



# PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE

American National Government – Section Syllabus  
POS 2041 D9305

Spring 2025, Session A

**Instructor:** David Gosbee, MS

**Office:** If you need a face-to-face meeting, please email to arrange time and location

**Phone:** 850-484-1425 (Pensacola Campus Main Office – leave a message)

**Email:** [dagosbee@pensacolastate.edu](mailto:dagosbee@pensacolastate.edu)

**Office Hours:** as needed – email to arrange a meeting

**Department Head:** Mr. Scott Schackmann

**Department Head Phone:** 850-484-1118

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**Final Exam Date:** To be determined

**Last Date of Drop/Add:** January 16, 2025

**Last Date for Student to Withdraw:** April 7, 2025

**Course Description:** A study of the American federal system of government with emphasis on the constitutional distribution of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches and the states. An analysis of policy formation as related to democratic theory and the role of government in the society.

- Please note that you will not be taught what to think about political issues in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the knowledge to determine how to think about political issues for yourself.

**Class Meeting Time:** Online

**Class Location:** Online

**Credits:** 3

**Prerequisites:** ENC 1101C with a grade of C or better.

**Offered:** FA, SP, SU

**Distribution:** Meets AA General Education Core, Social Sciences requirement. A writing emphasis course. Satisfies the State of Florida civic literacy requirement.

**Required Textbooks and Instructional Materials:** CourseHero eBook

**Methods of Evaluation:** At minimum, the instructor will cover content which aligns with statewide and institutional learning outcomes for the course. The instructor will measure student performance using the following:

A	90 – 100%
B+	87 – 89%
B	80 – 86%
C+	77 – 79%
C	70 – 76%
D	60 – 69%
F	59% and below

Evaluations of student progress towards achieving the stated learning outcomes and performance objectives is the responsibility of the instructor, within the policies of the College and the Department. Detailed explanations are included in the course supplementals developed by the instructor for each section being taught.

### Final Grade Calculation:

Your final grade in this course will be calculated as follows:

1 test at 10% of final grade	10 percent
1 midterm at 15% of final grade	15 percent
1 final exam at 20% of final grade	20 percent
3 formal writing assignments at 10% each	30 percent
Quizzes	10 percent
Discussion Posts	15 percent
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TOTAL:	100 percent

### Instructor Requirements:

- **Module Readings** – For each Module there is a corresponding reading assignment that you are suggested to have completed before watching that module’s narrated lecture.
- **Module Quizzes** – Each week (except for exam weeks) you will have a quiz composed of 10 multiple choice and true/false questions that highlight the major ideas and concepts from that week’s module. Each quiz is worth 10 points. The quizzes are worth 10% of your total grade.
- **Weekly Discussions** – The discussion component of this course is worth 15% of your total grade. You are expected to regularly contribute and participate in these discussions. There is a total of 5 points available for each module’s discussions. Consult the Discussion Grading Rubric located in the Canvas Course Information module for criteria regarding successfully completing the discussion portion of this course.
- **Exams** – There will be 3 exams. The exam breakdown is as follows:
  - **First Exam** – Worth 10% of your total grade – Covers Modules 2 – 5
  - **Midterm Exam** – Worth 15% of your total grade – Covers Modules 8 – 9
  - **Final Exam** – Worth 20% of your total grade – Covers Modules 10-15The exams will be 100 points: 40 points are composed of multiple choice and true/false questions worth 2 points each. The other 60 points are composed of 12 short written answers worth 5 points each that can be answered in 2 – 3 sentences. The exams are timed, but are open book/open note. You will need to prepare for each test to complete the test in time. We will not use Proctorio or lockdown browsers.
- **Writing Assignments** - There are three “formal” writing assignments/essays that combined are worth 30% of your total grade, where you will be using citation (we will be using the APA citation scheme). Your essay assignments are worth 10% of your total grade each.

**Student Expectations:** Students enrolled in this course can expect the following:

1. Clearly identified course objectives;
2. Productive class exercises;
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; and
9. Clear and well-organized instruction.

**General Education Student Learning Outcomes:**

**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.

**Communication:** The student effectively communicates knowledge and ideas.

**Cultural Literacy:** The student demonstrates an understanding of human culture and its diversity.

**Program Student Learning Outcomes (if applicable):**

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

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 demonstrate 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 litigation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.

**Academic Dishonesty Statement:**

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:

<https://pensacolastate.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/Catalog/Student-Handbook/Student-Responsibilities/Plagiarism-and-Academic-Cheating>

**Student Email Accounts:**

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.

**Flexibility:**

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.

**ADA Statement:**

For students with a disability that falls under the Americans with Disability Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, it is the responsibility of the student to notify Student Resource Center for ADA Services to discuss any special needs or equipment necessary to accomplish the requirements for this course. Upon completion of registration with the Student Resource Center for ADA Services office, specific arrangements can be discussed with the instructor. Contact the Student Resource Center for ADA Services at 850-484-1637 for more information.

**Equity Statement:**

Pensacola State College does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or genetic information in its programs, activities, and employment. For inquiries regarding the College's nondiscrimination policies, contact the Executive Director of Institutional Equity and Student Conduct, 1000 College Blvd., Building 5, Pensacola FL 32504 (850) 484-1759

**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.

**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.

**Course Structure:**

- **This course is not a “work at your own pace” course. There are regularly scheduled deadlines for all assignments and weekly participation is required. You will have weekly discussions and assignments to complete. Some weeks will include more activities than other weeks. Time management skills will be essential to maintain progress in the course.**

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Week	Topic	Notes	Readings
Week 1: September 10th - September 14th	Introductions American Political Culture  The Founding and the Constitution	Short Week Module 01 Quiz due by Sept 13th Complete required discussion/response posts	Read: eBook Chapter 02: The Constitution and its Origins
Week 2: September 15th - September 21st	American Federalism	Module 02 Quiz due by Sept 21st Discussion Posts due by September 19th/ 21st	Read eBook Chapter 03: American Federalism
Week 3: September 22nd - September 28th	Civil Liberties	Module 3 Quiz due by Sept 28th Discussion Posts due by Sept 26th/ 28th	Read eBook Chapter 04: Civil Liberties
Week 4: September 29th - October 5th	Civil Rights	Essay # 1 due no later than October 5th	Read eBook Chapter 05: Civil Rights
Week 5: October 6th - October 12th	Congress and the Presidency	Exam 1 Due October 12th	Read eBook Chapters 11 and 12
Week 6: October 13th - October 19th	Federal Court System		Read eBook Chapters 13
Week 7: October 20th - October 26th	Bureaucracy		Read eBook Chapters 15
Week 8: October 27th - November 2nd	The Media and Social Media	Exam 2 Due November 2nd	Read eBook Chapter 08: The Media
Week 9: November 3rd - November 9th	Public Opinion	Essay 2 Due No later than November 9th	Read eBook Chapter 6: Public Opinion
Week 10: November 10th - November 16th	Voting & Elections		Read eBook Chapter 07: Voting and Elections
Week 11: November 17th - November 23rd	Political Parties		Read eBook Chapter 09: Political Parties
Week 12: November 24th - November 30th	Interest Groups	Short week - Fall Break Nov. 27th - Dec. 1st	Read eBook Chapter 10: Interest Groups
Week 13: December 1st - December 7th	Domestic and Foreign Policy	Essay 3 Due no later than December 7th	Read eBook Chapters 16 and 17
Week 14: December 8th - December 13th	<b>Final Exam Due no later than Friday December 13th</b>		

***Distance Learning Attendance Policy: For any student enrolled in a distance learning course, participation in the course according to the schedule of events described by the faculty member is considered attendance. A student who does not access the class website during the first week of class, does not take examinations by established due dates, or does not otherwise participate in the distance learning process as outlined by the faculty member is subject to withdrawal.***

#### **USE OF TURNITIN:**

All writing assignments in this course will be submitted to Turnitin via Canvas. Turnitin generates a report on the originality of your writing by comparing it with a database of periodicals, books, online content, student papers, and other published work. This report can help you discern when you are using sources fairly, citing properly, and paraphrasing effectively -- skills essential to all academic work. Turnitin also generates a report that assesses the possibility that all or part of an essay may have been created through use of artificial intelligence (AI). If the Turnitin report indicates the possibility of AI generated work, the instructor may ask you to rework the paper to make sure it is in your words.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

It is highly recommended that you submit your paper early enough to review your Turnitin.com report before the final due date of your paper. Then, if necessary, you will have time to ask for help from the instructor or someone at the Writing Center.

#### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**

You will be submitting three written assignments throughout the semester. The due dates are clearly noted in the course schedule above. Each will cover major themes and issues covered in the textbook and in the class lectures. In each of these assignments, you will argue/take a side on a topic. These written assignments **MUST** be submitted electronically via Turnitin. Length will range from 3 - 4 pages, double spaced, using 12-point font, with one-inch margins, and page numbers at the bottom center. For reference, one double-spaced page is approximately 250 words, so your papers should be between 750 - 1000 words total.

#### **Email Response:**

To contact me via email, from within the course click the People link, then click my name, and then click Send Message button. Emails from all courses can be accessed from the Inbox link. I will contact you via the same e-mail tool as well.

Typically you can expect an email response from me within 24 hours. Weekends and holidays are the exceptions, where a response may take a little longer.

#### **Posting of Grades:**

Your instructor will strive to have assignments graded within one week of their submission. However, there will be occasional assignments that may take longer to grade. Your overall course grade in Canvas will update as assignments are graded.

**Pirates CARE Student Resource Center**

As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with your academic and personal success. These can include things such as basic needs (food, housing, transportation, healthcare, etc.), increased anxiety, depression, substance use, grief, or other stressful experiences. The Pirates CARE Student Resource Center provides free services to students, including emergency aid, campus food pantries, career clothing closets, connections to local resources for basic needs support, and confidential mental health counseling services provided in-person or via telehealth.

### Essay Rubric for Writing Emphasis Courses:

Grade Equivalent	A (90-100)	B (80-89)	C (70-79)	D (60-69)	F (0-59)
<b>Thesis (The general Idea)</b>	Essay Includes a clear thesis that articulates a central idea about the essay's topic	Essay includes clear thesis addressing topic but the thesis is not as strong/precise as an "A" paper	The thesis may be unclear, weak, or may not match the essay's content sufficiently	The thesis is unclear or inappropriate to the topic	The essay lacks a recognizable thesis statement or central idea.
<b>Organization and Coherence</b>	Essay flows logically; uses clear organizational patterns appropriate for the assignment. Uses proper sentence order and effective transitions.	Essay flows logically most times; includes appropriate organizational patterns– with minor exceptions. Writer controls sentence order and transitions.	Essay's logic is discernible but flawed. Includes acceptable organizational patterns; but some lapses in sentence order and the use of transitions are evident	Essay's logic discernible at times, but often difficult to follow. The essay is not organized appropriately, and the ideas lack clear connections.	The essay has no discernible plan or organization and is difficult to follow.
<b>Content</b>	Essay is skillfully developed. Critical thinking about the topic is evident through the use of vivid details and relevant examples to support key ideas.	The essay is mostly developed using appropriate details and examples that indicate critical thinking about the topic	The essay is somewhat developed, but the supporting details and examples are minimally effective.	The essay lacks development and provides few details. It lacks specific, vivid, or relevant examples.	The essay is undeveloped and fails to use relevant details or examples
<b>Style, Grammar, Mechanics, and Format</b>	Language is clear/precise, using appropriate academic tone. No discernable departures from Standard Edited Written American English (SEWAE). No major errors in MLA/Turabian Format. No major errors in documentation	The language is clear and mostly precise. Academic tone is used throughout with only a few minor exceptions. The essay has a few departures from SEWAE. May contain a few minor errors in formatting or documentation	The language is understandable throughout, but tone may be occasionally inappropriate or uneven. The essay exhibits some departures from SEWAE which may occasionally interfere with readability. May contain more than a few errors in formatting or documentation	The language is often confusing. Tone is inappropriate or uneven. The essay exhibits numerous departures from SEWAE interfering with readability. Significant formatting or documentation errors	Language makes essay difficult to read. Tone is inappropriate. Errors are so numerous that the reader struggles to discern meaning. Formatting or documentation is inadequate.



## Discussion Board Rubric:

Criteria	Excellent (8-10 Points)	Satisfactory (5-8)	Unsatisfactory (0-4)
<b>Ideas, Arguments, &amp; Analysis</b>	Ideas expressed in discussion posts include original thought, substantial depth, and are relevant to the topic. Viewpoint shows strong logical thinking, reasoning, and analysis with evidence and examples. Construction of new meaning and insights are evident.	Ideas expressed in discussion posts are mostly substantive and relevant to the topic; some original thought. Demonstrates logical thinking, reasoning, and/or analysis for the most part. Viewpoint is supported with evidence and/or examples.	Ideas expressed lack an understanding of the discussion topic. Comments are irrelevant, off-topic, and/or confusing to follow. Viewpoint, if given, is not supported with evidence or examples
<b>Connection to Course Materials</b>	Strong, direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.) and are clearly stated.	Some direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.) and are clearly stated for the most part.	No connections are made to readings or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.), and/or if made, are not clearly stated and are largely personal opinions.
<b>Contribution to Community</b>	Effectively contributes to the learning community. Frequently initiates dialogue and motivates group discussion by providing feedback to students' postings, asking follow-up questions, and through thoughtful, reflective comments. Respectfully encourages a variety of viewpoints and invites contributions from others.	Contributes to the learning community. Often attempts to direct group discussion to present relevant viewpoints and meaningful reflection by others. Interacts respectfully with students.	Negligible contribution to the learning community. Rarely engages with students and generally ignores others' posts and/or has a negative effect through misrepresenting content in other posts, inappropriate comments made, and/or attempts to dominate the discussion.
<b>Writing Quality</b>	Discussion posts are well written and clearly articulated using standard English, characterized by elements of a strong writing style with correct grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.	Posts show an average and/or casual writing style using standard English that is generally clear but contains some errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.	Posts show a below average/poor writing style that lacks standard English, and/or is difficult for readers to follow. Contains frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.
<b>Required Postings/ Timeliness</b>	Exceeds required postings; postings are early into the discussion and throughout the discussion; provides more than enough time for classmates to read and respond prior to deadline	All required postings by deadline; however there was not adequate time for others to read and respond to some postings prior to deadline	Some required postings missing by deadline &/or there was not adequate time for others to read and respond to postings prior to deadline.