

Syllabus SUMMER (Session E: 6/25/26 – 7/31/26)

POS 2041- 50050

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Office Hours:
To be announced

Credit Hours: 3; Summer 2026; Dates of Course: June 25, 2026 – July 31, 2026

Course Overview

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.

POS 2041: American National Government

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.

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>

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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. 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.

E-mail policy: PLEASE use Canvas to email me if possible. I check my e-mail daily and try to respond as soon as possible except on the weekends. However, please give me 36 – 48 hours to reply to your e-mail before thinking something is wrong. Especially if your e-mail requires a longer answer, I may set it aside until I have the appropriate time available to fully answer it. I often check Canvas on the weekends but not the school email. *I promise you; I treat each e-mail as important.*

Grades:

The grading scale is based on points, which can easily be translated into percentages. Note that there is no curve. Everybody can get an A or B, just as everyone can get a bad grade. You want to get as many points as possible on the various assignments and in class discussion.

There is a total of 800 Points. 3 points away gets rounded up. For example, 636 = B 79.5%

Grading Scale: Points	Percent
(720-800)	90 -100 = A
(640-719)	80 - 89 = B
(560-639)	70 - 79 = C
(480-559)	60 - 69 = D
(479>)	= F

Mid-term Exam – 15 % of the total grade -	120 points
Final Exam – 12.5% of the total grade -	100 points
Quizzes – 16.875% of the total grade -	135 points
Activities- 25 % of the total grade -	200 points
Participation/Discussion Pts- 25% of the total	200 points
Discussion post 5.625% of the total grade	45 points

To facilitate achieving these learning objectives, the following rules will be applied to all students equally:

Attendance see above. Participation: Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions or answer questions the teacher asks. This can be during official discussion classes or lectures, but each student must make a contribution to class discussion by making some “points” or reply to the arguments made by others at some time during the semester. (Activities carry their own points and talking to your mates during the activity does not fetch you official participation points). Contributing 12 times over the course of the semester= 100%. Less than 12 times is less than 100%.

Midterm test and Quizzes: Standard online Multiple-choice tests with a time limit. The Quizzes are up to 18-19 questions long, and you have to study before taking the quiz. There are no retakes similar to as if you were taking them in class. Students must complete the quiz or test by the date indicated on the syllabus, and since you will have a week or so as a window to take it, there will be no make-ups. I drop the lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester, which takes care of the 0 in case you miss a quiz.

The **Final test** will be administered in the classroom during “Finals Week.”!! All testing procedures must be followed and satisfy the instructor to receive a valid grade.

Discussion Board – There will one discussion board where students respond to the prompt. Instructions to complete this assignment are on Canvas under Discussion Board.

If you are testing somewhere else such as the “Testing Center,” please notify me if you intend to

continue taking tests and quizzes at the Testing Center. Your grade will be recorded as soon as I get the actual quiz back from your testing mentor (or the score online). >>**You will have to make reservations at the testing center during Finals week and notify me in a timely manner.** If you have any other testing needs, please speak with me and we will work things out.

You must **keep records** of all your graded work for the rest of the semester and bring them to class if necessary. Canvas is not the official gradebook, but scores are only valid if they are recorded in Canvas.

Activities: There will be 5 group activities worth 40 points each. These must be completed inside the classroom working with fellow students, and they are roughly 20 -30 minutes long. Certain activities are hard to make up, since they involve group collaboration or being present during the class lecture that precedes the activity, but there will be an official activity make-up day, which is when all activities can be made up for full points. Under certain circumstances, I may give you some work to do to substitute for the activity, but then I reserve the right to give only partial credit for the make-up work. The activities are a good way to bring up your grade, and I will try to do my best to help you gain at least some of those points without violating the **fairness to all** principle.

Disruptive behavior during class **will be dealt with immediately** and fairly with the **rules applying equally to all:** I will ask you to stop disrupting class the first time, and the second time I will ask you to leave. I have noticed that people whispering to each other in the back of the room don't realize that others around them are trying to concentrate on the lecture which is hard enough to follow without the constant noise behind them. There are other examples of disruptive behavior, mostly it is common sense, and it is me -Dr. Fistein- who decides what constitutes disruptive behavior or **when the policy has been violated.**

Social Sciences Laptop Policy

Students may use laptops in Social Sciences classes for note-taking purposes only. Other uses of laptop computers during class are prohibited. No laptops may be used during a test or while going over a test's answers without the explicit permission of the instructor. Please keep your cell phones in your backpack during tests and while going over tests as well.

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Class Schedule

June 30 1: Intro, rules for this course, questions? 1st Lesson

June 30: 2nd: Why should the majority rule? Read **Chapter 1** (pages 1-17 and terms on pages 18 and 24)

Jul 1: The American Creed; The Declaration of Independence "Liberty is Number One"

Jul 1: Read *"On the Liberty of Thought..." on Canvas; Activity # 0

Quiz 1 online due **July 6** midnight

July 2: U. S. Constitution; **Chapter 2** (entire chapter)

July 2: Federalism; Read Chapter 3 (pages 65-71 and 91-94)

July 7: Federalist papers (10, 51) **Read Appendix C pages 629 -635 before class** (Activity # 1)

July 7: (Watch Gideon vs Wainwright on Canvas under movies before class)

Civil Liberties are in the Bill of Rights; Read **Chapter 4** (entire chapter)

July 8: Equal protection under the law? Civil Rights **Chapter 5** (pages 143-163, 176-177, and 55-57) * "Letter from Jail in Birmingham" on Canvas*; "How it feels to be the colored me" on Canvas*.

--> **Movie on your own:** "Mississippi: Is this America?"

July 8: "Homo Politicus" **Chapt. 6:** (pages 185-187, 188 word in bold, 191-201, 205-213) (Activity # 2)

Read *" Power of Majority opinion..." on Canvas Quiz 2 online due **July 12** midnight

July 9: Congress 1. Discussion: gerrymandering and redistricting
July 9: Congress 2: Read **Chapter 11 (pages 373 -393, 396-404)**

Midterm exam is online and closes on Monday, July 12, at midnight

July 14: Presidency 1-(pgs. 409 -418, terms electoral college 422, cabinet 424, 427-428 vice president, 430 – 440)

July 14: The Presidency 2; Read **Chapter 12**

July 15: video clips of election campaigns (1950s – now)

July 15: Other types of government

July 16: The Federal Judiciary; Read **Chapter 13 (pages 448-454, 459-466, 468-473)** and *the summary of “Influence of Oral Arguments...”

July 16: Bureaucracy; Read **Chapter 15 (pages 515 -519 and 533)**

Quiz 3 online due **July 19**, midnight

July 21: Discussion (Activity # 3)

July 21: Political Parties; Read **Chapter 9 (pages 304 -317, 325 -334)**

-How many parties are enough? Two-party vs multi-party systems.

Discussion Board due Thursday midnight

Electoral College video p245-6

July 22: Voting and Elections; Read **Chapter 7 (pages 224 -236, terms superPAC, primary, incumbency p253)**

July 22: discussion; watch parts of the Gettysburg video

July 23: The Media; Read Chapter 8 (entire chapter), Quiz 4 online due **July 26** midnight

July 28: Interest Groups; (Activity # 4); Chapter 10, pages 339-341, 344-348 top, 356-359, 360 PAC, 365)

July 29: Economic Policy/ Domestic Policy Chapter 16 (pages 545 -559 top and 564 -569)

July 30: Foreign Policy (pages 578-582, 590 -592, 597 -602 and the term “war powers resolution”)

Read **Chapter 17** Q and A for Final (Students must bring questions)

Finals: **This class**: The Final exam will be administered in our regular classroom on the prescribed date and time for GCSC final examinations, which is July 31

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the scheduled readings and will announce such changes promptly. Students are responsible for the announcements the instructor will make in class.

Extra credit:

I will try to come up with some opportunities to earn extra points during the semester. No guarantees, however, since every semester is different.

Social Sciences Policies

AY 2025-2026

The following policies apply to all GCSC Social Sciences courses and are to be included in all course syllabi.

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 incidents of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incident 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/documents/student-handbooks/2025-2026-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 it 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.

6A-10.02413-1 Civics Literacy Competency

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

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 new rule applies to students who entered college beginning Fall Semester 2021. If you were continuously enrolled at Gulf Coast State College prior to Fall 2021, you will not need to complete the exam. This exemption does not, however, apply to dual-enrolled high school students.

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://gsc.instructure.com/enroll/FNC8GL>.

There is also a link within the module for you to register for the FCLE.

One last note: the FCLE is not part of your grade in AMH 2020 **[or POS 2041]**→it is entirely separate from your overall grade in our course.

The four competencies as required with the FCLE include:

- **An understanding of the basic principles of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.**
- **An understanding of the U.S. Constitution.**
- **Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.**
- **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 is equivalent to passing the test:

<u>Assessment:</u>	<u>Standard Score:</u>
AP Government and Politics, US	3
AP United States History	4
CLEP: American Government	50
Florida Civics Literacy Exam	60

STUDY RESOURCES AVAILABLE

THE FLORIDA CIVIC LITERACY TEST INCLUDES TOPICS FROM THE MATERIALS PROVIDED BELOW:

U.S. CITIZENSHIP TEST:

- [Civics Questions and Answers](#)
- [Flash Cards](#)
- [Pocket Study Guide](#)

CANVAS STUDY COURSE:

- [Florida Civic Literacy Exam Prep Module](#)

SUPREME COURT CASES:

- [Landmark Supreme Court Cases](#)
 - Review of this information is strongly recommended!

SCHEDULING THE EXAM

STUDENTS CAN SCHEDULE THEIR TESTING APPOINTMENT 72 HOURS IN ADVANCE THROUGH [REGISTER BLAST](#).

Withdrawal policy for on-campus, face-to-face courses: If a student is absent more than 1/8 of a semester (four class meetings) with unexcused absences before the official published withdrawal deadline of the semester, the student may be withdrawn from the class by full-time faculty consistent with GCSC withdrawal policy.

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

Prohibited Use of AI: 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.

Generative AI use exception: Students are permitted to use AI only in the manner and means described by the instructor. Specific assignments assigned by the instructor may contain very specific instructions on how to properly use Generative AI to complete the assignment. 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. >If I did not specifically ask for you to use AI to complete an assignment, then it is prohibited to use AI period.

For technical issues, please seek help from GCSC's IT Help Desk at (850) 913-3303.