

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**COURSE OUTLINE**

**POLS 105: Introduction to American Government and Politics**

**Prepared By: Lenore VanderZee in collaboration with Dr. Amani Awwad**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
May 2015**

- A. **TITLE:** Introduction to American Government and Politics
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** POLS 105
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Optional
- E. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall and Spring
- G. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:**  
3 lecture hours per week
- H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**  
This course examines the fundamental components of American government and politics, including political culture, interest representation, political participation, government institutions, and government policymaking. Students develop a basic knowledge of American politics and the tools for careful and critical evaluation of current events and political phenomena. Through the framework of the Constitution, this course considers governmental and political issues from the founding until now, including federalism, civil liberties and rights, political processes such as campaigns and elections, and the checks and balances between branches of government.
- I. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**  
a. Pre/Co-Requisites: None
- J. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**  
By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

<i>Course Objective</i>	<i>Institutional SLO</i>
a. Describe the role of government and politics in our social, cultural, and economic lives	1. Communication 3. Prof. Competence
b. Explain the structures, functions, and operations of the American government	2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence
c. Identify major constitutional rights and analyze their judicial interpretation over time	2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence
d. Describe data collection and how to use data to evaluate political and social phenomena	2. Crit. Thinking 3. Prof. Competence
e. Critically evaluate America's form of democracy	2. Crit. Thinking
f. Advance and defend their own opinions of how America's political system should work	2. Crit. Thinking 4. Inter-Intra Personal Skills

- K. **TEXTS:** Suggested Text: Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, and C Caroline J. Tolbert, *We The People: An Introduction to American Politics*, New York: London (latest edition; currently 9th, 2013).

**L. REFERENCES:**

Bardes, Barbara A., Mack C. Shelley, and Steffen W. Schmidt. 2013. *American Government and Politics Today*. Independence, KY: Wadsworth.

Canon, David T., John J. Coeman, and Kenneth R. Mayer. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2011. *Faultlines: Debating the Issues in American Politics*. New York, NY: Norton.

Canon, David T. and William T. Bianco. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2013. *American Politics Today*. New York, NY: Norton.

Fiorina, Morris, Paul E. Peterson, D. Stephen Voss, Bertram Johnson, and William Mayer. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 2010. *America's New Democracy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, and Caroline J. Tolbert. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. 2013. *We The People: An Introduction to American Politics*. New York, NY: Norton.

Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, and James Madison. *The Federalist Papers*. Any Edition/Publisher.

Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, and Thad Kousser. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2011. *The Logic of American Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press College.

Valelley, Richard M., ed. 2009. *Princeton Readings in American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

**M. EQUIPMENT: Technology Enhanced Classroom**

**N. GRADING METHOD: A-F**

**N. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

- a. Exams
- b. Quizzes
- c. Essays
- d. Papers
- e. Projects (group and/or individual)

**P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

- I. Foundations of American Government and Politics
  - A. Political Culture
    1. Citizenship
    2. Knowledge
    3. Participation
  - B. The Founding
    1. Declaration of Independence
    2. Articles of Confederation

- 3. Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists
  - C. The Constitution
    - 1. Constitutional Convention
    - 2. Branches of Government
    - 3. Amending the Constitution
    - 4. Changing Constitution
  - D. Federalism
    - 1. Powers of the National Government
    - 2. Powers of State Governments
    - 3. State Obligation to One Another
    - 4. Federalism Over Time
- II. Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
  - A. Bill of Rights
  - B. Civil War Amendments
  - C. Litigating for Equality
  - D. Extending Civil Rights
  - E. Affirmative Action
- III. Political Presentation and Representation
  - A. Public Opinion
    - i. Political Values
    - ii. Political Socialization
    - iii. Measuring Public Opinion
      - 1. Polling Procedures
      - 2. The U.S. Census
  - B. The Media
    - i. Traditional Media
    - ii. New Media
    - iii. Regulation of the Media
  - C. Political Participation and Voting
    - i. Forms of Political Participation
  - D. Political Parties
    - i. Democrats & Republicans
    - ii. Third Parties
    - iii. Ideology and Political Parties
  - E. Campaigns and Elections
    - i. Types of elections
    - ii. The Electoral College
    - iii. Election Campaigns
  - F. Groups and Interests
    - i. Lobbying
    - ii. Money and Power
- IV. Political Institutions
  - A. Congress
    - i. Organization
    - ii. Powers
    - iii. Lawmaking
  - B. The Presidency
    - i. Organization
    - ii. Presidential Powers
  - C. Bureaucracy
  - D. The Judicial System

- i. Federal Courts
    - ii. Judicial Review
  - V. Political Policy
    - A. Government and the Economy
      - i. Fiscal & Monetary Policy
      - ii. The Environment and the Economy
    - B. Social Policy
      - i. The Welfare State
      - ii. Education
      - iii. Health Care
    - C. Foreign Policy
      - i. Military and Security
      - ii. Diplomacy
      - iii. America and the United Nations

**Q. LABORATORY OUTLINE: None**