



Course Syllabus

American Government

POS 2041/ CRN: 85321/ Fall 2026

A Session (8/17/26 – 10/12/26)

Credit Hours: 3

Pre-requisites: None

Contact Information

Instructor

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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 the ways their government responds to citizens.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 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.

Course Materials & Resources:

***American Government 4e* from OpenStax by Glen Krutz and Sylvie Waskiewicz, 2025. Find the free text on the home page of this course.**

The OpenStax textbook for this course is a completely free, online, and downloadable text “designed to meet the scope and sequence requirements of most introductory American history courses. The text provides a balanced approach to U.S. history, considering the people, events, and ideas that have shaped the United States from both the top down (politics, economics, diplomacy) and bottom up (eyewitness accounts, lived experience).”

License: *American Government* by OpenStax is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution License v4.0

Delivery Method:

This is a Face-to face course. All 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 and within Canvas for more information.

Attendance and Make-Up Policies for this Course

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is essential to course success. Though attendance accounts for only 5% of your final grade, exercises and discussions in class will strengthen and deepen your understanding of lesson materials. Additionally, students may be given extra points on their final average of attendance is above 80% and he has completed all other assignments.

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.

AI Policy for this Course

Prohibited Use of AI

The use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited in all assignments, coursework, 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.

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 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:

Students enrolled in this course will be required to:

- Read all the textbook pages assigned with each Learning Module;
- Listen to and take thorough notes on the digital lectures assigned with each Learning Module—I cannot overstate the importance of the digital lectures;
- Complete the quizzes;
- Complete all exams AS SCHEDULED (see the course schedule below).
- Contact the instructor via email at once with any problems or issues. I cannot handle problems unless you make me aware of them.

Civic Literacy Competency

Civic Literacy, Course Competencies, and Outcomes: In 2020, the State of Florida added a new rule regarding Civics Literacy. The old Civics Literacy rule required all students to successfully complete AMH 2020 or POS 2041.

The new rule requires students to successfully pass AMH 2010, 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 four competencies as required by 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 and their impact on law and society.

The Division of Social Sciences has created a Preparation Module for students wishing to prepare for the FCLE. The module is housed within a designated Canvas page. You can self-register for the [Canvas Prep Module](#).

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

Assignments/Assessment Instruments

I. Exams

- The two exams will consist of multiple-choice, true-false, and discussion questions.
- Each exam will require the use of Respondus Lockdown Browser and will be available for a specific time period. See the course Canvas for information regarding Respondus and the course schedule in this syllabus (and within Canvas) for the dates during which time the exams will be available.
- The exams will be delivered online via Canvas.
- The exams will be timed; each is strictly closed-book and closed-notes.
- See the exam instructions within the course Canvas page for the time limit.

II. Introduction Assignment

The Introduction Assignment should be submitted as a Word document and uploaded directly into Canvas no later than 11:59 pm on 10 July 2026. This brief assignment requires you to draft a 250- to 300-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 MISSPELLINGS OR "TYPOS."**

IMPORTANT! As I use the Introduction assignment submission to determine attendance, students who do not submit the Introduction assignment by the due date will be reported as "No Show" students and dropped from the class roster.

FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO PREVIOUSLY HAVE SUBMITTED AN INTRODUCTION TO ME FOR A DIFFERENT COURSE: Draft a 250-300 word "Career Goals" essay in which you discuss your career aspirations, explain why you chose such a path, and detail what it is about your chosen profession that you believe will be most rewarding and why. Contact me if you have already submitted a "Career Goals" essay.

You should also include as much "contact information" as possible so that I will be able to contact you quickly if necessary. It is recommended that you draft the essay using whatever word processing program you have on your computer, closely edit the essay, and then upload it into Canvas via the Introduction assignment.

III. Lecture Quizzes

Each of the lectures includes a discussion quiz that you can use to test your comprehension of the materials. The lecture quiz scores will be combined and account for 30% of your final average.

Course Schedule

Dates	Lesson	DUE
Wed Oct 14, 2026	Discussion Topic Introductions	due by 11:59pm
Fri Oct 16, 2026	Quiz Practice Syllabus Quiz - Requires Respondus Lock Down Browser + Webcam	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 18, 2026	Quiz Development of the Constitution	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 31, 2026	Quiz Ideological Basis for the Constitution	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 25, 2026	Quiz Civil Liberties	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jun 14, 2026	Quiz Civil Rights	due by 11:59pm
Fri Oct 30, 2026	Quiz Exam 1 - Requires Respondus Lock Down Browser + Webcam	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 8, 2026	Quiz Bureaucracy	due by 11:59am
Sun Jun 28, 2026	Quiz Article 1 Legislature	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz Article 2 Executive	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz Article 3 Judiciary	due by 11:59pm
Tue Nov 10, 2026	Quiz Exam 1 SAR Only	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 15, 2026	Quiz Domestic Policy	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 22, 2026	Quiz Foreign Policy	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 29, 2026	Quiz Public Opinion	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz The Media	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz Capstone Project	due by 11:59pm

IV. Capstone Project

The Capstone Project is a critical thinking project. You will respond to a given topic in a 1,000-word essay. Details are in the Capstone Project assignment. The Capstone Project grade will be 10% of your final grade.

Grading

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

Attendance	5%
Introduction	5%
Quizzes	30%
Exam 1	25%
Final Exam	25%
Capstone Project	10%

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 of 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.