



SYLLABUS
American National Government
POS 2041 – D9305
Spring 2026 A-Session

Instructor	Robert Thead
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Office Hours	Monday: 9am -11am; 11:30am – 12:30pm; 2pm – 2:30pm Tuesday: 9:30am – 10:30am; 2pm – 2:30pm Monday: 9am -11am; 11:30am – 12:30pm; 2pm – 2:30pm Thursday: 9:30am – 10:30am; 2pm – 2:30pm
Department Head	Mr. Scott A. Schackmann
Department Head Phone	850-484-1118
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Final Exam Date(s)	Sunday, May 3 – Thursday, May 7
Last Date of Drop/Add	Thursday, January 15
Last Date for Student to Withdraw	Monday, April 6
Class Meeting Time	Weekly.
Class Location	Canvas
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.
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Student Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Calculation

<p>Reading Assignments: Each week there will be one chapter of your free textbook that corresponds with each week’s instructional components and graded assignments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">American Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Government and Civic Engagement The Constitution and Its Origins American Federalism Civil Liberties Civil Rights The Politics of Public Opinion Voting and Elections The Media Political Parties Interest Groups and Lobbying Congress The Presidency The Courts State and Local Government The Bureaucracy Domestic Policy 	
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Quizzes: Weekly (except for exam weeks) multiple-choice quizzes will be held with the option of multiple attempts.	10%
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Discussions: Each week we will discuss a topic that aligns with the instructional content. All discussions require that you post an individual response to the topic being discussed. Additionally, you will also be required to respond thoughtfully to the postings of some of your classmates. ("Yes, I agree" is not a thoughtful response.) or each week that has a class discussion, you will be required to submit your individual response to the questions raised by Thursday (of the week they are	15%
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assigned) at 11:59 P.M. The responses to your classmates must be posted no later than Sunday (of the same week) at 11:59 P.M. Total word count for each week should be approximately 250 words.		
Writing Assignments: You will be submitting 3 formal, researched & cited written assignments/essays throughout the semester, each covering major themes and issues covered in the textbook and the classroom worth 30% total of your grade. All writing assignments will be submitted electronically, via Canvas. You will be issued topics/prompts at least one week before each writing assignment is due. Length will range from 2 – 4 pages (750 – 1000 words), double spaced, 12 point font. A general rubric can be found at the end of this syllabus, and assignment-specific rubrics will be made available for each assignment.		30%
First Writing Assignment (10%) – Using one of the original 13 states as your perspective, argue and critically analyze your state’s stance on issues from the Constitutional Convention regarding representation and power sharing. Sources include the <i>Federalist Papers</i> , original documents,		
Second Writing Assignment (10%) – Using voter turnout and cost of election data, argue a stance on the issue of campaign finance, while critically analyzing the <i>Citizens United</i> (2010) Supreme Court decision.		
Third Writing Assignment (10%) – Using the text of the Constitution, explain the two-stage impeachment process and identify the role of each major branch during a presidential impeachment. Provide a short analysis on the effects of the political balance of power on future impeachments.		
Unit Exams: The exams open-book and are proctored via Proctorio, but your webcam is not recorded. The exams consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions, with approximately 500-750 words of writing per exam. The short-answer questions can be answered in several sentences. Final Exam is not cumulative.		45%
First Exam (10%): Modules 1 – 5		
Midterm (15%): Modules 6 – 9		
Final exam (20%): Modules 10 – 15		
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	Students enrolled in this course can expect the following: 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; clear and well-organized instruction.	

AI Statement for Writing Emphasis Courses	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.
Late Work	Late work will be accepted. But assignments submitted after the due date will be subject to a 10% per-day late penalty one week after the due date.
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: Academic Integrity
ADA Statement	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 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.