



NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

POS 1041, American Government, CRN: 10306, 3 Credit Hours
(Traditional, Fall 2024)

- Professor: Jason Shell
- Email: shellj@nwfsc.edu
- Phone: 850-863-6536
- Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday: 8-9:30am & 11:30am-12:30pm
If you need to meet outside these hours please contact or email me at shellj@nwfsc.edu to setup a day/time that best works for you.
- Office Location: Ft. Walton Beach Campus, Bldg 4. Room 404
- Class Location: Ft. Walton Beach Campus, Classroom Bldg. 3 (FW-43) Rm. 367
- Class Days: Mondays & Wednesdays
- Class Times: 9:30am – 10:45am
- Online Classroom with Gradebook: [Canvas class shell](#)
- Final Exam: last week of the semester

Course Description

In Accordance with Florida State Legislation:

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 U.S. 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.

POS1041 American Government: 3 credit hours

Overview of the course:

Welcome to the American Government course. This course's intent is to allow students to examine and better understand government, political ideals, and institutions. Strong emphasis is placed on political thought, the origin of the American federal system, and the distribution of powers between state and national governments. Each topic that students explore covers topics in American government. Through assignments and course objectives (critical thinking exercises, quizzes, discussion, student learning outcomes), students will learn to explore, discover, and describe various topics of American Government and meet degree requirements for specific programs at this college.

Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes

In accordance with Florida State Legislation:

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government (local, state, and federal).

Assess the changing nature of political parties, party platforms, voting patterns among the American populace, and different methods to measure public opinion.

Evaluate the three branches of the United States federal government to demonstrate an understanding of the duties of each specific branch and the application of checks and balances.

Understand the interdependence of each institution of government and why the relationship developed.

Explain the procedures and techniques used by various officials in the performance of their duties.

Describe the process of policy making (foreign and domestic).

Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and amendments and their application.

Develop and demonstrate knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.

Develop and demonstrate an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.

Goals and Objectives:

Course Level Learning Goals

GOAL 1: Students will be able to Demonstrate Basic Content Knowledge about American Government

1. Objective 1: Describe the meaning and content of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the nation's founding documents
2. Objective 2: Understand the origins and foundations of American government & federalism
3. Objective 3: Identify the various forms of government and economic and political systems

GOAL 2: Students will be able to Recognize Basic Concepts of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Presidency and the U.S. Judicial Branch

1. Objective 1: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Legislative Branch
2. Objective 2: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Branch
3. Objective 2: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Judicial Branch

GOAL 3: Students will be able to Understand Ideas Related to Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, the federal bureaucracy, public opinion and the political parties and elections.

1. Objective 1: Comprehend basic Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
2. Objective 2: Understand how the federal bureaucracy functions
3. Objective 3: Analyze the politics of public opinion, voting, elections and political parties

Unit Level Measurable Objectives

GOAL 1: Students will be Able to Demonstrate Basic Content Knowledge about American Government

Objective 1: Describe the meaning and content of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the nation's founding documents

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Objective 2: Understand the origins and foundations of American government & federalism

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Objective 3: Identify the various forms of government and economic and political systems

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

GOAL 2: Students will be able to Recognize Basic Concepts of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Presidency and the U.S. Judicial Branch

Objective 1: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Legislative Branch

1. Test Questions

2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Objective 2: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Branch

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Objective 3: Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Judicial Branch

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

GOAL 3: Students will be able to Understand Ideas Related to Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, the federal bureaucracy, public opinion and the political parties and elections.

Objective 1: Comprehend basic Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Objective 2: Understand how the federal bureaucracy functions

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Objective 3: Analyze the politics of public opinion, voting, elections and political parties

1. Test Questions
2. Discussion Board Posts (online course)
3. Group Projects

Course Prerequisite

A passing score on the standardized placement test measuring communications/verbal/reading achievement, successful completion of any required developmental English and Reading coursework with a grade of "C" or better, or exemption from placement testing.

Course Materials

Our course text is **the OpenStax textbook** on American Government. This is free online.

Class Attendance

Traditional Classes: Students who stop attending class or are not able to pass the course due to attendance expectations stated in the syllabus, may receive a failing grade which may impact the receipt of federal aid in subsequent courses. Students absent for military deployment/TDY or official college approved activities will not be penalized academically but will be responsible for missed work.

This class involves frequent graded class discussions and graded group work; students will neither benefit from these activities nor contribute to the class as a whole if students are frequently absent. Therefore, missing **4 or more** unexcused class sessions may result in the penalty of zero points in the participation element of the final course grade.

Online Classes: Attendance is required to remain in the course. Attendance in online course work includes posting in the Course Introduction Discussion module during the first week and completion of the first graded assignment. Students can be dropped from the course for non-attendance, in accordance with school policy, for not participating in the course within the first few weeks by failure to complete either of these activities.

The instructor uses Canvas announcements regularly. Students are responsible to remain engaged with posted content and be aware of expectations and due dates.

Attendance Confirmation

Active participation and academic engagement are expectations of enrollment in this course. Faculty confirm each student's attendance in class after the schedule adjustment period ends. Students who have not attended class or otherwise engaged academically in the course through the submission of an academic assignment or through participation in a curricular activity may be withdrawn from the course for nonattendance.

Students who are withdrawn for nonattendance or nonparticipation early in the course may request to be reinstated in the course by contacting their instructor by email. Reinstatement in the course is at the instructor's discretion during the first three weeks of class and is not guaranteed. Reinstatement requests occurring after this three-week period may be submitted to the instructor for consideration; however, additional administrative approval will be required to grant the reinstatement. If you are withdrawn from a course due to nonattendance and are not granted reinstatement in the course, please contact a Student Success Navigator for assistance.

Classroom Conduct

It is expected that students act with professionalism and courtesy toward other students and the professor. Electronic devices must not distract from learning. Courtesy to the professor and

other students requires that phones be on vibrate or silent mode during class. No student should initiate conversations, including texts, during class activities. Use of electronic communication devices during examinations or other graded activities may constitute grounds for disciplinary action; such devices must be completely out of sight during exams or other assessments. Where emergency or employment situations require access to electronic communication services, arrangements may be made in advance with the instructor.

It is expected that students arrive to class on time and stay the duration of the scheduled time. Students should come to class prepared to engage the material. Students should remain respectful of their fellow classmates and the instructor. To ensure this remains a productive, healthy learning environment, students should engage with each other and course content to remain mindful of each other to ensure a safe place for students to learn and share ideas. Students may be asked to leave if they are causing disruption. If students encounter any issues with the content, please email the instructor for guidance and assistance.

Grading Scheme and Procedures

All assignments must be submitted by the due date online listed in the “Assignments” module in Canvas. All submissions (writing assignments and exams) will be accepted until the listed due time (CST) on the due date listed in the individual assignment on Canvas. Please refer to either Canvas and/or the syllabus for due dates per assignment. If you need assistance in submitting assignments, please refer to the contact information in the “Welcome to NWF” folder posted on Canvas.

The assignments are set to close and will NOT accept additional submissions after the listed due date and time. Emailed copies of assignments will NOT be accepted even if received (or time stamped) on or before the deadline. No exceptions. No substitutions will be accepted as replacement for the assignments as designed by the instructor. Only those assignments completed in Canvas by the due date by the due time will be accepted.

Canvas is designed to give an automatic 0% for those assignments (written work and exams) submitted late. Those 0% will remain as your grade for failure to submit the work by the due date by the due time.

Instructor Communication

Email is the official communication medium of the College. Please check College email regularly for any class and College notifications. Messages sent via Canvas are not regularly checked, your college email is the fastest and most reliable way to receive a quick response.

Before sending an email, you may consider asking yourself: “Am I asking a question to which I should really already know the answer?” There are several useful guides and paper samples posted to Canvas. If your question pertains to a course assignment, for example, please read the syllabus and refer to the posted guides and samples before emailing the instructor. Additionally, if your questions are regarding a due date – all due dates are listed in the calendar

section of this syllabus and on each individual assignment in Canvas. Most student questions can be answered by reading all the materials as provided by the instructor. Additionally, the instructor has posted a Frequently Asked Questions guide located in the “Student Guides and Frequently Asked Questions” module in Canvas.

I will typically respond to emails within 24 hours or less. In most cases, I will respond within a few hours of reading the email at any time or day of the week. However, there may be times when this may not be possible. Be mindful of this when assignments are due because your email may not receive a prompt email response from your professor before the time when the assignment is due. Students will not be granted extensions on assignments if their email did not receive a response before the due date or due time especially if the email was sent beyond the response time for the professor. If students have questions about a course assignment, students are expected to email at least 48 hours in advance of the due date to ensure they receive a response before the assignment is due. The instructor is not responsible for emails that are not received by the due date or due time of an assignment if students email their questions less than 48 hours before the assignment’s due date. This is the student’s responsibility to seek assistance in a prompt manner to address issues or concerns.

When sending an email, please follow the email protocol below:

- 1) Email must be sent from your NWFSC email address.
- 2) Use the subject line of the email to write your course number, CRN, last name, and purpose of the email. (Example: POS 1041-30481, Smith, Exam Question) **PLEASE LOOK ON THE HEADING ON PAGE ONE OF THIS SYLLABUS FOR YOUR COURSE TITLE AND CRN. This is also your Canvas shell’s course title.**
- 3) Begin your email with a formal address of the instructor as **Professor Shell**.
- 4) State clearly and briefly the purpose of your email. Inform the instructor of the questions and/or concerns you may have regarding an assignment. **Use formal writing. Do not use text jargon in emails.**
- 5) Conclude the message with an appropriate closing. (Example: Sincerely,)
- 6) **State your full formal name. No nicknames should be used in emails.**

[Assignment Schedule](#)

***This is a tentative schedule, which is subject to change. Students will be notified of any changes to the syllabus and/or this schedule.**

This is the link to the free *OpenStax: American Government* Course Textbook:

<https://openstax.org/books/american-government-3e/pages/1-introduction>

This course will examine the chapters of this book; however, the course will not follow the order of the chapters in chronological order.

This course was designed to address American Government within three large themes:

- 1) Origin of Government and the Branches of Government
- 2) Application of Government: How Government Works
- 3) Testing, Methods, and the Discipline of Political Science

In **traditional face to face courses, Zoom Live courses, and during the in-class session for hybrid courses**, students are expected to take notes during each in-class session (whether delivered in a classroom or via Zoom in real time) regarding the content presented during in-class sessions. The textbook then supplements information as provided inside the classroom for **face to face, Zoom Live, and hybrid** courses.

I cannot cover everything that has happened during this period or of this theme in its entirety. The textbook serves as a reference for additional information that is not explicitly addressed in my lecture.

I have created this schedule for students to move through the content of the course. I would advise students to keep up with this schedule since exams will cover the content examined to that point of the course. **Remember – students are expected to demonstrate a mastery of this content (lecture content and content from the course textbook) for their exams.**

Review the contents of the **Welcome to the American Government Course!** folder and watch the two videos posted by Professor Shell in this folder. Also, click through the modules and assignments and become familiar with the course layout in Canvas.

Important note: those who do not attend any class sessions during the first two weeks of class or fail to complete the first exam risk being dropped from the course.

College closed: Sep 2, Labor Day (no class)

First Exam – given in class end of week 4

Federalism – Week 5: Sep 16 - 22

American Government textbook – Review Chapters 3 & 14

Lecture - The Federal System

Federalism graded group activity

U.S. Congress – Week 6: Sep 23 - 29

American Government textbook – Review Chapter 11

Lecture - U.S. Congress (part 1)

Lecture – U.S. Congress (part 2)

U.S. Presidency – Week 7: Sep 30 – Oct 6

American Government textbook – Review Chapter 12

Lecture: The Executive Branch (part 1)

Lecture: The Executive Branch (part 2)

Midterm Exam – Week 8: Oct 7 - 13

Midterm Exam – given in class

Federal Bureaucracy – Week 9: Oct 14 - 20

American Government textbook – Review Chapter 15

Lecture - The Federal Bureaucracy

Federal Agencies graded group activity

U.S. Judicial Branch – Week 10: Oct 21 - 27

American Government textbook – Review Chapter 13

Lecture - The Judicial Branch (part 1)

Lecture - The Judicial Branch (part 2)

Civil Liberties & Civil Rights – Week 11: Oct 28 – Nov 3

American Government textbook – Review Chapters 4 & 5

Lecture - Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

Jeopardy Group activity

Exam #3 – Week 12: Nov 4 - 10

Exam #3 – given in class

Public Opinion – Week 13: Nov 11 - 17

American Government – Review Chapter 6

Lecture - Public Opinion

FL Civics Literacy Exam information discussion and preparation

College closed: Nov 11, Veteran’s Day (no class)

Political Parties, Elections & Interest Groups – Week 14: Nov 18 - 24

American Government – Review Chapters 7, 9 & 10

Lecture - Political Parties

Lecture - Interest Groups & Lobbying

College closed: Nov 27 – 29, Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Final Exam & Course Completion – Week 15-16: Dec 2 - 12

Final Exam: given in class

Complete the End of Course Survey

Course Assessments (percentage of overall grade):

There are 4 lecture exams. Exams cover the material discussed during lecture and within the textbook. Each exam is comprised of 40 multiple choice questions worth 2.5 points each (100 total points). There is a maximum time limit of 1 hour for each exam.

For traditional in-class courses (not applicable to online courses), there are graded in-class discussions and group activities throughout the course. Students who miss these activities will receive a score of zero unless prior arrangements are made (an excused absence for example).

Exam #1: worth 20% of overall grade

Exam #2: worth 20% of overall grade

Exam #3: worth 20% of overall grade

Exam #4: worth 20% of overall grade

In-class activities: worth 20% of overall grade

Grades:

90% to 100% = A

80% to 89% = B

70% to 79% = C

60% to 69% = D

59% and below = F

Technical Skills and Specialized Technology

For online courses only (does not apply to traditional courses): This course is fully online. Students must provide their own device(s) with which to access and complete this class online. If you encounter any technology challenges using course resources in the Learning Management System, email the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at online@nwfsc.edu or call 850-729-6464.

Lecture Recordings

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as a

formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a College course intended to present information or teach about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures is not permitted. Except as detailed in the Catalog, recordings may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. To read and fully understand your rights and responsibilities when recording, visit the Catalog.

Emergency College Closure

In the event of unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the schedule, requirements, and procedures in this course are subject to change. If the College closes for inclement weather or other emergency, any exams, presentations, or assignments previously scheduled during the closure period will automatically be rescheduled for the first regular class meeting held once the college re-opens. If changes to graded activities are required, students will not be penalized as a result of the adjustments but will be responsible for meeting revised deadlines and course requirements.

Academic Continuity Plan

Northwest Florida State College is dedicated to protecting the health and wellbeing of its students, staff, and faculty. The College is dedicated to working with faculty and students to ensure timely course and program completion during emergencies. In the event of a College closure, the format of this course may be modified to enable completion of the course through other means, including but not limited to online course delivery through online classrooms. Check your RaiderNet College email and LMS classroom online for any updates.

Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for adherence to all college policies and procedures, including those related to academic freedom, cheating, classroom conduct, computer/network/email use and other items included in the *Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook*. Students should be familiar with the rights and responsibilities detailed in the current *Northwest Florida State College Catalog and Student Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty is a serious breach of student responsibilities and may trigger consequences which range from a failing grade to formal disciplinary action. NWFSC prohibits the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to generate text that students represent as their own independent creation.

Academic Integrity Tools

Northwest Florida State College subscribes to **Turnitin**, an online plagiarism detection and prevention service. By enrolling in this class, students are consenting to upload their papers to **Turnitin**, where they will be checked for plagiarism. Papers submitted to **Turnitin** may be saved as source documents within these databases solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in other papers. Please note: All assignments submitted in this course are analyzed for plagiarism and originality.

Student Dispute Resolution

NWFSC aims to deliver high-quality instructional experiences. In the event of a concern regarding a class, students should first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor. If a resolution cannot be reached following a reasonable effort to resolve the dispute informally, students may seek out additional counsel in Academic Leadership through a [formal process](#) by submitting a [Formal Grievance/Appeal form](#). Students seeking to file a Final Grade Grievance must do so within 30 days of the final grade being posted.

Campus Resources

The College is committed to offering quality resources to aid in your success as a student. Review the “Welcome to NWF” module in your LMS course online for information on these resources such as the library, tutoring, testing, military and veteran services, etc.

Accommodation Resources

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations, students with disabilities must contact the Accommodation Resource Center at arc@nwfsc.edu or call 850-729-6014. Upon request of accommodations, students will be asked to provide medical documentation that supports their disability request. If students are concerned that they may have an undiagnosed, disability-related condition that impacts their academic progress, it is recommended that they see a licensed medical professional for a diagnosis. Please contact the Accommodation Resource Center with any questions or concerns relating to permanent or temporary student disabilities.

Students who have been approved for accommodations through the ARC are encouraged to work with their professor on facilitation. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Student Counseling Services

Northwest Florida State College has partnered with Bridgeway Center, Inc. to provide mental health resources and counseling services to all actively enrolled students. All actively enrolled students are eligible to receive an initial assessment and up to five therapeutic sessions with a Behavioral Health provider at no cost to the student. A menu of services and resources is available at www.nwfsc.edu/studentcounselingservices. Bridgeway Center Confidential Helpline: (850) 833-7500, Select Option 1 - Open 24 hours/day

Children in the Classroom

Minor children are not permitted in labs, shops, construction/repair sites, classrooms, offices, labs, or other areas where potential hazards exist, unless enrolled in classes or activities scheduled at the site. In an emergency or other compelling situation, students or staff may bring children to class or the workplace on an incidental, individual basis, provided the instructor receives advance approval from the department chair or program director. In such cases, the children must be directly supervised at all times by the parent/adult and must not

disrupt or distract the flow of college work, services or instruction. The full [Children on Campus](#) policy statement appears in the College Catalog.

[Student Handbook](#)

The complete NWFSC Student Handbook can be found at <https://catalog.nwfsc.edu/>

[Welcome to Class](#)

Thank you for choosing NWFSC for your education—and welcome to class!