

American Federal Government – POL 1113



Course Description: This course is a study of the principles, structure, processes, and functions of the United States federal government – from its founding events to its unique constitution, from the great social movements of the nineteenth century to the challenges of the twenty-first century. A primary objective of this course is to stimulate *critical thinking* about the impact of government and politics on our society and on individual citizens, and how citizens and organizations influence their government.

Teaching Methods/Learning Experiences: Students will attend lectures which will orient them to basic concepts and information concerning the foundations and processes of American national government. Students are responsible, through self-study, readings, and writing assignments to learn relevant concepts and applications related to the study of American government. This class is designed for active student participation. Classroom questions and discussion are strongly encouraged. Students are responsible for retaining backup copies of all homework assignments turned in and handed back.

Course Competencies (upon completion of the course, students will be able to):

- Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental constitutional principles, such as democracy, federalism, separation of powers and checks and balances, determining the extent to which the U.S. conforms to the definition of democracy.
- List and describe the characteristics of the major political institutions in the U.S., legislative, executive and judicial, including the roles and powers of each. Analyze the functions of each political institution and their relationship to each other.
- Identify and discuss the roles of political parties, interest groups, and political action committees. Demonstrate how the public's demands are conveyed to the political system and how they provide opportunities for public representation. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal elections process and the role of citizens in that process.
- Describe the processes which produce government policies in the U.S. and analyze the impact of major policies on citizens and on society.
- Demonstrate an ability to do some light research and to critically analyze government issues.

Note: This sample syllabus is being provided in order to give general knowledge of the subject and should not be considered the sole outline of the course. Class format, assignments, and due dates may vary by professor.