works and its historical development; developing critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills; and, improving communication skills.

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 ways their government responds to citizens.

STUDENT LEARNIN OUTCOMES (SLOs)

- 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 US Constitution and its amendments, and The Federalist Papers.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of landmark US 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 an ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

6A-10.02413-1 Civics Literacy Competency

Prior to the award of an associate in arts, associate in science, or a 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)** prior to 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

Service Learning

Service Learning is...

a specific program wherein students can participate in off-campus experiences that mirror their on-campus studies. Through a combination of classroom interaction, research/reflection and hand-on activity, students gain an applied critical thinking-focused introduction to their major field of study or simply learn the political reality and policy implications of theories learned in a specific course. By understanding how policies develop and the impact of those policies on real people, you will better prepare yourself to accept the responsibilities of citizenship and be a leader in your community.

Ask professor for details first week of school if interested.

Includes min 15 hours of some type of community service, a journal, and a reflective essay

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF THE INSTRUCTOR/ EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENTS

Expectations Statements:

- Students enrolled in this section of POS 2041 can expect a comprehensive, highly detailed, and balanced study of American Government past and present.

- Let me know of problems or issues as soon as possible. I am always open to questions and to handling any problems you are experiencing with the course.
- Students can expect to receive replies to emails to the professor within 24 hours—48 hours on weekends.
- Students enrolled in this section of POS 2041 are expected to use Canvas

Students will be automatically enrolled in Canvas for use with this course. *Canvas* is available through the college's main website at www.gulfcoast.edu . Please speak with me if you do not know how to use *Canvas*; technical issues will need to be addressed with our IT staff on campus. Class updates, reading assignments, and resources will be posted on *Canvas* throughout the semester. Check it often.

2025-2026 GCSC 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 to promote success in college. 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.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy (AI): See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Generative AI Use with Permission and Disclosure: Students may use basic assistive technologies for spelling, grammar, and formatting (e.g., PaperRater or SpellCheckPlus). Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly’s AI function, etc.) may also be used for classes and/or assignments where instructors have given explicit permission. Students must clearly disclose and properly cite any AI-generated content used in their work, following course guidelines. Students are permitted to use AI only in the manner and means described by the instructor. Unacknowledged or unauthorized AI use will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties, including a zero on the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college’s academic integrity policy.

Instruments of assessment for POS 2041 include

Quiz 1

Quiz 2

Quiz 3

Quiz 4

Midterm Exam

Activity 0

Activity 1

Activity 2

Activity 3

Activity 4

Class Participation

2 ½ page essay written in the English language

Final Exam

Assignment of Grades: All examination and assignments grades will appear in the student’s gradebook in Canvas. Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

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