



NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

POS 1041, American Government, 10305, 3 Credit Hours
(Traditional) (Fall 2024)

- Professor: Dr. Jessica Khan
- Email: khanj@nwfsc.edu
- Phone: (850) 200-4114
- Office Hours:
Niceville Campus, Building 500, Room 226: MTWTh 8:00-9:20, 12:30-1:40
- Campus/Room: Niceville Campus, TBD
- Class Times: MW 9:30-10:50am
- Online Classroom with Gradebook: Canvas class shell
- Final Exam: No Final Exam

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of America's constitutional republic.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and its amendments, and The Federalist Papers.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation and landmark executive actions.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

Goals and Objectives

Course-Level Learning Goals

- Goal #1: Students will be able to explain the ideas and principles underlying our system of government and founding documents.
 - Objective 1.1: Understand the motivations and discussions of delegates at and prior to the Constitutional Convention, and how these discussions shaped various processes and institutions such as the constitutional amendment process, the Electoral College, the Bill of Rights, the structure of Congress, and our system of checks and balances.
 - Objective 1.2: Explain the principles of federalism, republican or representative government, popular sovereignty, the separation of powers, and checks and balances, and how each of these principles is incorporated in our system of government.
 - Objective 1.3: Comprehend the major sections and ideas of founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Federalist Papers.

- Goal #2: Students will understand the basic processes and functions of all of the major institutions of our government across the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
 - Objective 2.1: Explain the institutions, historical development, processes, roles, responsibilities, and structure of the legislative branch.
 - Objective 2.2: Explain the institutions, historical development, processes, roles, responsibilities, and structure of the executive branch.
 - Objective 2.3: Explain the institutions, historical development, processes, roles, responsibilities, and structure of the judicial branch.

- Goal #3: Students will comprehend the political behavior and influence of various actors in our government, including political parties, interest groups, the media, and the public.
 - Objective 3.1: Examine the behavior and influence of political parties on our national government.
 - Objective 3.2: Examine the behavior and influence of interest groups on our national government.
 - Objective 3.3: Examine the behavior and influence of the media on our national government.
 - Objective 3.4: Examine the behavior and influence of the public on our national government.

Unit-Level Measurable Objectives

- Goal #1: Students will be able to explain the ideas and principles underlying our system of government and founding documents.
 - Objective 1.1: Understand the motivations and discussions of delegates at and prior to the Constitutional Convention, and how these discussions shaped various processes and institutions such as the constitutional amendment process, the Electoral College, the Bill of Rights, the structure of Congress, and our system of checks and balances.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Objective 1.2: Explain the principles of federalism, republican or representative government, popular sovereignty, the separation of powers, checks and balances, civil rights, and civil liberties, and how each of these principles is incorporated in our system of government.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Discussion (Traditional sections) or Essay (Online Sections) on Civil Liberties
 - Objective 1.3: Comprehend the major sections and ideas of founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Federalist Papers.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
- Goal #2: Students will understand the basic processes and functions of all of the major institutions of our government across the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
 - Objective 2.1: Explain the institutions, historical development, processes, roles, responsibilities, and structure of the legislative branch.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Objective 2.2: Explain the institutions, historical development, processes, roles, responsibilities, and structure of the executive branch.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation

- Lecture Question Assignment Series
- Objective 2.3: Explain the institutions, historical development, processes, roles, responsibilities, and structure of the judicial branch.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
- Goal #3: Students will comprehend the political behavior and influence of various actors in our government, including political parties, interest groups, the media, and the public.
 - Objective 3.3: Examine the behavior and influence of the media on our national government.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Objective 3.1: Examine the behavior and influence of political parties on our national government.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Bonus Assignments on Party Platforms and Political Typologies
 - Objective 3.2: Examine the behavior and influence of interest groups on our national government.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Objective 3.4: Examine the behavior and influence of the public on our national government.
 - Test Questions
 - Lecture Review Participation
 - Lecture Question Assignment Series
 - Bonus Assignments on Party Platforms and Political Typologies
 - Policy Discussions

Course Prerequisite

A passing score on the standardized placement test measuring communications/verbal/reading achievement, successful completion of any required developmental English and Reading coursework with a grade of “C” or better, or exemption from placement testing.

Course Materials

Our course text is the [OpenStax textbook on American Government](#).

Class Attendance

While attendance is not graded, it is very important to attend class regularly to earn credit for participation in class discussions and review sessions. There is also a very strong correlation between class attendance and final grades.

Attendance Confirmation

Active participation and academic engagement are expectations of enrollment in this course. Faculty confirm each student's attendance in class after the drop-add period ends. Students who have not attended class or otherwise engaged academically in the course through the submission of an academic assignment or through participation in a curricular activity will be withdrawn from the course for nonattendance.

Students who are withdrawn for nonattendance or nonparticipation early in the course may request to be reinstated in the course by contacting their instructor by email. Reinstatement in the course is at the instructor's discretion during the first three weeks of class and is not guaranteed. Reinstatement requests occurring after this three-week period may be submitted to the instructor for consideration; however, additional administrative approval will be required to grant the reinstatement. If you are withdrawn from a course due to nonattendance and are not granted reinstatement in the course, please contact a Student Success Navigator for assistance.

Classroom Conduct

I will not grant any student requests for an extra grade increase beyond what the student has earned in the course. There will be no eleventh hour opportunities to earn extra credit. Any opportunities to earn credit in the course will be equally available to all students.

No late work will be accepted without both 1) a valid excuse and 2) proactive communication. Proactive communication requires students reach out to me 24 hours before the assignment is due to let me know why they cannot complete the assignment before the specified deadline and request an extension. If 24 hours' notice is infeasible (e.g. in a genuine emergency situation), you must let me know as soon as possible and *before the deadline passes*. All assignments will disappear from Canvas at the deadline and I will not reopen them unless both requirements to make up late work (valid excuse and proactive communication) are met.

It is students' responsibility to maintain awareness of all major aspects of the course, such as policies, procedures, assignments, and due dates.

All due dates are by 11:59pm on the date specified in the Course Schedule.

Students are responsible for ensuring that the correct, uncorrupted file version of assignments are uploaded by the stated due date.

Technical error claims as excuses for late submissions must include: (1) a screenshot of the error message, (2) the assignment emailed as an attachment as soon as possible if the issue is with Canvas, and (3) the document's date last edited must show as prior to the deadline passing.

Students need to be proactive about determining whether they need accommodations. I will not adjust grades previously earned before documentation that a student will require accommodations.

Do not take phone calls during class. If there is a dire emergency, step outside to take any calls.

Speaking when I am speaking is disruptive to the learning environment and will not be tolerated.

Leaving early is disruptive, distracting, and damaging to the educational environment. Students will therefore be penalized 0.5% of their final class grade for each early departure not previously cleared with the instructor. If a genuine emergency occurs, please feel free to depart early and notify me as soon as possible, and this penalty will not apply. Stepping out to use the restroom does not count as an early departure, but please be mindful to leave and return as quietly as possible.

Audible sighing, groaning, or other disrespectful verbal and non-verbal behavior is unwelcome and will not be tolerated.

I reserve the right to have continuously disruptive students leave the classroom to protect the educational rights of students who wish to learn and succeed in class.

Grading Scheme and Procedures

20%	=	Exam I
20%	=	Exam II
25%	=	Final Exam
15%	=	Policy Discussions
10%	=	Lecture Review Participation
10%	=	Lecture Question Assignment Series

Exam I (20%)

This exam will cover everything learned in class about the following topics: The Constitution, Federalism, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. It will be a multiple-choice exam consisting of 50 questions with four answer options each. It will be available to take online through Canvas.

Exam II (20%)

This exam will cover everything learned in class about the following topics: Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary. It will be a multiple-choice exam consisting of 50 questions with four answer options each. It will be available to take online through Canvas.

Final Exam (25%)

This exam will be cumulative, i.e. it may include anything learned over the course of the semester. It will be a multiple-choice exam consisting of 50 questions with four answer options each. It will be available to take online through Canvas.

Policy Discussions (15%)

Students will participate in a series of discussions about important public policy issues. There will be three discussions in total, each worth 5% of your final class grade. For all three discussions, students will make their initial discussion posts in Canvas. In their initial discussion posts, students will be required to identify and explain the reasoning behind *two clear arguments for each side* of the discussion question. We will brainstorm and select the discussion topics for all three debates on the first day of class. The first discussion will be held in-person, and the last two will be held online through Canvas. For the online discussions, students will reply to at least two of their classmates and critically evaluate at least one point raised by each classmate. Critical evaluation requires comprehending the point made and adding *your own original insights*, such as connections to class material, your personal experience, current events or logical extensions of the argument. Initial posts should be at least 200 words in length, and online replies should be at least 75 words in length. Initial posts are due by 9am on the date specified in the course schedule. Replies are due by 11:59pm on the date specified in the course schedule.

Lecture Review Participation (10%)

Students will be randomly called on to review material learned during lectures over the course of the semester. While attendance itself is not graded, students must be present in order to participate and earn credit for this component of the final class grade. This grade will be calculated as the proportion of times students were present to participate out of the number of times they were randomly selected from the roster. Students who give advanced notice (24 hours except in genuine emergencies) will be excused from participation for that day.

Random calling ensures students are mentally present and engaging with the material, and helps ensure discussions in class are not dominated by only a handful of students. Randomly calling on students to answer questions gives everyone an opportunity to earn participation credit.

Lecture Question Assignment Series (10%)

Students will answer questions that follow along with the lecture for every class meeting during which there is a lecture (most days in class). These questions constitute the Lecture Question Assignment Series. There are 18 of these assignments in total, each of which is worth 0.5% of your final class grade except for the four assignments on the

Constitution and Congress, which are each worth 0.75% of your final class grade. The purpose of these assignments is to help build and retain knowledge. Handwriting is strongly encouraged to best learn and remember this information.

Instructor Communication

Your NWFSC email is the official communication medium of the College. Please check College email regularly for any class and College notifications. I will respond to student emails within one business day.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices must not distract from learning. Courtesy to the professor and other students requires that phones be on vibrate or silent mode during class. No student should initiate conversations, including texts, during class activities. Use of electronic communication devices during examinations or other graded activities may constitute grounds for disciplinary action; such devices must be completely out of sight during exams or other assessments. Where emergency or employment situations require access to electronic communication services, please take these conversations outside the classroom.

Lecture Recordings

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a College course intended to present information or teach about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures is not permitted. Except as detailed in the Catalog, recordings may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. To read and fully understand your rights and responsibilities when recording, visit the Catalog.

Emergency College Closure

In the event of unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the schedule, requirements, and procedures in this course are subject to change. If the College closes for inclement weather or other emergency, any exams, presentations, or assignments previously scheduled during the closure period will automatically be rescheduled for the first regular class meeting held once the college re-opens. If changes to graded activities are required, students will not be penalized as a result of the adjustments but will be responsible for meeting revised deadlines and course requirements.

Academic Continuity Plan

Northwest Florida State College is dedicated to protecting the health and wellbeing of its students, staff, and faculty. The College is dedicated to working with faculty and students to ensure timely course and program completion during emergencies. In the event of a College closure, the format of this course may be modified to enable completion of the course through other means, including but not limited to online course delivery through online classrooms. Check your RaiderNet College email and LMS course online for any updates.

Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for adherence to all college policies and procedures, including those related to academic freedom, cheating, classroom conduct, computer/network/e-mail use and other items included in the *Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook*. Students should be familiar with the rights and responsibilities detailed in the current *Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty is a serious breach of student responsibilities and may trigger consequences which range from a failing grade to formal disciplinary action.

Dispute Resolution

NWFSC aims to deliver high-quality instructional experiences. In the event of a concern regarding a class, students should first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. If a resolution cannot be reached, students may seek out additional counsel in Academic Leadership through a formal process. Access the Formal Grievance/Appeal form.

Campus Resources

The College is committed to offering quality resources to aid in your success as a student. Review the “Welcome to NWF” module in your LMS course online for information on these resources such as the Library, tutoring, testing, military and veteran services, etc.

Student Success Statement

Northwest Florida State College aspires to provide a quality, convenient, and affordable education by using data-informed decision making and industry best practices. Northwest Florida State College seeks to provide students with premiere learning experiences that create personal and professional connections that support students’ personal growth, and clear, inclusive, education pathways that help students to successfully engage in a diverse society.

Accommodation Resources

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations, students with disabilities must contact the Accommodation Resource Center at arc@nwfsc.edu or call [850-729-6079](tel:850-729-6079). Upon request of accommodations, students will be asked to provide medical documentation that supports their disability request. If students are concerned that they may have an undiagnosed, disability-related condition that impacts their academic progress, it is recommended that they see a licensed medical professional for a diagnosis. Please contact the Accommodation Resource Center with any questions or concerns relating to permanent or temporary student disabilities.

Students who have been approved for accommodations through the ARC are encouraged to work with their professor on facilitation. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Student Counseling Services

Northwest Florida State College has partnered with Bridgeway Center, Inc. to provide mental health resources and counseling services to all actively enrolled students. All actively enrolled students are eligible to receive an initial assessment and up to five therapeutic sessions with a Behavioral Health provider at no cost to the student. A menu of services and resources is available at www.nwfsc.edu/studentcounselingservices. Bridgeway Center Confidential Helpline: (850) 833-7500, Select Option 1 - Open 24 hours/day

Children in the Classroom

NWF State College values family life and has worked to develop policies that are supportive of families. However, it is the policy of NWF State College that students and visitors should not use the College in lieu of a childcare provider. Minor children are not permitted in labs, shops, construction/repair sites, classrooms, offices, labs, or other areas where potential hazards exist, unless enrolled in classes or activities scheduled at the site. In an emergency or other compelling situation, students or staff may bring children to class or the workplace on an incidental, individual basis, provided the instructor receives advance approval from the department chair or program director. In such cases, the children must be directly supervised at all times by the parent/adult and must not disrupt or distract the flow of college work, services or instruction. The full [Children on Campus](#) policy statement appears in the College Catalog.

Student Handbook

The complete NWFSC Student Handbook can be found at <https://catalog.nwfsc.edu/>

Welcome to Class

Thank you for choosing NWFSC for your education—and welcome to class!

Class Schedule

Week One: Introductions, The Constitution

Monday August 19

Topic(s): Introduction to Class, Syllabus Review

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday August 21

Topic(s): Historical Context of the Constitution

Reading: Textbook Chapter 2

Assignment(s) Due: None

Week Two: The Constitution, Federalism

Monday August 26

Topic(s): Ideas, Key Clauses, Articles, and Amendments to the Constitution

Reading: Textbook Chapter 2

Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday August 28

Topic(s): Definitions of Federalism, Federalism and the Constitution, Nationalization

Reading: Textbook Chapter 3

Assignment(s) Due: Historical Context of the Constitution Lecture Questions

Week Three: Civil Liberties

Monday September 2

Topic(s): No Class-Labor Day

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Ideas, Key Clauses, Articles, and Amendments to the Constitution
Lecture Questions

Wednesday September 4

Topic(s): Incorporation, Bill of Rights Civil Liberties, Constitutional Right to Privacy

Reading: Textbook Chapter 4

Assignment(s) Due: Federalism Lecture Questions

Week Four: Civil Rights

Monday September 9

Topic(s): Definitions, Slavery, Reconstruction, the Jim Crow Era

Reading: Textbook Chapter 5

Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday September 11

Topic(s): 20th Century Civil Rights History and Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement

Reading: Textbook Chapter 5

Assignment(s) Due: Civil Liberties Lecture Questions

Week Five: Review I and Exam I

Monday September 16

Topic(s): Blooket Games to Review

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Civil Rights Part I Lecture Questions

Wednesday September 18

Topic(s): Exam I

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Civil Rights Part II Lecture Questions

Week Six: Policy Discussion I and Congress

Monday September 23

Topic(s): Policy Discussion I

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday September 25

Topic(s): Structure and Powers of Congress, Congressional Elections, Parties in Congress

Reading: Textbook Chapter 11
Assignment(s) Due: None

Week Seven: Congress, the Presidency

Monday September 30

Topic(s): Congressional Committees, the Legislative Process

Reading: Textbook Chapter 1

Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday October 2

Topic(s): Historical Development of the Presidency, Roles of the President, the President and Public Opinion, the Institutional Presidency

Reading: Textbook Chapter 12

Assignment(s) Due: Congress Part I Lecture Questions

Week Eight: The Bureaucracy

Monday October 7

Topic(s): Definitions and Purpose, Historical Development, Structure of the Bureaucracy

Reading: Textbook Chapter 15

Assignment(s) Due: Congress Part II Lecture Questions

Wednesday October 9

Topic(s): Bureaucratic Behavior, Who Controls the Bureaucracy?

Reading: Textbook Chapter 15

Assignment(s) Due: Presidency Lecture Questions

Week Nine: The Judiciary, Review II

Monday October 14

Topic(s): The Supreme Court Over Time, Structure of US Federal Courts, Judicial Decision-Making, the Supreme Court and the Separation of Powers

Reading: Textbook Chapter 13

Assignment(s) Due: Bureaucracy Part I Lecture Questions

Wednesday October 16

Topic(s): Review II

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Bureaucracy Part II Lecture Questions

Week Ten: Exam II, Policy Discussion II

Monday October 21

Topic(s): Exam II

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Judiciary Lecture Questions

Wednesday October 23

Topic(s): Policy Discussion II

Reading: None
Assignment(s) Due: None

Week Eleven: FCLE Presentations, Voting

Monday October 28

Topic(s): Guest Speakers Present Information on the Florida Civic Literacy Exam
Reading: Textbook Chapter 7
Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday October 30

Topic(s): The Expansion of Suffrage, Voter Turnout, Vote Choice
Reading: Textbook Chapter 7
Assignment(s) Due: None

Week Twelve: Campaigns & Elections, Political Parties

Monday November 4

Topic(s): Basic Necessities of a Campaign, Campaign Finance, American Elections in Comparative View, Election Laws, Types of Elections
Reading: Textbook Chapter 7, Textbook Chapter 1
Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday November 6

Topic(s): Why Political Parties Exist, the Two-Party System, Democratic and Republican Policy Positions
Reading: Textbook Chapter 9
Assignment(s) Due: Voting Lecture Questions

Week Thirteen: Interest Groups

Monday November 11

Topic(s): Veteran's Day-No Class
Reading: None
Assignment(s) Due: Campaigns & Elections Lecture Questions

Wednesday November 13

Topic(s): Definitions and Purpose, History of Interest Groups in America, Tactics
Reading: Textbook Chapter 10
Assignment(s) Due: (1) Political Parties Lecture Questions, (2) Party Platforms Bonus Assignment, (3) Political Typologies Bonus Assignment

Week Fourteen: FCLE Testing, the Media

Monday November 18

Topic(s): Florida Civic Literacy Exam in the Testing Center
Reading: None
Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday November 20

Topic(s): History of American News Media, the Media as a Business, News as a Product, Journalism as a Profession, the Role of the Media in the Political Process

Reading: Textbook Chapter 8

Assignment(s) Due: Interest Groups Lecture Questions

Week Fifteen: Public Opinion

Monday November 25

Topic(s): Definitions, Measurement, Origins of Public Opinion, Is Public Opinion Meaningful?

Reading: Textbook Chapter 6

Assignment(s) Due: None

Wednesday November 27

Topic(s): Thanksgiving Break-No Class

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: The Media Lecture Questions

Week Sixteen: Policy Discussion III, Final Exam

Monday December 2

Topic(s): Policy Discussion III

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Public Opinion Lecture Questions

Wednesday December 4

Topic(s): Final Exam

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: None