

Federal Government (GOVT 2305)



Credit: 3 semester credit hours (3 hours lecture)

Prerequisite/Co-requisite: Pass the reading portion of COMPASS or other accepted testing instrument.

Course Description

Origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights..

Required Textbook and Materials

1. *Politics in America*, Thomas Dye and Ronald Keith Gaddie. 2012 Election Edition, New York: Pearson Publishing.
 - a. ISBN is 13:9780205862917

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.)
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Core Objectives

1. Critical Thinking Skills: To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills: To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. Personal Responsibility: To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
4. Social Responsibility To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Course Outline

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Introduction of faculty and students
 - 2. Review Syllabus
 - 3. Review Class Policies
 - 4. Review Assignments
- B. Politics and Political Culture
 - 1. Compare and contrast government policies
 - 2. Compare and contrast representational government and direct government
 - 3. Show how elitism and pluralism reach different conclusions about who governs
 - 4. Evaluate the implications of the elitist conclusions about who governs
 - 5. Define the concept of political culture
 - 6. Characterize the trends affecting current distribution of wealth and income
 - 7. Analyze the relationships among social mobility, inequality and class conflict
 - 8. Differentiate various political ideologies that depart from conservatism and liberalism
- C. The Constitution and Federalism
 - 1. Outline the principles on which the Founders were in agreement
 - 2. Characterize the areas of conflict
 - 3. Explain how the Constitution structured the new government
 - 4. Analyze separation of powers and checks and balances established in the Constitution
 - 5. Assess the protections provided by the Bill of Rights
 - 6. Determine the various means through which the Constitution may be changed
 - 7. Distinguish the federal form of government from confederal and unity forms and evaluate
 - 8. Trace the evolution of American federalism
- 9. Explain federal grants, the impact and distribution of power between federal and state governments
- D. Public Opinion and Political Participation
 - 1. Explain how the agents of socialization influence the development of political opinions
 - 2. Determine the role of ideology in shaping opinion
 - 3. Describe the relationship between gender, race and opinion
 - 4. Assess how and to what extent public opinion influences public policy making
 - 5. Identify various ways citizen may participate in politics
 - 6. Trace the expansion of the right to vote
 - 7. Analyze political and demographic factors that influence voter participation
 - 8. Characterize protest as a form of political participation
- E. The Mass Media
 - 1. Identify functions and components of the mass media
 - 2. Describe the business of the media
 - 2. Assess the politics of media and how it is shaped by economic interests, environment, and ideology
 - 3. Analyze the role of media in shaping campaigns and elections
 - 4. Distinguish between freedom of the press and fairness of the press
 - 5. Assess the effects of media on public opinion and political behavior
- F. Political Parties
 - 1. Show how the relationship between organizations and political power explains political parties and interest groups
 - 2. Trace changes in political parties over history
 - 3. Outline functions and perception of the two American parties, how they are financed and their changing roles

GOVT 2305

Course Syllabus

4. Differentiate the three political arenas in which parties battle
 5. Evaluate the role of third parties in the electoral system
 6. Determine why the two-party system has persisted
- G. Campaigns and Elections
1. Evaluate the role of elections in American democracy
 2. Characterize factors that motivate people to pursue a career in politics
 3. Explain the advantages of incumbency
 4. Identify the main components of campaign strategies
 5. Analyze the role of money in campaigns, the sources of funding, the motivation to contribute and evaluate the efforts to regulate campaign finances
 6. Outline strategies in primary races, the general election, and assess influence on voters' choices
- H. Interest Groups
1. Explain the origins, functions, strengths and weaknesses of the interest group
 2. Characterize the interests represented, and lobbying in Washington
 3. Explain how interest group leaders create and build organizations
 4. Identify main activities of lobbyists and describe the environment of lobbying in Washington
 5. Outline the development, role and structure of political action committees
 6. Assess the relationships between bureaucratic agencies and interest groups and their influence in federal court system
 7. Evaluate positions and consequences of interest groups for American democracy
- I. The Congress
1. Explain the sources of power in Congress
 2. Explain the processes of congressional apportionment and redistricting
3. Describe congressional elections, the organization, and characteristics of the working life of a Congressional member
 4. Evaluate successes and failures of the two parties in Congress
 5. Assess the repercussions of committees and the distribution of power
 6. Characterize legislative work of committees
 7. Outline the process of a bill and identify obstacles to passage
 8. Assess the influences on congressional decision making
- J. The Executive Branch
1. Identify the powers and responsibilities of the president
 2. Assess presidential political power and analyze how personality and policy positions impact ratings
 3. Characterize the roles and responsibilities of the vice president
 4. Assess the extent of bureaucratic power
 5. Describe the types of agencies in the federal bureaucracy and their purpose
 6. Trace changes over time in the size and composition of the bureaucracy
 7. Assess the repercussions for democracy concerning bureaucracy
 8. Summarize the constraints that Congress can place on the bureaucracy
- K. The Courts
1. Assess the basis for and use of judicial power
 2. Compare and contrast the philosophies of judicial activism and judicial restraint
 3. Characterize the "special rules" of the judicial decision making process
 4. Assess the role of politics and ideology in the judicial selection process and in Supreme Court decision making
 5. Evaluate checks of Supreme Court power
- L. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

GOVT 2305

Course Syllabus

1. Outline the founders' views on individual liberty and the Bill of Rights
 2. Identify constitutional rights and their implementation
 3. Assess the role that politics has played over time in America's quest for equality
 4. Analyze how the Constitution was interpreted to first justify and then attach slavery and segregation
 5. Differentiate the meanings of equal protection of the laws
 6. Outline major civil rights legislation
 7. Determine how the 14th Amendment has been interpreted regarding gender equality and policy issues concerning sexual orientation
- M. Public Policy
1. Compare politics and economics as decision making systems
 2. Outline major social welfare programs in the United States
 3. Analyze the role of politics in welfare reform
 4. Compare the United States with other nations on health care and health care programs
 5. Describe ways that nations have attempted to bring order to international policies
 6. Describe the nature of terrorism and U. S. response to terrorism

Grade Scale

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

Course Evaluation

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

4 Tests	80%
2 Response Topics	10%
Attendance	10%

Course Requirements

1. Students are required to attend all classes and be prepared to work. Regular attendance is essential for success in this course as well as in the professional world. Students must have all needed supplies as non will be supplied for them. Students will be required to take notes, and participate in class discussions. Students are not allowed to have cell phones out at any time.
2. The student will write and submit a paper on two assigned response topics. The due date for the assigned response topic is shown on the course calendar. Correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and complete sentences must be used in all writing assignments. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a zero.
3. Four major tests will be given counting 20% each or 80% of the grade. Two Response Topics will count as 10% of the grade and attendance is 10% of the grade.

Course Policies

1. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated.

GOVT 2305

Course Syllabus

2. If you wish to drop a course, the student is responsible for initiating and dropping the course. Students who stop coming to class and fail to drop the course will earn an 'F' in the course.
3. Students will be allowed to make-up one exam upon approval of the instructor on the Final Exam Review date on the course calendar. All other missed exams will result in a zero.
4. Amending and supplementing syllabus: The instructor reserves the right to change course requirements and/or dates that material will be covered and exam dates. Any such changes will be announced at least one class in advance and it is the responsibility of the student to check for any changes.
5. Respect other students, faculty and staff of LIT.
6. No food, drinks, or use of tobacco products in class.
7. Beepers, telephones, headphones, and all other electronic devices must be turned off while in class and are not allowed out at any time.
8. Belligerent, abusive, profane, threatening, and/or inappropriate behavior on the part of students is a violation of the LIT Student Conduct Regulations. Students who are found guilty of such misconduct may be subject to immediate dismissal from the institution.

Disabilities Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. Among other things, these statutes require that all students with documented disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409) 880-1737 or visit the office in Cecil Beeson-Student Services.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reference
1	Course Introduction – Syllabus, instructor, etiquette, Chapter 1: Who Gets What, When and How Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	Syllabus pp. 1-29
2	Chapter 2: Political Culture Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms Response Topic Assignment I: Due Date	pp. 30-65
3	Continue Chapter 2 Discussion Chapter 3: The Constitution Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 66-99
4	Chapter 4: Federalism Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 102-141
5	Exam I Chapter 5: Opinion and Participation	pp. 142-183

GOVT 2305
Course Syllabus

Week	Topic	Reference
	Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	
6	Chapter 6: Mass Media Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 184-223
7	Chapter 7: Political Parties Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 224-271
8	Chapter 8: Campaigns and Elections Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms Exam II	pp. 273-321
9	Chapter 9: Interest Groups Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 322-361
10	Chapter 10: Congress Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms Response Assignment Topic II: Due date	pp. 362-417
11	Chapter 11: The President Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 418-463
12	Chapter 12: The Bureaucracy Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 464-501
13	Exam III Chapter 13: Courts Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 502-539
14	Chapter 14: Politics and Personal Liberty Learning Assessment: Test Yourself and Terms	pp. 540-587
15	Chapter 15: Politics and Civil Rights Chapter 16: Politics and the Economy Selected Topics	
16 Final Exam	<i>Given on the date and time specified by the official exam schedule</i>	

Contact information varies by instructor.