



POS 2041- 14809
American National Government

Course Syllabus
Spring Semester A 2026
January 9 – May 8, 2026

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to 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 in the Canvas course site and should periodically check for updates--at least every 48 hours.

Remember: This course is designed to offer flexibility in completing Chapter and Unit assignments, while also following a schedule. Each Unit, comprised of multiple chapters, contains learning modules, assignments, online lectures, online discussions, and/or online exams with various due dates. Refer to the course schedule within this syllabus for more information.

Instructor Contact Information:

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Instructor Education:

Associate in Arts, Political Science, Gulf Coast State College
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, University of Central Florida
Master of Science, Applied American Politics and Policy, Florida State University
CERA, Certified Election Administrator, Election Center – Auburn University

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Electronic Office Hours: As this is an online course, there will be no on-campus office hours. If you have items to discuss or need assistance, please email, or send a Canvas message. Plan two business days for response, barring illness or emergency.

Required Textbook: Krutz, Glen, Sylvie Waskiewicz. *American Government*, 3rd Edition, OpenStax.; 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.

Catalog Course Description: In this course students will investigate how the national government is structured and how the American constitutional republic, or representative democracy, 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 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.

Teaching Techniques: The means of content delivery for this course, which includes instructor generated lectures, textbook readings, PowerPoint presentations, discussion board contributions, one-on-one correspondence, online videos, and supplementary websites. Each of these techniques support the broad goals of students learning the American political system in its most broad aspects and understanding the functions, processes, policies, and philosophical foundations of that system.

Student Learning 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.

The Florida Civic Literacy Requirement: Before 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 (1) and (2) before graduation:

- (1) Successfully passing either POS 2041 American Government or AMH 2020 United States History Since 1877. Each of the courses must include the following competencies:
 - (a) Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government;
 - (b) An understanding of the United States Constitution and its application;
 - (c) Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-government; and
 - (d) An understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.
- (2) Achieving the standard score on one of the following assessments:

Assessment:
AP Government and Politics, US

Standard Score:
3

AP United States History	4
CLEP: American Government	50
Florida Civics Literacy Exam	60

The Division of Social Sciences has created a Preparation Module for students wishing to prepare for the Florida Civics Literacy Exam. 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>.

Please Note: The Florida Civics Literacy Exam is entirely separate from this course; thus, it is not part of your grade.

Student Expectation Statement: Students will be expected to complete all course requirements through the GCSC Canvas LMS and take an active role in this course through listening to the lectures, reading the textbook, taking notes, and learning new and varied perspectives from their peers through the courteous and articulate discussion board posts. Communication should always be respectful, polite, and articulate – No hostility, vulgarity, or other harmful/discouraging/discriminatory language or action will be tolerated.

Technology Requirements for this Course: This course requires students to have access to a computer and the internet. For those students who do not own a computer, computer labs are available on the GCSC campus and in public libraries. Students without internet can come to the GCSC campus, go to local public libraries, coffee shops, etc.

Minimal technical skills required for this course; however, skills required include the ability to navigate the Microsoft Office Suite applications and Canvas.

Technical Assistance:

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

Course Requirements: Take responsibility for your learning by:

- ✓ Listening to the lectures and taking notes accordingly.
- ✓ Reading the textbook.
- ✓ Utilizing the Discussion Board and post as assigned.
- ✓ Complete all **three** Unit Examinations **AS SCHEDULED**.
 - Deadlines are non-negotiable; however,
 - If there is a conflict with the examination window, contact me well before the deadline and, on a case-by-case basis, you may take the exam early.
- ✓ Communicate any issues or questions in a timely manner.

Respect deadlines – They are not guidelines.

Method of Evaluation:

Unit I Exam	20%
Unit II Exam	20%
Unit III Exam	20%
Chapter Quizzes: 10	20%
Discussion Boards: 10	20%

Assignment of Grades:

A	90.0%-100%
B	80.0%-89.9%
C	70.0%-79.9%
D	60.0%-69.9%
F	59.9% and below

Course Components:

Unit Timeline*

- Unit I: January 16 – February 5, 2026
 - Chapters 1, 2, and 3
- Unit II: February 6 – March 26, 2026
 - Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, and 7
- Unit III: March 27– May 7, 2026
 - Chapters 4, 5, 8, and 9

*Pay attention to assignment deadlines. The total unit window contained above, does not reflect the window for all unit assignments.

Unit Exams

There are three (3) unit exams, each worth 20% of the final grade. The exam will focus on the textbook chapters, chapter assignments, lectures, and any other supplemental information provided during the unit. Successful students will be those who listened to the lectures, read the chapters, completed the assignments, and utilized any other supplemental resources as provided by the professor. The exams will not be cumulative.

- Unit I Exam: Chapters 1, 2, and 3
 - Window: January 30 – February 5, 2026
 - **Deadline: Thursday, February 5, 2026 by 11:59 CST**
- Unit II Exam: Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, and 7
 - Window: March 13 – March 26, 2026
 - **Deadline: Thursday, March 26, 2026 by 11:59 CST**
- Unit III Exam: Chapters 4, 5, 8, and 9
 - Window: April 24 – May 7, 2026
 - **Deadline: Thursday, May 7, 2026 by 11:59 CST**

Chapter Quizzes

There will be a quiz for each of the Chapters. Typically, Chapter Quizzes will open on Friday and close the following Thursday. There will be one attempt per quiz and the quizzes are timed.

The lowest two quiz scores will be dropped, and the remaining ten scores will make up 20% of the final grade.

To successfully pass the chapter quizzes, you should listen to the lecture and read the chapter in the textbook. After the quiz closes, it is closed, and there will be no opportunity to make up quizzes you may have missed.

Discussion Board Posts

There will be a total of ten discussion board posts required for this course. The ten posts consist of four original discussion board posts and six responses to classmates' posts over the duration of the course as outlined in this syllabus.

Each original discussion board post must be *at least* 250 words in length and submitted on time to receive full credit. The discussion board responses must be *at least* 100 words in length to receive full credit.

Discussion Board Deadlines:

- Introduction: January 15, 2026
 - One 250-word Discussion Board post where you will introduce yourself.
 - What are your interests, some fun facts, etc.
 - What are the top two majors you are considering and why, or if you are already set in your major, what is it and why?
- Unit I: January 29, 2026
 - One original 250-word Discussion Board post
 - Two responses to classmates' post
- Unit II: March 12, 2026
 - One original 250-word Discussion Board post
 - Two responses to classmates' post
- Unit III: April 23, 2026
 - One original 250-word Discussion Board post
 - Two responses to classmates' post

Discussion Board Points:

- Maximum Points:
 - Introduction Post: 10 points
 - Unit Discussion Board:
 - Original Post: 5 points
 - Responses: 5 points
- Discussion Board Grading Criteria:
 - Full 10-point credit will be achieved by:
 - A post consisting of *at least* 250-words, that is on topic, articulate, polite, ORIGINAL, and submitted by the deadline.
 - Two responses to classmates' posts that are EACH *at least* 100-words in length, articulate, polite, relevant, and submitted by the deadline.
 - Note: Your response should be on topic and add to the conversation. i.e., what you took away from the topic that may be in agreement or disagreement with what your peer wrote and why, rather than 'great job' and restating what your classmate wrote.
 - **There will be no credit for Original Posts or Responses submitted after the deadline.**
 - Points will be deducted for posts that do not meet the assigned word minimums, are irrelevant to the course/discussion topic, are extremely poorly written, and/or lacking in effort.
 - Lacking in effort examples include summarizing/restating other classmates' posts, copy and pasting text straight from the textbook, or essentially regurgitating, in its original form, any text in any form from an outside source.
 - Be respectful and courteous when posting.

Instructor Policies and General Information: Be mindful of how you communicate with instructors. Proofread all correspondence prior to sending or posting and always be respectful. Additionally, before sending the instructor a message, verify that the question or concern has not already been addressed via a Canvas course announcement, Canvas message, or this syllabus.

Attendance Policy: A student's acquisition of learning outcomes is tied to attendance. Excessive absences guarantee that a student has not had minimal exposure to enough of the student learning outcomes to receive credit for the course. As such, missing multiple class periods will likely lead to failure.

For an online course, attendance is measured by assignment submissions. To be counted present for the week's classes, students must submit at least one of the week's assignments. The only way to be successful in this course is to keep up with all the assigned readings, available lectures, and coursework.

Make-Up Work Policy: Students should be forewarned that policies on missed and late work in this class are strict and rigid with very few exceptions. Please acquaint yourself with the assignment deadlines now and plan ahead to ensure that you do not miss any assignments, exams, or assignment deadlines.

Potential exception circumstances to the zero-tolerance late policy:

Students should promptly contact me when any **unforeseen, legitimate circumstance beyond his/her control** (i.e., events that do not involve choice, like a documented illness or medical emergency) occurs that may result in a missed assignment deadline. However, since all chapter assignments open with each unit, students should be proactive by completing them early to avoid issues as deadlines approach. Students who foresee missing assignment and/or exam deadlines due to voluntary travel or other circumstances within the student's control should contact me and submit work *early*. Additionally, there is flexibility for exams to be opened early on a case-by-case basis but there is not flexibility for late submissions.

Likewise, note that a lack of access to internet services is not a valid excuse for missing or late work. As an online student, it is your responsibility to figure out a way to submit your work. The library on campus is open after hours and there are many public spaces with free Wi-Fi (your public library, Panera, McDonalds, etc.). Take advantage of the Canvas app and other services on your phone as well, if possible.

Further, if Canvas is down or not letting you submit, you should email the assignment to me as an attached PDF or .docx file from your GCSC email account before the deadline for that assignment has passed.

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.

The following definitions will apply:

- a. **"Cheating"** includes but is not limited to the use of any unauthorized assistance in completing coursework.
- b. **"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. Individual instructors or programs may provide students with additional academic integrity policy statements at the start of a semester.
- c. **"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.
- d. The use of AI software in any form to create class assignments may violate GCSC's Academic Integrity Policy. *Students are not permitted to use AI technology to complete assignments in this course.* **The use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited in all assignments, class work, and throughout all stages of the work process, such as brainstorming, outlining, or drafting.** This includes, but is not limited to, tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Grammarly's AI function. Use of AI tools 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.

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 accommodation can be arranged. Before receiving accommodation, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodation 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.

Course Schedule		
FIRST DAY ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENT: January 9 – January 15, 2026		
Introduction Discussion Board Post	Located under the Start Here Module in Canvas.	Due <i>NO LATER THAN:</i> January 15, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. CST
Unit I January 16 – February 5, 2026		
Chapter	Materials	Chapter Quiz Dates
Chapter 1 American Government and Civic Engagement	☐ Read <i>American Government (Am. Gov.)</i> Chapter 1 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 1 Lecture	☐ Opens January 9 th and is due by January 15, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 2 The Constitution	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 2 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 2 Lecture	☐ Opens January 16 th and is due by January 22, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 3 Federalism	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 3 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 3 Lecture	☐ Opens January 23 rd and is due by January 29, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
☐ Unit I Discussion Board Post and Two Responses: Thursday, January 29, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST		
Unit I Exam Window: January 30 – February 5, 2026 at 11:59 pm CST		
Unit II February 6 – March 26, 2026		
Chapter	Materials	Chapter Quiz Due Dates
Chapter 11 Congress	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 11 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 11 Lecture	☐ Opens February 6 th and is due by February 12, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 12 The Presidency	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 12 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 12 Lecture	☐ Opens February 13 th and is due by February 19, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 15 Bureaucracy	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 15 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 15 Lecture	☐ Opens February 20 th and is due by February 26, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 13 Federal Courts	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 13 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 13 Lecture	☐ Opens February 27 th and is due March 5, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 8 The Media	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 8 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 8 Lecture	☐ Opens March 6 th and is due by March 12, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
☐ Unit II Discussion Board Post and Two Responses: Thursday, March 12, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST		
Unit II Exam Window: March 13 – March 26, 2026 at 11:59 pm CST		
Unit III March 27– May 7, 2026		
Chapter	Materials	Chapter Quiz Due Dates
Chapter 4 Civil Liberties	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 4 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 4 Lecture	☐ Opens March 27 th and is due by April 2, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 5 Civil Rights	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 5 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 5 Lecture	☐ Opens April 3 rd and is due by April 9, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapters 9 & 10 Political Parties	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapters 9 & 10 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 9 & 10 Lecture	☐ Opens April 10 th and is due by April 16, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 7 Elections	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 7 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 7 Lecture	☐ Opens April 17 th and is due by April 23, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
☐ Unit III Discussion Board Post and Two Responses: Thursday, April 23, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST		
Unit III Exam Window: April 24 – May 7, 2026 at 11:59 pm CST		

