



Course Syllabus

American National Government

POS 2041 / 80168 / Fall 2026, Session B (August 17 – October 7, 2026)

3 Credit Hours

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: None

Contact Information

Instructor

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Course Information

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 the ways their government responds to citizens.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of America's constitutional republic.
2. 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*.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of landmark US Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions.
4. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society.
5. Students will demonstrate an ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
6. 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 Civic Literacy Competency

Civic Literacy, Course Competencies, and Outcomes: The State of Florida recently implemented a new rule regarding Civic Literacy. The previous Civic Literacy requirement mandated that all students successfully complete either AMH 2020 or POS 2041.

The new requirement mandates that students must pass AMH 2020 or POS 2041 and achieve a passing score on a civics exam approved by the Department of Education, including the Florida Civics Literacy Exam (FCLE).

The Division of Social Sciences has developed a Preparation Module for students preparing for the FCLE. The module is available on a dedicated Canvas page. You can register for the Canvas Prep Module using 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 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.

Course Materials & Resources:

The textbook for this course, *American Government 4e*, ISBN-13: 979-8-385190-66-9, is sometimes available in the Gulf Coast State College Bookstore and is currently free online at:

<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-4e>

Delivery Method:

This is a web-based course. 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.

Student Expectations

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, Microsoft Teams or Zoom, assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- 1. Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- 2. Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- 3. Active Participation:** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- 1. Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions promptly. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.
- 2. Respond via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within 24-48 hours (excluding weekends), unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns.

3. Post Regular Announcements: To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively, I will send out weekly reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.

4. Maintain Weekly Office Hours: I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I am available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week.

Course Schedule

COURSE OUTLINE OF LEARNING MODULES

<u>Week of:</u>	<u>MOD</u>	<u>Module Assignments</u>
17 AUG	00	Term Begins
17 AUG	01	“Biosketch Essay” (Due: Thursday, 20 Aug) Discussion Board (DB) No. 1 (Due: Thursday, 20 Aug) Essay No. 1 (Due: Sunday, 23 Aug)
24 AUG	02	DB No. 2 (Due: Thursday, 27 Aug); Exam No. 1: Modules 1 and 2 (Due: Sunday, 30 Aug)
31 AUG	03	DB No. 3 (Due: Thursday, 03 Sep) Essay No. 2 (Due: Sunday, 06 Sep)
07 SEP	04	DB No. 4 (Due: Thursday, 10 Sep) Exam No. 2: Modules 3 and 4 (Due: Sunday, 13 Sep)
14 SEP	05	DB No. 5 (Due: Thursday, 17 Sep) Essay No. 03 (Due: Sunday, 20 Sep)
21 SEP	06	DB No. 6 (Due: Thursday, 24 Sep) Exam No. 3: Modules 5 and 6 (Due: Sunday, 27 Sep)
28 SEP	07	DB No. 7 (Due: Thursday, 1 Oct) Essay No. 4 (Due: Sunday, 04 Oct)
05 OCT	08	Exam No. 4: Modules 7 and 8 (Due: Wednesday, 07 Oct)
07 OCT	00	Term Ends

Grading

Assessment Instruments:

- I. **Exams** (4 exams at 15% each = 60% of the final grade):
 - A. Each exam will be comprised of multiple-choice and true-false 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 “open-book” and “open-notes.”
- E. None of the exams will be comprehensive.

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 **Thursday, 20 Aug 2026**. This brief assignment requires you to draft a 300–500-word essay about yourself, being certain to include items such as career aspirations, educational background, previous college-level history courses, etc. **YOUR ESSAY SHOULD BE GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT, WITH NO MISPELLINGS OR "TYPOS."**

III. Essays (4 essays at 5% each = 20% of the final grade):

All students will submit four (4) 300–500-word essays. All grammar, punctuation, and composition rules will be applied and graded. Please refer to the due dates and the Canvas page for additional 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 substantively add to our discussion and generate further discussion and in-depth analysis.

V. Extra Credit (Points to be Determined):

Occasionally, I will hold live Zoom sessions to review material, provide additional guidance, and discuss current events. Attendance at these Zoom sessions is **NOT** mandatory. But if you attend them, I will likely add at least 1 point to your overall grade for each Zoom session. Those who cannot participate in a live Zoom session may submit a 300-word essay summarizing the recording.

GCSC Grading Scale:

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)

Calculation of Grades:

Essay No. 01	(05%)	Biosketch Essay	(10%)
Essay No. 02	(05%)		
Essay No. 03	(05%)	Discussion Board # 01	(1.4%)
Essay No. 04	(05%)	Discussion Board # 02	(1.4%)
		Discussion Board # 03	(1.4%)
Exam No. 01	(15%)	Discussion Board # 04	(1.4%)
Exam No. 02	(15%)	Discussion Board # 05	(1.4%)
Exam No. 03	(15%)	Discussion Board # 06	(1.4%)
Exam No. 04	(15%)	Discussion Board # 07	(1.4%)



Incomplete Grades:

Grades of Incomplete in any Social Sciences course can only be assigned to students whose emergencies arise during the last two weeks of the course.

To receive an Incomplete, students must:

1. 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.
2. 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."

Course Policies

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. Please visit [GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource \(SAR\) webpage](#) to learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email sar@gulfcoast.edu or call 850-747-3243.

Attendance Policy:

Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which they are registered.

You are expected to know the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus for each course. In the event of absence, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible to indicate the reason and to inquire whether make-up work is possible. (Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of your professor.)

If your absences in a class become excessive, as stated in the course syllabus, your professor may contact you, indicating that further absence may result in your withdrawal from the course. Your professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission.

Instructors will monitor attendance at the beginning of each semester. If you are not in attendance during this period, you may be withdrawn from the course. You will be financially responsible for the course, and a "W or NS" will appear on your transcript. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid.

Withdrawal Policy:

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.). There are two kinds of withdrawals: student and administrative.

Student Withdrawal (W1) - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal deadline will be recorded as a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Administrative Withdrawal (W2) – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy, in which case the student will receive a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

Academic Integrity:

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. GCSC professors report every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion in the student's records.

Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

"Cheating" includes but is not limited to the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.

"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. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult your course syllabi for your instructor's guidelines on AI material.

"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 that 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.

Classroom Recording:

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 GCSC Student Handbook.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy:

The use of generative AI tools in academic work requires clear guidelines to maintain academic integrity. Please review the policy selected for this course regarding the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly's AI features, and similar platforms for assignments, research, and other coursework. See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Generative AI Use with Permission and Disclosure

In this course, 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.

Anti-Discrimination Policy:

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies, or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

Syllabus Policy:

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.

Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the [Student Services web page](#).

Course Technology & Support:

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- 1. Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- 2. Internet Speed:** Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- 3. Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).
If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7, at **(850) 913-3303**.

