

## American National Government POS 1041

### *Course Description:*

In this course, students will investigate how the national government is structured and how the American constitutional republic operates. It covers the philosophical and historical foundations of American government, including but not limited to the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and all its amendments, and The Federalist Papers. The course examines the branches of government and the government's laws, policies, and programs. It also examines the ways in which citizens participate in their government and ways their government responds to citizens.

Government and politics touch every aspect of our lives. Yet many—indeed most—Americans lack even the most basic knowledge of how our national government operates. The goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the fundamentals of American government and politics as well as some of the analytical tools that students will need to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of political institutions and behavior. This course is designed to introduce students to the contemporary study of the institutions and processes of American national government.

First, students will acquire a factual understanding of American national government. Students will expand their knowledge and vocabulary regarding American politics. This will provide the foundation for intelligent discussion and critical thinking about American politics. The course covers, and subsequently assesses via examinations, students' knowledge of the following subjects:

- the basic principles and practices of American representative democracy and their application in its republican form of government
- the U.S. Constitution and its application
- the Founding documents and their shaping of the nature and functions of the institutions of self-governance in the United States
- landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on American law and society

Throughout the course, students will also consider the political trade-offs among the competing values of liberty, equality, and order. Doing so facilitates knowledge of the Founding Period, the U.S. Constitution, ideology, civil liberties, and civil rights, among other subjects. Recognition of these inherent trade-offs provides a framework for understanding many of the conflicts and controversies in American politics—both contemporary and historical.

Second, students will engage both longstanding debates about the role of a nation's government and contemporary scholarship on American political behavior, voting and elections, and the institutions of national government. Drawing from social choice theory, the course will introduce students to analytical concepts that will enable them to assess various behaviors that pose dilemmas for American representative democracy. Among the most important of these concepts are free riding, the prisoner's dilemma, and the tragedy of commons. As they engage these concepts, students will also review arguments that suggest that political institutions and practices, as well as social capital, provide possible solutions (albeit imperfect ones) to problems that citizens face when they need to act collectively. Again, examinations will assess students' knowledge of these various subjects.

***Course Learning Objectives (including CoreFSU learning objectives assigned to the course):***

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of America’s constitutional republic.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the nation’s founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and its amendments, and The Federalist Papers.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the American federal government and its impact on law and society.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

Finally, this course has been approved as counting toward the Civic Literacy requirement, as outlined by the Florida Legislature.

***Grading Assignments***

exams, discussions, writing assignments.

***Standard University and Liberal Studies Language***

**CoreFSU STATEMENT**

This course has been approved to meet FSU’s CoreFSU Social Sciences requirements and helps you become a critical analyst of theories and evidence about social forces and social experience.

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Discuss the role of social factors in contemporary problems or personal experiences.
2. Analyze claims about social phenomena.

**UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family, and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid written excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of student’s academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State

University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)

### **ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Department of Student Support and Transitions to learn more.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with the academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet the integral requirements of the course.

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; and (2) request a letter from the Office of Accessibility Services to be sent to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and (3) meet (in person, via phone, email, skype, zoom, etc...) with each instructor to whom a letter of accommodation was sent to review approved accommodations. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in an alternative format upon request.

For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
oas@fsu.edu  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>

### **CONFIDENTIAL CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

#### **Victim Advocate Program**

University Center A, Rm. 4100  
(850) 644-7161  
Available 24/7/365  
Office Hours: M-F 8-5  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>

#### **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

Florida State University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) primary mission is to address psychological needs and personal concerns, which may interfere with students' academic progress, social development, and emotional well-being. The following in-person and virtual (tele-mental health) services are available to all enrolled students residing in the state of Florida:

1. Individual therapy
2. Group therapy
3. Crisis Intervention
4. Psychoeducational and outreach programming
5. After hours crisis-hotline
6. Access to community providers for specialized treatment

Call 850-644-TALK (8255) for more information on how to initiate services.

Counseling and Psychological Services  
250 Askew Student Life Center  
942 Learning Way  
(850) 644-TALK (8255)  
Walk-in and Appointment Hours:  
M-F 8 am – 4 pm  
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

**Services at UHS are available to all enrolled students residing in Florida:**

The mission of University Health Services (UHS) is to promote and improve the overall health and well-being of FSU students. UHS provides a coordinated continuum of care through prevention, intervention, and treatment. Services include general medical care, priority care, gynecological services, physicals, allergy injection clinic, immunizations, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, and a medical response unit. The Center for Health Advocacy and Wellness (CHAW) assists students in their academic success through individual, group, and population-based health and wellness initiatives. Topics include wellness, alcohol and other drugs, hazing prevention, nutrition and body image, sexual health, and power based personal violence prevention. For more information, go to [uhs.fsu.edu](https://uhs.fsu.edu).

University Health Services  
Health and Wellness Center  
960 Learning Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32306  
Hours: M-F, 8 am – 4 pm  
(850) 644-6230  
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>