



**Government 2305-106CL  
Federal Government  
Spring 2023  
TTH 8:00-9:20 AM  
Learning Resource Center (LRC), Bldg. 8, Rm. 212A**

**Instructor Information**

**Name:** Mr. John Presnall

**Email:** [jpresnall@com.edu](mailto:jpresnall@com.edu)

**Phone:** 409.933.8126 (Leave Message)

**Student/Office Hours:** MW 7:35-8:05 AM (Online/FHS); MW 10:00-11:00 AM;  
TTH 9:30-11:00 AM; TTH 1:30-2:30 PM

**Office Location:** Learning Resource Center (Building # 8) 215C

**Required Textbook:** Glen Krutz, *American Government 3e* (Houston: Openstax, 2019.)  
<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

**Course Description:** Government 2305 is an introduction to politics and government of the United States. The purpose of this introduction is to acquire knowledge of the basic principles and practices of the federal government.

This semester we will study the origins and development of the federal government; the political science of the Declaration of Independence and the Federalist Papers; the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution; the idea of constitutionalism, separation of powers and checks and balances; the idea of federalism; the institutions of Congress, the Presidency, the public administration, and the Judiciary; civil rights and civil liberties; public opinion, political parties, and elections; and issues in public policy.

This introductory course will also attempt to understand some of the basic questions and problems encountered by political science and political philosophy. For an introduction to these questions, we will read an essay "In Defense of Politics" by Steven B. Smith and explore the basic concepts of political science.

## Course Requirements

**Course Exams:** There will be 4 Unit Exams. Each exam will cover the required textbook chapter readings, lecture notes, and additional readings. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions.

**Short Papers:** There will be 4 short papers (2 pages at a minimum) over a specific topic. Additional information on grading rubric, submission, format, citations, etc. will be provided in the assignment file. Submit in class.

**Research Paper:** Write a Position Paper on a specific issue in current public policy discourse in the United States. Pick an issue and find a specific policy or proposed policy related to that issue (e.g., Should private businesses in the US have the right to deny service based on their religious beliefs and practices?; Should marijuana be legalized in the US?; Should the United States place strict limitations on immigration, whether legal or illegal?; What should US policy be in regard China and Taiwan?; Or Russia and Ukraine?; Should Medicare be expanded to all US citizens?, Should the US adopt the “Green New Deal?”; Should Congress pass the “John Lewis Voting Rights Act?”; etc.).

Make sure that your paper is on a topic that is national in scope, and not an issue and policy that is specific to one state. The paper can cover an already existing policy or a proposed policy.

Write a paper on an issue in public policy. Describe the issue and explain it in detail (what is the question or controversy at hand?). Explain and describe the policy or proposed policy, and explain and describe how it relates to and deals with the issue (what is the law, executive action, administrative regulation, or judicial ruling that has determined or could determine the policy? What does the policy do or intend to do?) Take a position on the policy or proposed policy (whether in favor of it or against it).

Conduct research on the topic, citing at least three sources from credible and reliable publications, web sites, journals, books, etc. Formulate an argument based on evidence in defense of the position you are taking. Also, respond to the most common objections to this position.

Explain how this position impacts the issues of personal responsibility and social responsibility.

The paper should be 1000 words (approximately 5 pages), double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Use a standard style for references, citations, and the list of sources (e.g., MLA, Chicago, or APA). Submit in class.

**Emergency Assignment:** If for any reason the college closes, continue to work on the assignments spelled out in your syllabus and/or refer to Blackboard for Emergency Closing Assignments and further instructions.

## Determination of Grade

**Unit Exams**— 60% (15% each) toward final grade.

**Papers**— 20% (5% each) toward final grade.

**Research Paper**— 20% toward final grade.

<b>A</b>	100-90
<b>B</b>	89-80
<b>C</b>	79-70
<b>D</b>	69-60
<b>F</b>	59-0

**Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra Credit Policy:** Late and make-up work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students need to notify the instructor via email of any problems in this regard. Extra Credit assignments will be offered toward the end of the semester.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required for every class. Roll is taken every day. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to get missing class materials.

**Tardiness:** Tardiness disrupts the class. Students must be on time. Frequent tardiness will adversely affect the student's class participation grade.

**Withdrawal:** It is the student's responsibility to acquire and complete the drop form before the semester deadline. Any student who ceases to attend the class and fails to withdraw will receive an "F" for the course. The instructor also reserves the right to withdraw any student due to insufficient academic progress in the class.

**Communicating with your instructor:** All communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

<b>Student Learner Outcome (SLO)</b>	<b>Maps to Core Objective</b>	<b>Assessed via this Assignment</b>
1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.		Exam
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.		Exam
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.		Exam
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.		Exam

5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties.	Communication	Paper
6. Analyze the election process.		Exam
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.		Exam
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.	Communication	Paper
9. Complete a required paper on a selected writing pertaining to issues in American government and politics.	Communication	Paper
10. Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Communication	Paper

**Academic Dishonesty:** Any incident of academic policy will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty, such as cheating on exams, is an extremely serious offense and will result in a grade of zero on that exam and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate discipline action.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving proper citation. It includes paraphrasing someone else's words, copying directly from a website and pasting it into a written assignment, and using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any written assignment containing any plagiarized material will receive a grade of zero and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate discipline action.

**Student Concerns:** If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Department Chair, Shinya Wakao at 409-933-8107 or [swakao@com.edu](mailto:swakao@com.edu).

## **Federal Government Course Outline**

### **Unit 1—Political Science and the Declaration of Independence—Weeks 1-3**

#### **Readings:**

Steven B. Smith, “In Defense of Politics”  
The Declaration of Independence  
Textbook Chapter 1—Political Science

#### **Assignments:**

**Paper 1:** On “Steven B. Smith, “In Defense of Politics”

#### **Unit 1 Exam**

**Discuss Research Paper** Due Tuesday, May 2, 2023

### **Unit 2—The U.S. Constitution and *The Federalist Papers*—Weeks 4-8**

#### **Readings:**

Textbook Chapter 2 and Notes—U.S. Constitution  
Text of the Constitution of the United States (with amendments)  
*The Federalist Papers*, nos. 10 & 51

#### **Assignments:**

**Paper 2** On the Principles of the U.S. Constitutional

#### **Unit 2 Exam**

### **Unit 3—Political Participation in the United States—Weeks 9-12**

#### **Readings:**

Textbook Chapter 7 and Notes—Voting and Elections in the United States  
Textbook Chapter 9 and Notes—Political Parties in the United States  
Textbook Chapter 10 and Notes—Organized Interests  
Textbook Chapters 6 & 8 and Notes—Public Opinion and Media

#### **Assignments:**

**Paper 3** On Political Parties

#### **Unit 3 Exam**

## Unit 4—Political Institutions—Weeks 13-16

### Readings:

Textbook Chapter 11 and Notes--Congress  
Textbook Chapter 12 and Notes—Presidency  
Textbook Chapter 13 and Notes—United States Judiciary  
Textbook Chapter 15 and Notes—United States Bureaucracy  
Textbook Chapters 4 & 5 and Notes—Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

### Assignments:

**Paper 4** On the Congress & Presidency

### Unit 4 Exam

**Research Paper** Due Tuesday, May 2, 2023

## Institutional Policies and Guidelines

**Grade Appeal Process:** Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook [Student Handbook 2022-2023 v4.pdf \(com.edu\)](#). *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

**Academic Success & Support Services:** College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college career. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

**ADA Statement:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact Kimberly Lachney at 409-933-8919 or [klachney@com.edu](mailto:klachney@com.edu). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the Student Success Center.

**Textbook Purchasing Statement:** A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a "W" grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are only permitted to withdraw six times during their college career according to state law. The last day to withdraw is April 24.

**FN Grading:** The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required

capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor.

**Early Alert Program:** The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important for us. Students will be referred to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If a student is referred to the Early Alert Program he or she will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center. Someone from the Counseling Department will schedule a meeting with the student to see what assistance can be offered in order to meet academic goals.

**Resources to Help with Stress:**

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at [deanofstudents@com.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).