



GOVT 2305.221H2 Federal Government

Hybrid Lecture Monday 06:00PM - 08:50PM, Learning Resource, Bldg. #8, Room 255

Fall 2024 2nd 8-week Syllabus

Instructor Information:

- **Name:** Michele Betancourt
- **E-mail:** mbetancourt@com.edu
- **Phone:** 281-239-1590(M-R 8-3)

Student Hours and Location: TU/TR 8:00 -8:30 am via Brightspace instant messages (during this time, I will also be immediately available via phone or email). The course is accessible at [COM Brightspace Login Page](https://com.brightspace.com) (Link Address: <https://com.brightspace.com>)

Required Textbook:

- Title: American Government 3rd edition
- Author: Glen Krutz - OPENSTAX
- The textbook can be accessed **free of charge** online and downloaded as a PDF file at: [American Government 3e - Openstax Online Textbook](#)

The textbook is mandatory, but if you don't like using an online version, you can print it out yourself or purchase a hard copy from any retailer, but that is optional.

Course Description: This course examines the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, the structure and powers of the national government, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties, and civil rights.

Course Requirements: This course primarily consists instructor led lessons online and face to face lectures and discussions. Notes and other supplementary articles will also be placed online to assist students and emphasize key ideas. The classroom lectures parallel and reinforce assigned textbook readings; therefore, it is essential that students keep up to date with their assigned readings.

Determination of Course Grade

Written Assignments: You will be assigned to write a position paper (yes/no; pro/con) on a current public policy controversy in the United States (e.g., Should Private Businesses Have the Right to Deny Service Based on Their Religious Beliefs and Practices? Should Marijuana Be Legalized? Etc.) This assignment will be submitted in 4 parts (one part in each unit. Part one is to sign-up for your topic; part 2 is an annotated bibliography, Part 3 is an outline, and Part 4 is your final paper project. You will need to research the topic, citing sources from credible and reliable publications, web sites, journals, books, etc. Formulate an argument based on evidence in defense of this position and explain how this position impacts the issues of personal

responsibility and social responsibility. Additionally, you will incorporate a variety of political elements such as political opinion, interest groups and political parties as well. Specific details on the assignments such as length, required elements, and format and citation requirements will be detailed in the assignment files located in Brightspace. Detailed grading rubrics and student samples will also be posted to guide your efforts.

Unit Exams: Each unit exam will cover only the chapters/lesson notes assigned for that unit and may consist of multiple choice, matching, and short essay questions. A study guide will be provided at the beginning of each unit so you can prepare for the exam.

Lesson Activities: As this is a hybrid course, a portion of the course materials will be presented online. There are eight online lessons and eight face-to-face lectures. Each set of online lesson notes will include a series of embedded videos and activities that must be completed. The activities may be re-done for a higher grade up until the due date listed on the course outline below.

Extra Credit: In addition to the regularly assigned materials, there are several opportunities to increase your grade through extra. The introductory tasks at the beginning of the course can add up to 1% to your final average. Additionally, there is an optional part of the research project that can be submitted. You can earn up to 4% on your final average by submitting a comprehensive outline for your paper. In total you can add up to 5% to your final course average (1/2 letter grade).

Late work: Late work will have a 20% penalty. Extra credit cannot be submitted late. All other work can be submitted up to 3 days late with a 20% penalty. Pay careful attention to the list of due dates in the class

Detailed Grading Formula:

Grading Weights

Graded Work	Weight
Unit Exams	40%
Policy Project	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1-Topic Select • Part 2 - Bibliography • Part 3 – Outline • Part 4- Final Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 • 15% • Extra Credit • 25%
Lesson Notes Activities	10 %
Attendance/Participation	10 %

Final Grade Scale

Percentage Range	Letter Grade
89.5% - 100%	A
79.5% - 89.4%	B
69.5% - 79.4%	C
59.5% - 69.4%	D
Below 59.4%	F

Grading Timeframe: I generally grade twice a week on Mondays and Fridays. Please feel free to call or email me if you are concerned about your progress in the course or if you do not see your grade posted within a week of submission. Please be aware that discussion grades may not appear until the end of the unit.

Attendance Policy: If you want to pass, come to class. As this is a hybrid course, attendance is expected in BOTH the face to face component and the in the online environment. In an online environment, this means that you are expected to log into the course a minimum of 2 times per week and you should expect to spend at least 2-3 hours a week in the course reviewing lessons, and other course material, and completing assignments. The online material goes beyond the material presented in the text and face to face components, and you will be held accountable for this material on the exams and course assignments. NOTE: If, for any reason, the college closes, continue to work on the assignments spelled out in your syllabus and refer to Brightspace for further instructions.

Communicating with Your Instructor: ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about class performance through other electronic means. I try to return messages (course messages, email, phone, discussion postings) within 36 hours (weekends and holidays excepted). For detailed information, see the “Instructor” section of the syllabus above.

State Required SLOs

Student Learner Outcomes & Associated Objectives Outcomes Assessment

Student Learner Outcome	Connects to Core Objective	Assessed via Assignment
Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam
Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.		Exam
Describe the separation of powers and checks and balances in theory and practice.		Exam
Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the federal government		Exam
Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	Critical Thinking (CT) Personal Responsibility (PR) Communication Skills (CS1)	Exam/Policy Paper
Analyze the election process.	Critical Thinking (CT) Social Responsibility (SR)	Exam/Policy Paper
Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.	Personal Responsibility (PR) Social Responsibility (SR)	Exam
Analyze issues and policies in the US.	Critical Thinking (CT) Social Responsibility (SR)	Exam/Policy Paper
Develop, interpret, and express ideas on a Government 2305-related topic through written communication.	Communication Skills (CS1) Critical Thinking (CT)	Policy Paper
Students will demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.	Social Responsibility (SR) Communication Skills (CS1)	Policy Paper
Evaluate the choices and actions of others or one’s own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Personal Responsibility (PR) Communication Skills (CS1)	Policy Paper

Academic Dishonesty: Any incident of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty is an extremely serious offense and may result in a penalty **grade of zero on the assignment/exam/discussion etc. Further, a student will also forfeit any extra credit earned to that point in the class and be disqualified from earning additional extra** and possibly referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the course. The instructor reserves the right to define "Academic Dishonesty." Below are some examples of Academic Honesty (not an exhaustive list; academic dishonesty is not limited to only these types of incidences):

Plagiarism -

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas and claiming them as your own. Plagiarism is a very serious offense. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing someone else's words without giving a proper citation, copying directly from a website and pasting it into your paper, and using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any assignment containing any plagiarized material will receive a **grade of zero**, and the student may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action.

Links to Resources about Avoiding Plagiarism:

1. [Purdue OWL: Avoiding Plagiarism](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/) https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/
2. [Plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org/) http://www.plagiarism.org/
3. [eLearners How to Avoid Plagiarism](http://www.elearners.com/online-education-resources/online-learning/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/) http://www.elearners.com/online-education-resources/online-learning/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/

Cheating

Cheating includes looking at or copying from another student's exam, having another person take an exam or complete a project or assignment for you, bringing/accessing unauthorized notes, texts, audio/video recordings, electronic devices, or other materials to complete an online exam, and/or obtaining or distributing unauthorized copies of exams or any part of an exam.

Collusion

Collusion is inappropriately collaborating on assignments designed to be completed independently. This course is designed to be completed independently.

Technology Compliance Policy: This class uses a Learning Management System called Brightspace for lectures, assessments, and other course-related materials and links. Each student must maintain Internet access throughout this course. Additionally, students are expected to maintain a state of technical compliance, including (but not limited to):

- up-to-date browsers,
- multiple (minimum of 2) browsers (recommended: Chrome & Firefox),
- appropriate and adequate computer hardware,
- a stable Internet connection,
- and other up-to-date software as required by the instructor.

The instructor is not required to consider lost/missing/unacceptable work from technical non-compliance and/or end-user technical issues. Failure to maintain Internet or computer access is not a valid excuse for

missed work. Any student who cannot keep up with the coursework owing to a lack of computer or Internet access or functionality should refer to the [Library Computer Lab hours of operation](https://www.com.edu/computer-labs/library-computer-lab) (https://www.com.edu/computer-labs/library-computer-lab) and plan to complete all coursework during posted hours (including testing, as needed).

In short, if you fail to complete an assignment or exam because your computer crashes or loses internet access, forget to attach a file, attach a wrong/blank/empty file to an assignment, did not verify submission of the correct file/information/link/etc., or did not use the appropriate browser or operating system to access and complete course work, then you are not entitled to make up the course work. If the assignment, , project, or exam was not completed or submitted on time due to your error or end-user technological issues, it cannot be made up beyond the stated late period for that assignment.

In the event you experience a technology problem or error, it is your responsibility to communicate **immediately** (not the next day, not 3 hours later) with your instructor using a working form of technology, via Text (see contact instructions in Brightspace) or email [at mbetancourt@com.edu](mailto:mbetancourt@com.edu). If you experience any technology problems or errors with *college* software (Brightspace, etc.), **immediately** notify the DE department at College of the Mainland (COM) by submitting a ticket through [Parature](http://com.parature.com) (http://com.parature.com). If possible, make a screenshot of the error and email it to your instructor as well as the Distance Education Helpdesk. Contacting COM’s Distance Education department can be accomplished by submitting a ticket

through [Parature](http://com.parature.com) (http://com.parature.com) or via live chat Monday to Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM whenever the college is open.

Student Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please use the provided contact information. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Dr. Wakao at swakao@com.edu or 409-933-8107.

Course Outline

Unit 1- Political Foundations: October 4

Week (Dates)	Course Materials	Due Date
Monday 10/14	Review: Getting Started Material IN CLASS LECTURE: Intro to Politics and US Constitution	Monday, October 14, 6-8:50 pm LRC255
Tues 10/15-Sun 10/20	READ: Chapters 1-3 COMPLETE: Culture and Ideology Lesson Notes COMPLETE: Federalism Lesson Notes	
Graded Assignment	Policy Project: Part 1- Topic Selection	Sunday, October 20, by 11:59 pm
Monday 10/21	IN CLASS LECTURE: Civil Liberties	Monday, October 21, 6-8:50 pm
Tues 10/22-Sun 10/27	READ: Chapter 4-5 COMPLETE: Civil Rights Lesson Notes	
Graded Lessons	Unit 1 Lesson Note Activities	Sunday, October 27, by 11:59 pm
Unit Exam	Unit 1 Exam	OPEN: Thursday, October 24 to CLOSE: Sunday, October 27 at 11:59pm

Unit 2- Political Participation: October 5 - November 1

Week (Dates)	Course Materials	Due Date/Date Range
Monday 10/28	IN CLASS LECTURE: Socialization and Public Opinion Review: Annotated Bibliography	Monday, October 28, 6-8:50 pm
Graded Assignment	Policy Project: Part 2- Annotated Bibliography	Sunday, November 3, by 11:59 pm
Tues 10/29-Sun 11/3	READ: Chapters 6-7 COMPLETE: Elections and Campaigning Lesson Notes	
Monday 11/4	IN CLASS LECTURE: Media and Media Literacy	Monday, November 4, 6-8:50 pm
Tues 11/5-Sun 11/10	READ: Chapter 8-9 COMPLETE: Political Parties Lecture Notes	
Monday 11/11	Review: Extra Credit Outline IN CLASS LECTURE: Interest Groups	Monday, November 11, 6-8:50 pm
Tues 10/12-Sun 11/17	READ: Chapters 10	
Graded Assignment	Policy Project: Part 3- Extra Credit Outline	Sunday, November 17, by 11:59 pm
Unit Exam	Unit 1 Exam	OPEN: Thursday, November 14 to CLOSE: Sunday, November 17 at 11:59pm

Unit 3- Political Institutions: November 2 – December 6

Week (Dates)	Course Materials	Due Date/Date Range
Monday 10/14	Review: Part 4 – Final Project IN CLASS LECTURE: Congress	Monday, November 18, 6-8:50 pm
Tues 10/15-Sun 10/20	READ: Chapter 11-12 COMPLETE: Legislative Process Notes	
Monday 10/21	IN CLASS LECTURE: The Presidency	Monday, November 25, 6-8:50 pm
Tues 10/15-Sun 10/20	READ: Chapter 13; 15 COMPLETE: Bureaucracy Notes	
Monday 10/21	IN CLASS LECTURE: Courts	Monday, December 2, 6-8:50 pm
Tues 10/15-Sun 10/20	READ: Chapter 16-17 COMPLETE: Policy Notes	
Graded Assignment	Policy Project: Part 4- Final Project	Sunday, December 1, by 11:59 pm
Unit Exam	Unit 3 Exam	OPEN: Sunday, December 1 to CLOSE: Thursday, December 5 at NOON

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 https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2024-2025_v2.pdf, *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 careers. 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, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator
- Phone: 409-933-8919
- Email: AccessibilityServices@com.edu
- Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, 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 permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1st 8-week session is October 2. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 15. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 8-week session is November 26.

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. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

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 to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your 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 or communityresources@com.edu.

Nondiscrimination Statement: The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.