COURSE OUTLINE

POL S 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:

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


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