



SYLLABUS

American National Government - Section Syllabus

POS 2041 – P1048

Spring 2026, Session A

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Final Exam Date(s)	10:30 AM-12:30 PM, Monday, May 4.
Last Date of Drop/Add	1/15/2026
Last Date for Student to Withdraw	4/6/2026
Class Meeting Time	M/W 11:00 AM-12:15 PM
Class Location	Room 1462, Bld. 14
Prerequisite(s)	Grade of C or better in ENC 1101.
Course 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 United States Constitution and all 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.
Credits	3 credit hours
Semester(s) Offered	Fall, Spring, Summer
Course Designation(s)	College Transfer. Meets AA General Education Core, Social Sciences requirement. A writing emphasis course. Satisfies the State of Florida civic literacy course requirement.

General Education Core Course Standard	Per Florida Statute 1007.25 , "Social science courses must afford students an understanding of the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavior and past and present social, political, and economic issues."
Required Textbooks and Instructional Materials	American Government . College Sidekick. 2025. Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) The educational materials used in this course, including textbooks and ancillary materials, are intended for educational purposes only. All opinions represent those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of Pensacola State College or the instructor.
Minimum Requirements for Online Classes	Access to a Windows or Mac-based computer with a working webcam and microphone is required for this course. Mobile devices such as Androids, iPhones, iPads, or other tablets or Chromebooks are not recommended because of their limited functionality. Reliable, high-speed internet access is also required. Specific browser and computer requirements for using Canvas, PSC's learning Management System.
Course Learning Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the parts of the Constitution relating to political institutions and the rights of individuals. 2. Explore the structure and function of each branch of government. 3. Identify the key players and their roles in the political process of policy formulation within the scope of American political culture. 4. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government. 5. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and its application. 6. Develop and demonstrated knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance. 7. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.
General Education Student Learning Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical Thinking: The student analyzes, evaluates, and, if necessary, challenges the validity of ideas, principles, or data in order to develop informed opinions, probable predictions, or defensible conclusions. 2. Communication: The student effectively communicates knowledge and ideas. 3. Cultural Literacy: Demonstrate an understanding of human culture.
General Education Writing Emphasis Course Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All writing used to fulfill the writing emphasis requirement must possess the five characteristics of college-level writing: 1) have a clearly identified central idea or thesis; 2. 2) provide adequate support for the idea; 3) be organized clearly and logically; 4) show awareness of the conventions of standard written English; and 5) be formatted in an appropriate fashion for the assignment.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A minimum of four (4) evaluated assignments, which may include the final exam, is required. Because an extensive amount of writing is intended by Rule 6A-10.030, F.A.C., additional writing assignments may be used to satisfy this requirement. 4. The grades earned on the writing assignments must reflect student performance in 5. college-level writing and significantly impact the final course grade. 6. All sections of a course must meet all requirements. 7. Instructors provide detailed feedback regarding the content, organization, and use of standard written English for all writing used to satisfy the requirement. 8. Instructors return each evaluated writing assignment to a student before the submission of the next evaluated writing assignment, with the exception of a final exam used to satisfy the requirement. 9. Only individual, original student work counts toward the extensive writing requirement; AI or machine-written content is not accepted. 10. The grading rubrics used for each writing assignment will be shared with students and will be uniformly applied as the assessment instrument in all sections of a course.

Student Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Calculation

Course Readings

- MLK, “The Purpose of Education”
- Horace Mann, “Go Forth and Teach”
- Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Address
- US Declaration of Independence
- Openstax, American Government 3e (henceforth: “Textbook”), Sections 2.2-2.3.
- Storing, Herbert J. “The Small Republic.”
- James Madison, “The Work of the Constitutional Convention”
- Preamble to the US Constitution
- Federalist 10
- Federalist 49
- Federalist 51
- Article V, US Constitution
- Brutus, “On the Dangers of the Federal Government”
- *McCulloch v Maryland*
- Elihu Root, “On Citizenship”
- Jefferson, “On Citizenship”
- Textbook, Section 3.2-3.4
- Jonathan Haidt, Video: “Moral Roots of Liberals and Conservatives”
- F.A. Hayek, *Constitution of Liberty*, “Majority Rule”
- Jeffrey Howard, “Is Dangerous Speech Free Speech?”
- Textbook, Section 6.1-6.3
- Textbook, Section 8.2 and 8.4
- Dan McLaughlin, “Fact-Checking the Babylon Bee”
- Stephen J. Ceci and Wendy M. Williams, “The Psychology of Fact-Checking”
- James Caesar, “Political Parties and Constitutional Principles”
- Textbook, Section 9.2 and 9.3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook 11.3-11.5 • Morris Fiorina, "The Rise of the Washington Establishment" • Textbook, Sections 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3 • Textbook, Sections 7.3, 7.4, and 11.2 • Theodore Roosevelt, "Stewardship Theory." • William H. Taft, "Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers." • Textbook Chapter 13.3-13.5 • Brutus, "Dangers of Federal Judiciary" • Hamilton, "Federalist 78" • William J. Brennan, Jr., "Constitutional Interpretation" • Robert Bork, "Interpretivism" • Textbook 4.1-4.3 • <i>Roe v Wade</i> • <i>Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health</i> • <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> • Du Bois, W.E.B., "On Social Equality" • <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> • <i>Bolling v. Sharpe</i> 	
Class Participation Three grading periods averaged together. The grade for each period is calculated as such: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% for attendance (usually 10 class periods per 5 weeks) • 10% passive participation (e.g. taking notes in class, paying attention) • 10% active participation (e.g., answering questions or raising questions) 	10%
Quizzes (averaged together, at least 1 per week except exam weeks, ~12 total)	15%
Midterm Exam (cumulative of all material prior to the exam date)	15%
Final Exam	20%
Writing Assignments	40% total
Writing #1: Opinion Editorial Critique This is a primary source analysis that requires students to apply tests of logical reasoning and argumentation in evaluating the argument of an opinion editorial. Students are assessed on how well they can recapitulate the original argument in their own words (demonstrating an understanding of the argument's structure and line of reasoning) and apply specific tests of reasoning in determining the strength of the editorial's argument.	(10%)
Writing #2: Argumentative Essay This is an argumentative essay that students will construct using materials provided by the course. Students are assessed on their ability to use multiple sources to support a claim and their ability to construct and articulate a logical argument.	(10%)
Writing #3: Pro Opinion Editorial This is an argumentative essay in which students will argue for a particular policy (of their choice but preapproved by the instructor) in the form of an opinion editorial. The essay is assessed based on the strength of its reasoning and evidence.	(10%)

Writing #4: Con Opinion Editorial This is an argumentative essay in which students will argue against the same policy as Writing #3 in the form of an opinion editorial. The essay is assessed based on the strength of its reasoning and evidence.		(10%)
Total		100%
Grading Scale	90%-100%	A
	87%-89%	B+
	80%-86%	B
	77%-79%	C+
	70%-76%	C
	67%-69%	D+
	60%-66%	D
	0%-59%	F
Student Expectations	<p>Students enrolled in this course can expect the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. clearly identified course objectives; 2. productive class meetings; 3. a positive learning environment; 4. opportunities for appropriate student participation; 5. effective instruction; 6. positive and appropriate interactions; 7. assistance with meeting course objectives during and beyond class hours; 8. evaluation of student performance and appropriate and timely feedback; 9. clear and well-organized instruction. 	
AI Statement for Writing Emphasis Courses	<p>Because writing emphasis courses focus on the foundational skills of critical thinking, rhetorical awareness, and information literacy, the work presented by students must be original. As such, the use of generative AI for graded assignments is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to assign a failing grade to an assignment determined to exhibit markers of generative AI use. In such instances, the student may challenge the failing grade and is responsible for demonstrating the originality of a submitted text. Continued registration in the course will be understood as acceptance of this policy.</p>	
Academic Dishonesty Statement	<p>Pensacola State College is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic conduct. All forms of academic dishonesty, to include plagiarism and cheating, are prohibited. Penalties for academic dishonesty include but are not limited to one or more of the following: the awarding of no credit on the assignment, a reduction in the course grade, or the assignment of a final course grade of F and removal from the course. See the College Catalog for more details: Academic Integrity</p>	
ADA Statement	<p>Students with a disability that falls under the Americans with Disability Act Amendments Act of 2008 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should contact the Student Resource Center for ADA Services to discuss academic accommodations. Appropriate academic accommodations are determined on an individual basis with careful consideration of the course learning outcomes and the documentation of the disability. For more information, students should visit the Student Resource Center for ADA Services on the</p>	

	Pensacola campus in building 6, room 603; call 850-484-1637; email ADAservices@pensacolastate.edu ; or complete the online intake form in the ADA Services app within the MyPSC apps dashboard.
Emergency Statement	In the case of severe weather or other emergency, the College administration maintains communication with appropriate state and local agencies and makes a determination regarding the cancellation of classes. Notices of cancellation will be made through the College's PSC Alert system and on the College's website.
Flexibility Statement	It is the intention of the instructor to accomplish the objectives specified in the course syllabus. However, circumstances may arise which prohibit the fulfilling of this endeavor. Therefore, this syllabus is subject to change. When possible, students will be notified of any change in advance of its occurrence.
Non-Discrimination Statement	Pensacola State College does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex (as defined by applicable federal and state law), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or marital status in its educational programs, activities, or employment. For inquiries regarding the College's nondiscrimination policies, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Officer at (850) 484-1759, Pensacola State College, 1000 College Blvd., Pensacola, Florida 32504.
Security Statement	Pensacola State College is committed to encouraging all members of the College community to be proactive in personal safety measures. In case of emergency, students should ensure that they are aware of the building exit closest to each of their classrooms, as well as all alternative building exits in case circumstances require using a different route.
Student Email Account Statement	Pensacola State College provides an institutional email account to all students enrolled in courses for credit. PirateMail is the official method of communication, and students must use PirateMail when communicating with the College. In cases where companion software is used for a particular class, email may be exchanged between instructor and student using the companion software.
Course Specific Expectations	
Classroom Technology Use	<p>Use of electronic devices in the classroom such as tablets or laptops is strictly restricted to <u>accessing</u> course materials (e.g., assigned readings).</p> <p>Except in the cases of accommodations, students should take notes by hand.</p> <p>All cell phones should be stowed away during class.</p> <p>Flagrant and repeated violators of this rule will be asked to leave and counted absent.</p>
Instructor Response Time	<p>On weekdays I will respond within 24 hours of your email.</p> <p>I may answer emails during weekends, but I do not check my work emails regularly over the weekends except if an assignment is due.</p>

	<p>If you email me over the weekend you can expect a response by 10:00 PM on Monday.</p> <p>If you email me a question regarding a general class question (e.g. change in a due date, where to find information) that is not time-sensitive or not a question specifically related to your personal circumstances (e.g., excused absence, excused work, etc.) I may choose to make the announcement in the next class meeting or through the Canvas course announcements rather than responding directly to your email. If you have a general question, it's possible other students do as well, and it will better to answer the question generally so everyone can benefit.</p>
Exam Preparation	<p>The two exams will comprise multiple choice questions and short answer questions (requiring a one word or a one sentence response to complete).</p> <p>Each is cumulative so student should be consistently reviewing previous material throughout the semester to be prepared.</p> <p>In order to help you prepare for each exam, I will post a review sheet to Canvas no later than one week prior to the exam.</p> <p>This review sheet will identify key terms, concepts, and arguments that will be tested, but will not define or explain them in detail. Students should use their lecture notes and assigned readings to fill in these details. The review sheet is a guide for students to use their own notes to study.</p> <p>Previous students have found it helpful to compare notes with their classmates and to work in small groups to prepare a study guide based on the exam review sheet.</p>
Quizzing	<p>Quizzes will not be announced in advance, and will evaluate (a) the student's reading and comprehension of the assignment(s) due that day (the date it is listed in Canvas) and (b) understanding of the material from the previous lecture (but only the previous lecture and not earlier lectures).</p> <p>Students should expect at least one quiz per week.</p> <p>Quizzes will be administered on paper in class in the first 5-10 minutes of class.</p> <p>Quizzes will comprise 5-10 questions of some combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. Students will not consult books, notes, or other materials while taking a quiz.</p> <p>At the end of the semester, I will drop the lowest quiz scores. There will be no make-up quizzes regardless of excuse so be sure to attend class regularly.</p> <p>Quiz grades for excused absences will not be recorded; while quizzes for unexcused absences are recorded as a zero.</p>
Class Participation	<p>Students must attend at least 70% of the course to avoid a failing grade for absences.</p>

	<p>Participation is graded in the following three categories:</p> <p>(1) Attendance. Students who attend regularly (defined in course policies below) and are prepared (bringing a physical or digital copy of assigned readings to class and a notebook and writing utensil for taking notes) earn 80% of their course participation grade. Students with absences and tardies lose points from that 80% for each grading period.</p> <p>(2) Passive Participation. Students who are alert, are consistent in notetaking (e.g., visibly writing down notes unprompted at key ideas in the lecture), and provide interactive feedback during lectures (such as nodding or shaking a head, showing confusion) earn an additional 10% to their participation grade. Students who engage in disruptive behavior or exhibit inattentive behavior (e.g., drawing in notes, blank stares, 'zoning out', etc.) will not earn these points.</p> <p>(3) Active Participation. Students who actively contribute to class earn the final 10%. Contributing to class includes answering questions, raising relevant questions (e.g. questions that expand on, apply, or evaluate the ideas in class lecture or from the readings), or proposing original ideas related to class content. Clarifying questions about the readings or lecture are always welcome as long as they are honest questions and not because of the students lack of due diligence to read or listen carefully.</p> <p>Participation grades in my courses track close to students' grades on exams and quizzes and rarely deviate by a letter grade from them. This is unsurprising since participation in class is the best preparation for what you will be evaluated on in the exams and quizzes. In other words, your work <i>in class</i> shapes your skills and knowledge so that evaluation of your work <i>in class</i> will match evaluations of your academic competence. In short, the more you put into a class the more you will get out of it. Because of this I reserve the right to adjust borderline grades in light of a student's participation (but this adjustment will always be upward in the student's favor).</p> <p>Students can and should meet with the instructor for any questions or concerns about their participation evaluation.</p>
Class Attendance	<p>Students must attend at least 70% of the course to avoid a failing grade for absences.</p> <p>Attendance is defined as being seated in class when attendance is taken at the beginning of class and remaining seated until class is dismissed. Students who are not present when attendance is taken or who leave class without permission prior to dismissal will be considered absent.</p> <p>Excused absences for illness or family emergencies will be granted at the discretion of the instructor and consistent with PSC's policy, on the condition that documentation is provided to verify the cause of the absence. Documentation for excused absences must be submitted to me by the day of the final exam. Special circumstances which affect attendance will always be considered if the instructor is informed ahead of time.</p>

