



National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

2021 Winter Program

PLSC 111 Introduction to American Politics

Course Outline

Course Code: PLSC 111

Instructor: Dr. Margaret E. Stiffler

Home Institution: North Carolina State University

Office Hours: Weekly Via Zoom and by appointment

Email: stiffler@ncsu.edu

Credit:4

Course Description:

This course is designed to be an introduction to American government and politics. We will cover the historical foundations, institutions, and political processes. The purpose of this class is to teach you about the institutions, practices, and history of politics and government in the United States.

This course will cover a great deal of ground, as we will discuss the Constitution, the three branches of the federal government, interest groups, public opinion, campaigns, elections, and parties. For each subject, we will examine some of the leading perspectives, and we will incorporate current events and our personal experiences.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the basic concepts of democratic thought
- Analyze the formation, concepts, and components of the United States Constitution
- Investigate the idea of federalism and explain the role of states and the national government in

America's political environment



- Explore America's political culture and examine the traits and beliefs of the American voter
- Identify America's major political parties, the core beliefs, and the impact special interest groups can have on their actions
- Understand the electoral process in the United States
- Analyze the organization and purpose of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of government
- Understand the role and structure of the federal bureaucracy
- Investigate the modern media and its impact on public opinion
- Examine the concepts of civil rights and civil liberties and their impact on American society

Required Textbook:

American Government 2 Edition, OpenStax, Senior Contributing Author:

Glen Krutz, University of Oklahoma

<https://assets.openstax.org/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/american-government-2e-6.11.pdf>

Course Requirements and Grades:

Final course grades are based on the following:

Participation: Participation in Weekly Discussions is required. This is worth 20% of your final grade.

Quizzes: There will be a weekly quiz based on readings and discussions. Quizzes will be administered at various times without necessarily being scheduled for a certain class meeting. Quizzes are worth 20% of the total grade.

Midterm: A short answer and/or multiple-choice examination will be given approximately halfway through the course. The test will cover all readings, lectures, and discussion up to the date of the test. It is worth 20% of the total grade.

Reflection Paper: Students will be assigned a 2-page reflection paper based on the viewing of documentary that covers an American political or government topic. Reflection papers are due at the end of the 3rd week of the term. Students may present their papers for extra credit. Reflections Papers are worth 20%.



Final examination: The final examination may include short answer, multiple choice, and short essay questions. The test will cover all readings, lectures, and discussion up to the date of the test, that is, it is cumulative. Administered the last day of class, the final exam is worth 20% of the final grade.

Course Policies:

Students are required to participate in a consistent manner, being respectful of classmate's opinions and contributions. Check email frequently; additional readings and perhaps announcements will be distributed through email. Please use email to tell me of an illness or to set up a time to meet.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Read Chapters 1-4, Chapter 1 American Government and Civic Engagement, Chapter 2 The Constitution and Its Origins, Chapter 3 American Federalism, Chapter 4 Civil Liberties. Watch Zoom Lectures 1-4. **Weekly quiz based on readings and lectures.**

Week 2: Read Chapters 5-8, Chapter 5 Civil Rights, Chapter 6 The Politics of Public Opinion, Chapter 7 Voting and Elections, Chapter 8 The Media. Watch Zoom Lectures 5-8. **Weekly quiz based on readings.**

Mid-Term Exam

Week 3: Read Chapters 9-12, Chapter 9 Political Parties, Chapter 10 Interest Groups and Lobbying, Chapter 11 Congress, Chapter 12 The Presidency. Watch Zoom Lectures 9-12. **Weekly quiz based on readings.**

Reflection Papers Due

Week 4: Read Chapters 13-17, Chapter 13 The Courts, Chapter 14 State and Local Government, Chapter 15 The Bureaucracy, Chapter 16 Domestic Policy, Chapter 17 Foreign Policy. Watch Zoom Lectures 13-17. **Weekly quiz based on readings.**

Final Exam

Grading Scale:

A+:4.3——95-100

A :4.0——87-94

A -:3.7——82-86

B+:3.3——78-81

B :3.0——75-77

B -:2.7——71-74



C+:2.3——68-70

C :2.0——65-67

C -:1.7——61-64

D :1.0——55-60

E :0.0——49-54

X :0.0——0

