

American National Government

COURSE SYLLABUS POS 2041

ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE

Instructor: Dr. Alicia Isaac

Location: Boca Ciega

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 2:15 – 3:15 pm

Fall 2020

Bldg 1, Room 64

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Other Hours by Appointment

Course Description

Prerequisite: (ENC 0020 and REA 0002) or EAP 1695 or appropriate score on the SPC placement test. This survey course provides a comprehensive examination of the American political system. Through this course students will become familiar with theory, organization, principles, and function of the American national government, and various elements within the political system that work to shape policy outcomes. 3 Credit Hours

Attendance Policy

Please refer to St. Petersburg College Attendance Policy on class attendance. According to the policy, you are subject to being dropped for excessive absences during the term. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of ANY absence.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you wish to request accommodations as a student with a **documented** disability, please make an appointment with the Learning Specialist on campus. If you have a documented hearing loss, please contact the Program for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing. If you need assistance during an emergency classroom evacuation, please contact your campus learning specialist immediately about arrangements for your safety. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities can be reached on spc.edu for assistance.

Course Texts:

Lynne E. Ford; Barbara A. Bardes; Steffen W. Schmidt; Mack C. Shelley, II., **American Government and Politics Today, 2015-2016 Edition.**

Additional readings and handouts are also required to successfully navigate the course and will be distributed in class or provided on the course site. It is also recommended that students access newspapers and other information/political opinions from sources such as those listed below.

- Radio: National Public Radio (NPR)
- Television: Colbert Show, NewsHour on PBS.
- Reading the news, Time, Newsweek, New York Times, Washington Post, or USA Today.
- Web sites and portals: CNN, ABC, Yahoo, Excite, Google News.
- Political shows/websites (many of these are partisan): RealClearPolitics, Politico, Slate Magazine, Fark.com/politics, Fox News, Washington Times, The Wall Street Journal, The National Review, The Weekly Standard, Drudge Report, The Huffington Post, MSNBC, or The Nation.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of government.
2. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the American federal system.
3. The student will demonstrate understanding of the various philosophical, cultural, and political experiences that impacted the creation and evolution of principles and values of the American political system.
4. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles and features of the original Constitution of 1787.
5. The student will demonstrate an understanding of civil liberties as contained in the Constitution and interpreted by the courts.
6. The student will demonstrate knowledge of various movements to secure civil rights protections.
7. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and functions of the legislative branch.
8. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and functions of the executive branch.
9. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and functions of the judicial branch.
10. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of policy-making and the factors that work to shape policy outcomes.
11. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of political parties and interest groups, and the impact of public opinion and political participation by diverse groups on the American political system.
12. The student will demonstrate increased ability in writing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (PERFORMANCE)

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of government by defining government and describing its purpose and function.
2. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the American federal system by:
 - a. defining and recognizing the arrangement of governmental powers under federal systems.
 - b. defining and recognizing the arrangement of governmental power under unitary systems.
 - c. defining and recognizing the arrangement of governmental power under confederal systems.
3. The student will demonstrate understanding of the various philosophical, cultural, and political experiences that impacted the creation and evolution of principles and values of the American political system by:
 - a. examining the significance of incidents provoking opposition to British rule.
 - b. examining the values and theories incorporated in the Declaration of Independence.
 - c. outlining the structural arrangement of government under the Articles of Confederation.
 - d. summarizing the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
4. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental principles and features of the original Constitution of 1787 by summarizing: (1) popular sovereignty; (2) limited government; (3) separation of powers; (4) checks and balances; (5) representative government and (6) federalism.
5. The student will demonstrate an understanding of civil liberties as contained in the Constitution and interpreted by the courts by:
 - a. examining the liberties contained in the original Constitution.
 - b. examining the liberties contained in the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the Constitution.
 - c. examining the role of the Supreme Court in interpreting liberties in the Constitution.
 - d. explaining how the due process clause of the 14th Amendment is used to selectively incorporate liberties in the Bill of Rights.
6. The student will demonstrate knowledge of various movements to secure civil rights protections by:
 - a. defining civil rights and examining the concept of equality.
 - b. summarizing the impact of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.
 - c. examining the history and evolution of African-Americans' rights, women's rights, and other civil rights movements.

7. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and functions of the legislative branch by:
 - a. outlining the powers of Congress
 - b. examining similarities/differences between the chambers of Congress.
 - c. explaining the law-making process of Congress.
8. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and functions of the executive branch by:
 - a. identifying the constitutional responsibilities of the president.
 - b. identifying the formal roles of the president.
 - c. outlining the responsibilities of the Executive Office of the President.
 - d. explaining the election process and role of the electoral college.
 - e. outlining the bureaucracy and its responsibilities.
9. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and functions of the judicial branch by:
 - a. outlining the federal court system.
 - b. identifying the jurisdiction of district courts, circuit courts, and the Supreme Court.
 - c. identifying and defining the types of law.
 - d. explaining the federal judicial appointment process.
 - e. explaining the meaning of judicial review.
10. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of policy-making and the factors that work to shape policy outcomes by:
 - a. defining domestic and foreign policy and identifying the process determining priorities of policies.
 - b. explaining the role of the executive and legislative branches in formulation and implementation of domestic and foreign policy.
 - c. recognizing contextual influences on foreign and domestic policy-making.
11. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of political parties and interest groups, and the impact of public opinion and political participation by diverse groups on the American political system by:
 - a. describing the development and function of political parties.
 - b. examining the impact of public opinion on public policy emanating from government institutions.
 - c. examining the importance of the campaign process, voting and elections to a representative democracy.
 - d. describing the functions and identifying the various types of interest groups.
 - e. describing the strategies used by interest groups and their impacts on policy-making.
12. The student will demonstrate increased ability in writing by planning and writing one or more of the following (all of which will be evaluated):
 - a. research, analysis, outline, evaluation or other types of papers completed outside of the direct classroom experience.
 - b. research, analysis, outline, journal, evaluation or other types of essays completed during the direct classroom experience.
 - c. any type of expository, evaluative, persuasive or personal response writing as described in the college publication entitled “A Resource Manual For Writing Across the Curriculum.”

Instructional Philosophy and Course Expectations

In this course, we will use a variety of instructional methods, including lecture, multi-media, student presentations, peer review, collaborative group work and discussions. American National Government requires active learning which means reading and writing analytically, completing assignments with integrity, participating in discussions, asking questions, keeping abreast of current events, and studying for exams.

- **Standard college work expectations apply:** for every hour you spend in class per week, it is suggested that you spend 2-3 hours per week outside of class preparing for the course. **Assignments are due at the beginning of class** on the assigned date. **Late work will not be accepted.** If there are extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be discussed prior to the due date. In the event you are absent on the day an assignment is due, it should be emailed by the start of class.
- **Attendance:** There is a clear correlation between attendance and success in class. The responsibility to come to class is yours and as such, **you are responsible for any material missed due to absence.** Though I am happy to assist in the case of excused absences, please expect to get lecture notes and other pertinent information from classmates. It should be noted that attendance, by itself, is not enough to ensure student success; you must be prepared to engage in a meaningful way.
- **Exam Policy:** Students are expected to complete exams when scheduled. Make-up exams will only be given in the case of documented extenuating circumstances. Make-up exams will be scheduled at the professor's convenience within one week.
- **Civility and Respect for Learning:** The college classroom is a place for serious learning, active engagement, and respect for fellow learners. Because controversial topics will be discussed, students must commit to open-minded discussion and respect for opinions that differ. Please be on time—coming in late is disruptive to both me and your fellow students. Please turn off/silence, and put away all cell phones and portable electronic devices (including ear buds), before class begins. Students should be seated and ready to begin when the bell rings.

Student Evaluation and Grading

Students will be evaluated in the following way:

	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
Tests (3)	(180 points)	35%
Problem Solution Analysis	(105 points)	20%
Short Papers and Class Activities	(130 points)	25%
Final Exam	(105 points)	20%

Student assignments and tests are scored using the point system as listed. Final grades are calculated as: 90-100% (A), 80-89% (B), 70-79% (C), 60-69% (D), below 60% (F). For example, a student earning 90-100% of all available points for the term will earn an A.

Tests and Final Exam

There are 3 tests for this course. Tests are non-cumulative and consist of multiple choice questions and essays. The final exam will be a cumulative test similar in format to the midterm exams.

Short Papers

Students will be expected to write five (5) *Short Papers* -reader responses to selected questions (no more than 1 page). The reader responses should avoid summary, and instead critically analyze and engage a particular question or theme grounded and supported by the course readings.

Some assignments will be required to be submitted through the course dropbox in SPC My Courses.

Class Activities

Every student should come to class prepared to engage in informed, lively conversation based on the week's reading and lectures. Students are expected to bring textbooks, readers, and other materials to class each day unless otherwise instructed. Additionally, forum posts, in-class writing assignments, participation in Socratic Seminars and debates, collaborative group assignments and other class exercises comprise the class participation grades.

Problem Solution Analysis Paper

In addition to short writing assignments (Short Papers) and exam essays, students will write a 10- page research paper, which is due the week before finals. Students must submit a one paragraph proposal of their research topic by the ninth week of class. Papers will focus on a topic illustrating a problem and potential solutions related to governmental/political theory, operation, behavior, and relationships with the public. Papers will be written using APA formatting.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy and fabrication are defined in the St. Petersburg College Student Handbook .

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 August 24 - August 28

American Political Culture and the Nature of Democracy

Due: Chapter 1

Week 2 August 31 – September 4

Constitutional Underpinnings

Due: Chapter 2

Madison, *The Federalist Papers* #10, #51

Short Paper #1

Week 3 September 7 – September 11

Federalism

Due: Chapter 3

Weeks 4 & 5 September 14 – September 25

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Due: Chapters 4 & 5

Short Paper #2

Midterm 1

Week 6 September 28 – October 2

Public Opinion, The Media, and Political Participation

Due: Chapters 6, 7, & 8

Short Paper 3

