



Course Syllabus

American National Government

POS2041 / 84549 / Fall A 2026

8/17/2026 – 12/10/2026

Credit Hours: 3

Pre-requisites: None

Contact Information

Instructor

Karen Williams McKinney
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Response Time: Two Business Days

Division Chair

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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.

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:

Krutz, Glen, Sylvie Waskiewicz. *American Government*, 3rd Edition, OpenStax.; 2021. Hardcover ISBN: 13: 978-1-711493-96-1, Paperback IBSN: 13: 978-1-711493-95-4, Digital ISBN: 13: 978-1-951693-38-1.

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 designed to offer flexibility in completing Chapter and Unit assignments, while also following a schedule. Each Unit, comprised of multiple chapters, contains learning modules, assignments, online lectures, online discussions, and/or online exams with various due dates. Refer to the course schedule within this syllabus for more information.

Student Expectations

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

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

- **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.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via Canvas Inbox, 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 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:

- **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.
- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within two business days, unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns.
- **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.
- **Office Hours:** I am available by appointment.

Course Schedule

Course Schedule		
FIRST DAY ATTENDANCE ASSIGNMENT: August 17 – August 20, 2026		
Introduction Discussion Board Post	Located under the Start Here Module in Canvas.	Due <i>NO LATER THAN:</i> August 20, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. CST
Unit I August 21 – September 17, 2026		
Chapter	Materials	Chapter Quiz Dates
Chapter 1 American Government and Civic Engagement	☐ Read <i>American Government (Am. Gov.)</i> Chapter 1 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 1 Lecture	☐ Opens August 21 st and is due August 27, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 2 The Constitution	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 2 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 2 Lecture	☐ Opens August 28 th and is due September 3, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
Chapter 3 Federalism	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 3 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 3 Lecture	☐ Opens September 4 th and is due September 10, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
☐ Unit I Discussion Board Post and Two Responses: Thursday, September 10, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST		
Unit I Exam Window: September 11 – September 17, 2026 at 11:59 pm CST		
Unit II September 18 – October 29, 2026		
Chapter	Materials	Chapter Quiz Due Dates
Chapter 11 Congress	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 11 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 11 Lecture	☐ Opens September 18 th and is due September 24, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 12 The Presidency	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 12 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 12 Lecture	☐ Opens September 25 th and is due October 1, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
Chapter 15 Bureaucracy	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 15 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 15 Lecture	☐ Opens October 2 nd and is due October 8, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
Chapter 13 Federal Courts	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 13 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 13 Lecture	☐ Opens October 9 th and is due October 15, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST

Chapter 8 The Media	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 8 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 8 Lecture	☐ Opens October 16 th and is due October 22, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
☐ Unit II Discussion Board Post and Two Responses: Thursday, October 22, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST		
Unit II Exam Window: October 23 – October 29, 2026 at 11:59 pm CST		
Unit III October 30– December 9, 2026		
Chapter	Materials	Chapter Quiz Due Dates
Chapter 4 Civil Liberties	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 4 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 4 Lecture	☐ Opens October 30 th and is due November 5, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST
Chapter 5 Civil Rights	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 5 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 5 Lecture	☐ Opens November 6 th and is due November 12, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
Chapters 9 & 10 Political Parties	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapters 9 & 10 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 9 & 10 Lecture	☐ Opens November 13 th and is due November 19, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
Chapter 7 Elections	☐ Read <i>Am. Gov.</i> Chapter 7 ☐ Listen to the Chapter 7 Lecture	☐ Opens November 27 th and is due December 3, 2026 by 10:59 pm CST
☐ Unit III Discussion Board Post and Two Responses: Thursday, December 3, 2026 by 11:59 pm CST		
Unit III Exam Window: December 4 – December 9, 2026 at 11:59 pm CST		

Grading

GCSC Grading Scale

A	90.0%-100%
B	80.0%-89.9%
C	70.0%-79.9%
D	60.0%-69.9%
F	59.9% and below

Calculation of Grades

Unit I Exam	20%
Unit II Exam	20%
Unit III Exam	20%
Chapter Quizzes: 10	20%
Discussion Boards: 10	20%

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 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.

- 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 absences 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.

Make-Up Work Policy: Students should be forewarned that policies on missed and late work in this class are strict and rigid with very few exceptions. Please acquaint yourself with the assignment deadlines now and plan ahead to ensure that you do not miss any assignments, exams, or assignment deadlines.

Potential exception circumstances to the zero-tolerance late policy:

Students should promptly contact me when any **unforeseen, legitimate circumstance beyond his/her control** (i.e., events that do not involve choice, like a documented illness or medical emergency) occurs

that may result in a missed assignment deadline. However, since all chapter assignments open with each unit, students should be proactive by completing them early to avoid issues as deadlines approach. Students who foresee missing assignment and/or exam deadlines due to voluntary travel or other circumstances within the student's control should contact me and submit work *early*. Additionally, there is flexibility for exams to be opened early on a case-by-case basis, but there is no flexibility for late submissions.

Likewise, note that a lack of access to internet services is not a valid excuse for missing or late work. As an online student, it is your responsibility to figure out a way to submit your work. The library on campus is open after hours, and there are many public spaces with free Wi-Fi (your public library, Panera, McDonald's, etc.). Take advantage of the Canvas app and other services on your phone as well, if possible.

Further, if Canvas is down or not letting you submit, you should email the assignment to me as an attached PDF or .docx file from your GCSC email account before the deadline for that assignment has passed.

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 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 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.

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.

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:

- **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.