COURSE SYLLABUS

POS 2112

State and Local Government

Fall Term, 2026

CRN: 85339 • Online • Credit Hours: 3 • Prerequisites: None

Semester Dates: 17 August 2026 – 10 December 2026

Instructor Information:

Elizabeth Trentanelli
Instructor's email: If **Canvas email** is not available, please try my college email address: etrentanelli@gulfcoast.edu .

After teaching more than 25 years at college level and two years at high school level I retired from my full-time teaching appointment at Gulf Coast State College, and I am currently teaching part time here.

Division Chair Information:

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Required Textbook:

Politics in States and Communities, 15/Edition by Thomas R. Dye and Susan A. MacManus. 2015, Pearson. ISBN-10: 0205994725 – or -- ISBN-13: 9780205994724

Copies are available in the campus bookstore. For cost saving digital and rental options check our *Canvas* course "Get Started" folder under Lessons tab.

POS 2112/Course Description:

The course is a study of state and local forms of government and the dynamics of governmental administrative processes. The State of Florida is used as an example of activities and patterns common within state-level governance. The responsibilities of local government at the county and city levels are explored as well.

- **This course is online, reading based, with weekly assignments to support learning with feedback from the instructor. Assignments are quizzes and class wide Canvas discussion boards or individual short essays submitted privately in textboxes. This is not a class where you can submit your assignments whenever you want – we are on a strict weekly schedule so we can complete required material in 16 weeks.**
- The broad goals of the course include students learning and retaining a significant amount of information about how the US government functions as well as components of our Constitution and key founding documents; students will also learn about their role in public life of the US society, while developing critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills; and improving written communication skills.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will

· Describe the basic principles of federalism.

· Explain the structure and characteristics of state and local governments.

· Summarize the policy making process of state and/or local government.

· Demonstrate college-level writing.

6A-10.02413-1 Civics Literacy Competency

Prior to the award of an associate in arts, associate in science, or a baccalaureate degree, first-time-in-college students entering a Florida College System institution in the 2021-2022 school year, and thereafter, must demonstrate competency in civics literacy by completing (a) and (b) prior to graduation:

(a) Successfully passing either **POS 2041 American Government or AMH 2020 United States History Since 1877**. Each of the courses must include the following competencies:

(1) Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government;

(2) An understanding of the United States Constitution and its application;

(3) Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-government; and

(4) 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:

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

What you can expect from this course:

- Students enrolled in this section of POS 2112 can expect a comprehensive, highly detailed, and balanced study of the theory, practice, ideals, and realities of government and politics in our states and communities, especially Florida. Major areas of study include behavior and participation, the legislative process, governors, the judicial process, county & city governments, and the administrative agencies.
- **This online course is organized into weekly modules that correspond to each textbook chapter reading assignment. Inside each specially labeled module folder you will find an assignment and a quiz.**
- Please check the course schedule (available August 17, first day of class) for days/times I devote to our web class and contact with students.
- **Barring emergencies, I generally check & respond to emails & phone calls within 48 hours (excluding holidays/weekends) Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.**
- **The primary learning activities** in this course will be reading all the assigned chapters in the textbook, contributing to our ongoing discussion boards, completing short essay assignments and quizzes, and taking the midterm and final exams. Extra credit assignments that relate directly to our course are in a specially labeled module folder. **Many previous students have commented positively about the organization of my online courses, so you should find everything to be clear and well-labeled. But if you have questions, please do reach out to me.**

Students enrolled in this course will be required to:

- **Follow the schedule provided; weekly chapter assignments and quizzes are in each week's module folder.**
- **Read the assigned chapter(s)** for the week; follow instructions to **complete the accompanying assignment and chapter quiz**. Each will be completed through Canvas.

- **Complete all weekly assignments and quizzes, plus the midterm and final exams AS SCHEDULED (see the course schedule in Canvas).**
- **Contact me via email at once with any problems or issues.** I cannot assist with problems unless you make me aware of them. Do not wait until the assignment or quiz *due date* to contact me with questions about the material.

- **Students enrolled in this section of POS 2112 are expected to use the textbook (noted above) plus Canvas for accessing the learning materials for this course and for internet-based communication with the college, their GCSC email address.**

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 on the student's records. ***"Cheating" includes but is not limited to use of any unauthorized assistance in completing course work. "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 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. **Sanctions for incidences of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incidence 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.**

Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy (AI):

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.

See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Diversity of Viewpoints and Recording Lectures – A Florida College System institution may not shield students, faculty, or staff from "expressive activities", such as peaceful assembly, speeches, signs, literature, lectures, and educational materials. "Intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity mean the exposure of students, faculty, and staff to, and encouragement of their exploration of a variety of ideological and political perspectives" (Chapter 2021-159, Laws of Florida). 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.

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 accommodation, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. **Appropriate academic accommodation 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.**

Attendance/Withdrawals/Incomplete Grades

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 this to the Office of Enrollment Services prior to the scheduled withdrawal date as published on the college calendar. Social Sciences instructors do not withdraw students from their individual courses under any circumstances. If you feel you have a unique situation that warrants removal from all 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.

Instruments of assessment for POS 2112 include:

Final grades are composed of test scores, online quizzes, and class participation through short assignments.

Weekly Quizzes	Assignments	Exams
12 textbook quizzes, up	12 assignments at up to	midterm 150 points
to 10 pts. (and 2 @ 15 pts)	10 pts each (and 2@ 15 pts)	final exam 150 points
Sub-total: 150 points	Sub-total: 150 points	Sub-total: 300 points
25% of final grade	25% of final grade	50% of final grade

Students are required to complete **weekly assignments (short essays or discussion boards) & quizzes which coincide with textbook chapters. Each assignment must be completed with well written & accurate work addressing each part of the assignment. If you miss an assignment or a quiz you can "make up" points with assignments from the "Extra Points for Extra Work" folder. Points will be deducted from any weekly assignment that is difficult to read/comprehend due to misspellings or poor grammar. All assignments & quizzes can be found under the "modules" tab.*

Late work: With documentation of true emergency (military deployment, hospitalization) a "make up" can be arranged, please email me; without documentation a 1-time-only "make up" will be accepted, penalized at one letter grade off per day late. Work *posted* more than two weeks after the due date will receive a grade of 0.

Assignment of Grades: All examination and assignments grades will appear in the student's gradebook in Canvas. Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A 90%-100%
B 80%-89%
C 70%-79%
D 60%-69%
F 59% and below

POS 2112 – State & Local Government (online) weekly schedule

Due dates for assignments Fall Term 2026; please mark these dates in your calendar:

Modules	Focus	Due Dates/Other
1) August 17-23	Introduction to State Politics/ch. 1	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Aug. 23
2) August 24-30	Constitutions/chapter 2	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Aug. 30
3) Aug. 31-Sept. 6	Federalism/Chapter 3	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Sept.6
4) Sept. 7 – 12	Voting Rights & Civil Rights/chapters 4 & 15	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Sept.12 Labor Day Sept. 7
5) Sept. 13- 20	Political Parties, Campaigns & Elections/ chapter 5	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Sept.20
6) Sept. 21 - 27	State Legislatures/chapter 6	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Sept. 27
7) Sept. 28-Oct. 4	State Governors/chapter 7	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Oct. 4
8) Oct. 9 - 10	**Mid-term Exam ***	Instructions will be posted & emailed.
9) Oct. 12-18	Bureaucratic Agencies/chapter 8	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Oct. 18
10) Oct. 19-25	Courts & Criminal Justice Policy/ch.9	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Oct. 25
11) Oct. 26-Nov.1	Local Government & Community Politics/chapters 10, 11	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Nov. 1
12) Nov. 2-8	Metro Politics, Land Use & Environment/chapters 12 & 13	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Nov. 8
13) Nov. 9-15	Taxation, Finance/chapter 14	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Nov. 15
14) Nov. 16-22	Education/chapter 16	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Nov. 22
15) Nov. 23-Dec.1	Health, Poverty, Welfare/ch. 17 Extra credit deadline	Short assignment & quiz due by midnight Dec. 1; delayed deadline due to Thanksgiving holiday
Date Dec. 7 - 8	**Final Exam *** Grades due/term ends	Instructions will be posted/emailed.

**Please note the midterm and final exam dates; additional instructions will be emailed to the class. I will post a midterm and final exam review ahead of time.*

***Web class time/contact hours**:*
*I have set aside time each **Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 – 12am**, specifically for our POS web class & grading your work; that is the best time to reach me quickly via Canvas email.*

*Barring illness or emergency, I **check & respond to emails in Canvas/college email within 48 hours, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays** (but not weekends or holidays).*