

GOVT 2305: Federal Government

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Office Hours: Flexible hours by appointment

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the study of politics and political institutions in the United States. It will introduce the actors, institutions, and processes of the American system of government through the coverage of Federalism, Congress, the Presidency, Voting and Elections, and other topics. Emphasis will be placed on American founding principles and philosophy, with comparison to contemporary ideals. This course is an overview of the information necessary to understand how and why the government operates as it does. The goal is for you to be able to think critically and logically about the functions of the government and how they impact your lives.

Required Materials

- Kruz, Glen & Sylvie Waskiewicz. *American Government*. Available for free at <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government>
- Additional readings assigned will be made available through Canvas

Course Objectives

Upon successful 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 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 US Politics.

Grading Criteria

Components

There are THREE major graded components for this course:

1. 2 Exams (300 points each; 600 points total)
2. 5 Quizzes (highest 5 of 6; 50 points each; 250 points total)
3. Attendance & Participation (150 points)

Total possible: 1000 points

Grading Policy

- A: 900-1000
- B: 800-899
- C: 700-799
- D: 600-699
- F: 00-599

NOTE: Point values are final. Final calculations of grades will be rounded following normal rounding rules. However, final grades will not be "bumped" even if a student is one (1) point away from the next grade level.

Exams

The two exams will be given on the dates noted in the course calendar below and will be accessible via Canvas. The test will be open for the full 24 hour period of the day it is listed and will promptly close at the end of the day (11:59 pm). Approximately half of the questions for the exam will come directly from the quizzes and the other half will come from lecture notes, so class attendance is vital to your success. The two exams are open book and open note and will cover the material from each unit only (not comprehensive). The exams are to be completed independently from other students and the questions are randomized so there is no advantage to collaborating.

No makeup exams will be given! If you miss an exam for any reason you may take the final exam during the date and time assigned by Grayson College. The final exam may only replace one missed exam. If you miss more than one, the others will be graded as 0. The final exam may NOT be taken to raise the grade of another exam. There are no exceptions to this rule. The final exam will be comprehensive of the entire course. Plan your semester accordingly.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be taken via Canvas and are due by 11:59PM on the date listed in the course calendar below. Each quiz will open approximately three days before it is due to provide ample time to complete. Each quiz will have a one hour time limit once it has been started. Please ensure you plan enough time to complete each quiz.

There are no makeup quizzes. If you miss a quiz it will be graded as a 0. It is important to take these quizzes seriously as roughly half of your exams questions come directly from them. I suggest saving and printing them to review for the exams.

Attendance

Academic success is closely associated with regular classroom attendance and course participation. All successful students, whether on campus or online, are expected to be self-motivated. Despite this class being taught online, class attendance and participation is still expected and required. Each student is required to post 2 times each week in the appropriate class discussion for that week; one original post and one reply. Each original post should address the specific question for the discussion board. To receive full credit, your original posts should be made in paragraph format and should be approximately 75 words in length. Replies should also be in paragraph format and roughly 50 words in length. All posts are to be made in a thoughtful, intellectual manner. Please conduct all discussions from a position of mutual respect. The participation discussions are due each week on Thursday by 11:59 PM, unless otherwise noted in the Course Calendar. In addition, students may earn 10 bonus points each week by replying to 2 other student threads.

Course Calendar

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. This schedule below should be viewed as the key concepts you should grasp after each week, and also as a study guide before each exam, and at the end of the semester. Each exam will test on the material that was taught up until the exam. Concepts tend to build on each other throughout the semester though, so it is still important to at least review earlier concepts throughout the semester.

- Syllabus Review
- Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement
 - Discussion posts due
 - Quiz 1 due
- Chapter 2: Constitution and Its Origins
- Chapter 3: American Federalism
 - Discussion posts due
 - Quiz 2 due

- Chapter 7: Voting and Elections
- Chapter 9: Political Parties
 - Discussion posts due
 - Quiz 3 due
- **Exam 1**
- Chapter 11: Congress
 - Discussion posts due
 - Quiz 4 due
- Chapter 12: The President
- Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy
 - Discussion posts due
 - Quiz 5 due
- Chapter 13: The Courts
- Chapter 8: The Media
 - Discussion posts due
 - Quiz 6 due
- **Exam 2**
- **Final Exam: TBD**

Course Policies

Course Flow

Due to the flexible nature of this semester, this syllabus will operate as a guideline from which all necessary changes will be made. Currently, the end date for the semester has not be changed. However, if the end date does change, the course will be adjusted accordingly.

You are expected to read the assigned textbook chapter prior to each class. I will post the slides for that chapter before each class for you to review. I will hold online office hours during the class's scheduled time to answer any and all questions you have regarding the material. Additionally, the class discussion for each chapter is an excellent tool for us to dive into topics that deserve more attention or need further clarification.

Student Responsibility

You have already made the decision to go to college; now the follow-up decisions on whether to commit to doing the work could very well determine whether you end up working at a good paying job in a field you enjoy or working at minimum wage for the rest of your life. Education involves a partnership that requires both students and instructors to do their parts. By entering into this partnership, you have a responsibility to show up for class, do the assigned readings before class, be engaged and pay attention in class, follow directions, and put your best effort into it. You will get out of your experience here exactly what you put into it - nothing more and nothing less.

Late Assignments

Sufficient time has been allotted for each of the assignments in this course. As such, late assignments are not accepted in this course. Do not fail to plan your time appropriately and expect me to make exceptions.

Extra Credit

There is NO extra credit for this course. Note the grading criteria and plan accordingly.

Canvas

Canvas is used in this class for quizzes, review, and to check your progress in the class. It is your responsibility to take the exams in the allotted time frame. I am not responsible for your inability to access Canvas. Grayson provides Canvas technical support Mon-Fri 8am-4pm and Mon-Thurs 6-9pm. The services include a telephone number for immediate assistance (903-415-2665), email request service, and an online chat service. Please use this link to access the Grayson Canvas Helpdesk: <https://www.grayson.edu/current-students/help-desk/index.html>. I suggest utilizing any of the campus computer labs for all exams to avoid issues with accessibility.

University Policies

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable.

Students who are caught submitting plagiarized material or who have engaged in collusion on any course assignment or exam will receive a zero on the first assignment and an F in the course

for any additional acts of academic dishonesty. Students who are caught cheating on any course assignment or exam will receive an F in the course.

Institutional Information

Grayson College campus-wide student policies may be found on our Current Student Page on our website: <http://grayson.edu/current-students/index.html>

Title IX

GC policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status. Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct: sexual violence (sexual assault, rape), sexual harassment and retaliation. For more information on Title IX, please contact:

- Dr. Regina Organ, Title IX Coordinator (903-463-8714)
- Dr. Dava Washburn, Title IX Coordinator (903-463-8634)
- Dr. Kim Williams, Title IX Deputy Coordinator- South Campus (903) 415-2506
- Mr. Mike McBrayer, Title IX Deputy Coordinator (903) 463-8753
- Website: <http://www.grayson.edu/campus-life/campus-police/title-ix-policies.html>
- GC Police Department: (903) 463-8777- Main Campus) (903) 415-2501 - South Campus)
- GC Counseling Center: (903) 463-8730
- For Any On-campus Emergencies: 911

Instructor's Rights

The instructor has the right to add, delete, or revise this course syllabus.