



POS 2041—51277—Online
American National Government
Instructor: Professor Teresa Thurtle
Course Syllabus

Summer 2026 Semester — Session A
Term Dates: 15 May – 31 Jul
3 Credit Hours—Pre-requisites: None

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 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:

Professor Teresa Thurtle
Social Sciences Division
tthurtle@gulfcoast.edu

No set office hours. Just send me a message, and we can set up a time to video chat.

Instructor Education:

BA, Criminal Justice, University of Nevada Reno, 2008
BA, Women's Studies, University of Nevada Reno, 2008
MA, Organizational Behavior, University of Texas, 2019
MPA, Masters of Public Administration, American Military University, 2011
PhD, Public Policy and Administration, Walden University, 2020

The best way to contact me is through **Canvas messages**. I travel often and sometimes get locked out of my email. And/or your email goes to my spam. Messages are best.

I ask that you do not send me a message as if you are sending a text. This is a professional, academic setting. Please respect the institution. Please use common courtesy as I often times will not respond to students who are not respectful. I generally respond to messages within 24 to 48 hours.

Social Sciences Division Contacts:

Division Chair:

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Ms. Jody Walton
Social Sciences 210
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Required Textbook:

Krutz, G., & Waskiewicz, S. (2021). *American Government 3e*. OpenStax.
<https://openstax.org/books/american-government-3e/pages/1-introduction>

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 available on the Panama City Campus from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

POS 2041 Catalog 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 ways their government responds to citizens.

Teaching Techniques: The primary means of content delivery for this online course includes instructor-generated lectures, textbook readings, PowerPoint presentations, the Discussion Board, and weekly synchronous study sessions. 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.

Civic Literacy, Course Competencies, and Outcomes: (As required by the State of Florida Legislature and the Florida Department of Education):

- 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 and their impact on law and society.

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

Student Expectation Statement: The student is expected to participate in the course listening to and taking thorough notes on all digital lectures, by reading the assigned readings, by participating in the weekly discussion boards, and by completing all exams as scheduled. The students should understand that this course is delivered via the Canvas LMS.

Instructor Availability: The best way to contact me is through **Canvas messages**. I ask that you do not send me a message as if you are sending a text. This is a professional, academic setting. Please respect the institution. Please use common courtesy as I often times will not respond to students who are not respectful. I generally respond to messages within 24 to 48 hours.

Course Requirements. Students enrolled in this course will be required to:

- Listen to and take thorough notes on the digital lectures assigned with each weekly Learning Module—**I cannot overstress the importance of the digital lectures;**
- Read all of the textbook pages assigned with each Learning Module;
- Contribute to the weekly discussion boards
- Complete all four exams AS SCHEDULED (see the course schedule below).
- Contact the instructor via Canvas messenger at once with any problems or issues. I cannot handle problems unless you make me aware of them. I do not open up

COURSE OUTLINE OF LEARNING MODULES

Week of:	MOD	Module Assignments
May 15 - 24	1	Introduction, American Government and Civic Engagement, The Constitution and Its Origins, American Federalism Lecture Videos, Knowledge Check, Discussion Boards
May 25-31	2	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, lecture videos, knowledge checks, discussion boards, Quiz 1
Jun 1-7	3	The Politics of Public Opinion, Voting and Elections, lecture videos, knowledge check discussion board, Quiz 1
Jun 8 – Jun 14	4	Political Parties, The Media, lecture video, knowledge check, discussion board
Jun 15 - 21	5	Midterm Exam
Jun 22 - 28	6	Interest Groups and Lobbying, lecture videos, knowledge check, discussion board
Jun 29 - Jul 5	7	Congress, The Presidency, lecture videos, knowledge check, discussion board
Jul 6 - 12	8	The Courts, lecture videos, knowledge check, discussion board, Extra Credit
Jul 13 - Jul 19	9	State and Local Government, lecture videos, knowledge check, discussion board, Extra Credit
Jul 20 - 26	10	The Bureaucracy, lecture videos, knowledge check, discussion board, Quiz 2, Extra Credit
Jul 27 - 30	11	Domestic Policy, Foreign Policy, lecture videos, knowledge check, discussion board, Extra Credit
Jul 27-30	12	Final Exam

Attendance Policy: Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, you are required to participate in the weekly discussion boards to show your understanding of the lectures. This is counted as posting a 250 initial post, and a 100-word post to another student.

Make-Up Work Policy: Missing any part of this schedule may prevent completion of the course. If you foresee difficulty of any type (i.e., an illness, employment change, etc.), which may prevent completion of this course, **notify the instructor as soon as possible**. Failure to do so will result in failure for an assignment and/or failure of the course. If I have not heard from you by the deadline dates for assignments, exams, or forums, no make-up work will be allowed (unless extraordinary circumstances exist, such as hospitalization). **Requests for extensions must be made in advance and accompanied by appropriate written documentation.** “Computer problems” is not an acceptable excuse.

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 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, which 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.

Limited Generative AI Assistive Use Only: Students may use basic assistive technologies for spelling, grammar, and formatting (e.g., PaperRater or SpellCheckPlus); however, the use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly's AI function, etc.) for generating, rewriting, or enhancing content is not permitted. All work must reflect the student's original ideas and writing. Representing work created by AI as one's own is 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 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, 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. Prior to 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 - In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own 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 in the current GCSC Student Handbook.

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 submission of complete written assignments prior to 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 prior to 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 prior to 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

Method of Evaluation:

Type of Assignment	# Of Questions	Points	Total
Quizzes (Q)	30	2	2 Quizzes x 60 = 120
Mid-Term	70	4	280
Final	70	4	280
Lecture Knowledge Check (KC)	5	1	17 x 5 Points =85
Discussion Boards		5	5 x 17 required = 85

Points Possible			850
Extra Credit		5- 25	

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

765 – 850	90-100	= A
680 - 764	80-89	= B
595 - 679	70-79	= C
510 – 678	60-69	= D
> 509	50-0	= F

Assessment Instruments: Students will be evaluated based on the following:

- Weekly Discussion Board (DB): Participation and discussion demonstrating the understanding of the assigned reading and lectures. All initial posts must be 300+ words. Initial posts are due on Wednesdays unless otherwise noted. You must also respond to another student with 150+ words. Due on Sundays. Initial post and response to another student, but their due date will result in full credit.
- Lecture Knowledge Check (KC): Short test of your knowledge and understanding of the weekly lecture.
- Quizzes (Q): This will test your knowledge and understanding of the assigned reading and lectures between the mid-term and final exams.
- Mid-Term: Multiple-choice examination. Testing your knowledge and understanding of the assigned reading and lectures for the first half of the semester.
- Final: Multiple-choice examination. Testing your knowledge and understanding of the assigned reading and lectures for the second half of the semester.
- Extra Credit (EC): Opportunities for students to earn additional points demonstrating their understanding of the required material through current events.