



Course Syllabus

American National Government POS 2041

POS 2041 / CRN: 80169 / Fall 2026

A Session (8/17/26 – 12/10/26)

Credit Hours: 3

Pre-requisites: None

Contact Information

Instructor

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Office: Social Sciences 218
Office Hours:
Monday 11-2
Wednesday 11-2
Tuesday 9-9:30 and 12:30 – 1:30
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Response Time: 24-48 hours

Division Chair

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Course Information

Important Note

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.

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.

Student Learning Outcomes:

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: SLOs

Students will demonstrate:

- An understanding of the basic principles and practices of America's constitutional republic.
- Knowledge of the nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and its amendments, and *The Federalist Papers*.
- Knowledge of landmark US Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions.
- Knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society.
- An ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
- An ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

Course Materials & Resources:

Textbook: Glen Krutz (2025), *American National Government 4e* (4th edition)

Publisher: OpenStax

Digital copy ISBN: 978-1-961584-79-2

B& W paperback ISBN: 978-8-385190-65-2

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

This book is provided for free as part of the course through the Canvas Learning Management System

Delivery Method:

This course meets face-to-face. Course material, assignments, and announcements may be offered via Canvas as a supplemental approach to learning at the discretion of the instructor. Please make sure that you have access to a computer with a webcam and internet service in the event a change in course delivery is needed.

Attendance and Make-Up Policies for this Course

Attendance Policy:

There is no grade for attendance. However, regular class attendance is highly encouraged, since it is a significant factor that helps to promote success in college.

Attendance will help you know the material covered in class.

On the other hand, there is a grade for participation, which can be achieved with irregular attendance as well as regular attendance.

Participation: Students are required, as part of the overall course design and purpose of this course, 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 replying 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%.

Make-Up Work Policy:

A more thorough explanation can be found under assignments

1 lowest quiz grade drops out – no make-ups

Midterm make-up by appointment. Student responsibility to arrange a convenient time.

Activities must be made up on the activity make-up day.

Discussion Board is an activity that cannot be made up once the due date has passed, because the assignment will be open for over a month, and the instructor of record will encourage students to do it before the final due date several times.

Final – no make-ups

AI Policy for this Course

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 individual assignments where Fistein, the instructor of record, has 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.

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.

Student Expectations

Communication and feedback within the course will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, Microsoft Teams or Zoom, assignment feedback, and/or instructor office hours.

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

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the instructions within the course syllabus along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. Be certain you understand the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Active Participation:** Engage actively in the course and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a deeper learning experience.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **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.
- **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.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** Announcements will be posted to keep you updated and help you manage your time. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.
- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week.

Course Requirements:

The following rules will be applied to all students equally. Students enrolled in this course will be required to:

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 during lectures, but each student must make a contribution to class discussion by making some “points” or replying 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 be one discussion board where students respond to the prompt. Instructions to complete this assignment are on Canvas under the 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 partial 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**.

Assignments/Assessment Instruments

I. Exams and Quizzes

There will be four quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

The quizzes and the midterm exam are online, and they will be open several days prior to the deadline. The lowest score of the 4 quiz scores drops out, which means a student can miss one quiz without penalty and without a make-up. If a student misses a second quiz, a conference with the instructor of record will be necessary to discuss a path forward. The midterm is open several days before it is due, but if a student has an emergency or becomes sick on the due date, it would be nice if the student provided a valid reason for requesting an extension. The exact procedure of administering a make-up opportunity will be discussed with the student on an individual basis with the student according to their learning needs and personal calendar.

The final exam is in class and must be taken in class to get a valid grade.

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

II Activities

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III. "Discussion Board"

There will be one "discussion board" where students respond to the prompt. Instructions to complete this assignment are on Canvas under "Discussion Board." The "Discussion Board" is a non-make-up activity, and it will be open for over a month, and the instructor of record will encourage students to do it before the final due date several times

Course Schedule

Dates	Week	Module Assignments
17-23 August	1	Intro, rules for this course, questions? 1 st Lesson 2 nd lesson: Why should the majority rule? Read Chapter
Aug24 -Aug 30	2	The American Creed; The Declaration of Independence “Liberty is Number One” Read * <u>“On the Liberty of Thought...”</u> on Canvas; Activity # 0 Quiz 1 online due August 30 midnight
Aug 31 – Sept 6	3	U. S. Constitution; Chapter 2 (entire chapter) Federalism; Read Chapter 3 (pages 65-71)
Sept 7-Sept 13	4	Sept 7 holiday September 9: Federalist papers (10, 51) Read Appendix C pages 639 - 645 before class (Activity # 1)
Sept 14 - 20	5	(<u>Watch Gideon vs Wainwright</u> on Canvas under movies <u>before class</u>). Civil Liberties are in the Bill of Rights; Chapter 4 (read entire chapter) Equal protection under the law? Civil Rights Chapter 5 (pages 143-161, 173 -174) Asian American cartoon, exclusion act, and picture, and 56-58) ** “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?” Quiz 2 online due Sept. 27 midnight
Sept 21 -Sept 27	6	“Homo Politicus” Chapt.6: (pages 187-203) (<u>Activity # 2</u>) Congress 1. Discussion: gerrymandering and redistricting
Sept 28 – Oct 4	7	Congress 2: Read Chapter 11 Other types of government Midterm exam is online and closes on <u>Oct. 4</u> at midnight
Oct 5 – Oct 11	8	Presidency 1- Reach Chapter 12 (cabinet, vice president, constitutional powers, other powers, electoral college) Oct 9 Break October 8,9, 2025 Have an exciting, fun, and safe Fall Break
Oct 12- Oct 18	9	The Presidency 2; Read Chapter 12 video clips of election campaigns (1950s – now)

Oct 19 – Oct 25	10	The Federal Judiciary; Read Chapter 13 (pages 451-457, 463-74, 468-473) and <u>*the summary</u> of “Influence of Oral Arguments...” Bureaucracy; Read Chapter 15 (pages 521 Box on 527, 532-537) Quiz 3 online due Oct 25 midnight
Oct 26 Nov 1	11	Discussion (Activity # 3) Political Parties; Read Chapter 9 (pages 305 -318, 332 -336) (and terms divided government, “loyal opposition,” bipartisanship, moderates, party-in-government) -how many parties are enough? Two-party vs multi-party systems.
Nov 2 - 8	12	Discussion: current topic in American Government are we still subservient to the majority opinion today? Videos CP Electoral College video Voting and Elections; Read Chapter 7 (pages 225 -238, terms superPAC, primary, incumbency)
Nov 9 -15	13	Interest Groups; (Activity # 4); Chapter 10 pages 341-343, 347-349 term: “PAC”) The Media; Read Chapter 8 (entire chapter) Quiz 4 online due Nov 15 midnight
Nov 16 - 22	14	<u>Make up</u> day for Missed Activities, other TBA maybe a bonus points worksheet Discussion Current Topic + Gettysburg video
Nov 22- 29	15	Nov 25: Economic Policy/ Domestic Policy Chapter 16 (pages 545 -559 top and 564 -569) Thanksgiving: Thanksgiving Break November 25- 29
Nov 30 – Dec 6	16	Foreign Policy (pages 585-596 + 606 -610) and the term “war powers resolution”) Read Chapter 17 Discussion: Media and majority public opinion. What’s next? Q and A for Final (Students must bring questions)
Dec 4 - 10		finals

Grading

Grading Scale

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 discussions.

There is a total of 800 Points. 3 points away gets rounded up. For example, 637 = B 79.5%

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

Calculation of Grades

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

Incomplete Grades

Grades of Incomplete in any 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 sixty 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 all remaining work is not submitted during this period, the grade will automatically change to an “F.”

General GCSC 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.

GCSC 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 can withdraw you from the 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 on 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.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)" is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images, or code, based on user input. These systems are trained on vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function.

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.

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.

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.

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:

- 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.
- Internet Speed: Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- 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.