



**Government 2305- 012IN**  
**Federal Government**  
**Spring 2024 January 16, 2024-May 10, 2024**  
**ONLINE COURSE**

**Instructor Information:** Karina M. Lovas

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

**Student hours and location:** Tuesdays 8:05am-9:05am at DHS, and on-campus or virtually by appointment

**Required Textbook/Materials:** Glen Lutz et al. *American Government* (3rd edition) (You can download and access for **FREE** from <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>) If you would like you can order a hard copy of the text from the publisher or Amazon, but it is not necessary.

I recommend downloading the Brightspace D2L App and/or the Outlook app (set up with your COM e-mail) so you can keep up with class announcements.

**Course Description:** Origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, 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.

Remember that this is a **self-paced** online course.  
You are expected to be keeping up with reading, lectures, notes, and turning in assignments weekly.  
Keep this in mind before the semester drop deadline, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

Each week, I recommend listening to the lecture and looking at the corresponding notes, and then skimming the chapter. Students who do that generally do well in the course.

- This is an online class, but I know lectures can sometimes be helpful. I post recorded lectures for most chapters we cover; I highly encourage listening to those. I recommend listening to the lecture and looking at the corresponding notes and skimming the provided chapter. Some students fill out their study guide as they listen to the lectures, some students take their own notes, some just listen- whatever works for you. Students who listen to the lectures, skim the chapters, and look at the notes do well on the exams and assignments.
- I don't grade assignments via email! So please be sure you submit your work on D2L.

- I don't do make-ups/ re-grade assignments. If you don't follow the instructions for an assignment and it gets a 0 or miss a participation assignment and get a 0, that grade is final- but I do offer extra credit to make up points.
- **You are expected to write your assignments in your own words- assignments that are obviously generated by AI (includes tools like ChatGPT and Bing and other similar things, as well paraphrasing generators/translators) will receive no credit. After one 0, I will submit an academic dishonesty report to the College. Please don't do that!**

**Course requirements:**

Requirement	Points
Syllabus Quiz	5
Exam 1	15
Exam 2	15
Participation Activities (3 x 10)	30
Topic Assignment	10
Position Paper	20
Current Event Paper	5
Total	100

**Syllabus Quiz (5 points)**

Students will take a brief quiz on D2L to demonstrate they are familiar with the class policies and have read the syllabus. It is 10 questions, and it should not take long to complete.

The syllabus quiz needs to be taken on time; I will not reopen it.

**Syllabus Quiz due Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup> by 11:59pm!**

**Exams (2 x15 points)**

2 exams will be given throughout the semester. They will be multiple-choice questions with 5 short answer questions. I usually add 2-4 extra credit short answer questions. You will take the exam on D2L with Lockdown Browser anytime during the day they are assigned. The tests will be worth 15 points each.

They will encompass only material presented from the last examination. The exams will **not** be cumulative.

**The exams will be taken with Lockdown Browser! Please be sure you are prepared to do that with a suitable connection, computer, and camera before the exams close.**

You will not be able to use any materials to take the tests. Referencing a study guide, notes, books, phone, or written material while taking the exam will result in a 0 for cheating. However, to help you prepare for the exams- study guides will be provided on D2L

- Exam 1 will be available Feb 16- Feb 20<sup>th</sup>. **Exam 1 will close Feb 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.**
- Exam 2 will be available May 7<sup>th</sup>-May 10<sup>th</sup>. **Exam 2 will close May 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.**

### **Participation Activities (10 x3 points)**

Up to 30 points will be awarded for class participation and response to 10 prompts. These weekly writings should reflect an understanding of the material and demonstrate that the student has read the notes/skimmed the chapter/listened to the lecture as well as conducted additional research, if applicable.

Participation activities will be **due on Sunday evenings** throughout the course beginning January 21<sup>st</sup> and worth 3 points each (towards 30 total participation points).

These assignments will close after 11:59pm the day after they are due (so at Monday nights at 11:59pm) and I will not accept them late after that. However, I will offer optional extra credit periodically to earn back some lost points if a week's activity is missed.

Participation activities are found on D2L in the weekly folders under Content. Please follow the instructions for submission. Each activity will have different requirements as to accepted length.

### **Topic Assignment and Position Paper:**

Later in the semester, students will write a position paper on **one** of the following public policy controversies in the United States:

- Should private businesses have the right to deny service based on their religious beliefs and practices?
- Should the electoral college be changed or done away with?
- Should the U.S Congress be expanded?
- Should there be term limits for federal judges?
- Should political donations and election spending be more strictly limited?
- Should there be term limits for members of Congress?
- Should the federal government legalize recreational drugs?
- Should the federal government ban all animal testing?
- Should the federal government ensure Americans all earn a living wage?
- Should the federal government ensure everyone has access to mental health care?

Topic Assignment (10 points) **DUE: Feb 11th, 2023 at 11:59pm on D2L**

To ensure that students will be successful for the position paper, they will first complete a topic assignment. Students will fill out the topic assignment worksheet to submit their chosen topic, their chosen position, and at least THREE sources (in proper MLA, APA, or Chicago style). It will include a brief explanation on which topic they have chosen and what side they intend to take.

*There is a worksheet on D2L that has every component you need for the topic assignment. It will be graded with comments, use these comments for the paper*

**Position Paper (20 points) Due April 14th at 11:59pm on D2L**

Write a paper taking a position (yes or no) on your chosen issue. Conduct research on the topic, citing at least **FOUR** sources from credible and reliable publications, web sites, journals, books, etc.

Formulate an argument based on evidence in defense of this position and respond to the objections to this position. Explain how this position impacts the issues of personal responsibility and social responsibility.

The paper should be 1000 words (approximately 4 pages), double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and a 12-point Times New Roman Font and the correct header, with a works cited page with correctly formatted MLA, APA, or Chicago style citations.

There should be a works cited page (not included in word count) and in-text citations throughout the paper.

**Please use the template provided on D2L with the correct formatting and header.**

Paper Guidelines:

- Format
  - **Template on D2L**, citation style can be MLA, APA, or Chicago (as long as it is consistent)
  - Times New Roman
  - 12 Point font
  - Correct header from the template that does not take up half the page.
  - Double-spaced
  - 1-inch margins
  - No end notes
  - Microsoft Word doc or PDF file
- 1000 words (aim for 4 pages) not including works cited page
- Be sure to cite both paraphrased and quoted information. Do not use more than two direct quotes.
- You can use the following sources for topic assignment and paper:
  - Academic Journal articles
  - Newspaper articles (not from editorial section) preferably from print media (like *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *Texas Tribune*, *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, etc. As far as non-print journalism goes NPR, AP, Reuters, C-Span, CBS News, and ABC News generally have decent reporting)
  - Government sites
  - Research and polling institutes like Pew

- You may **NOT** use the following sources:
  - Wikipedia (good starting point to read about your topic, just go to the sources that it links)
  - Pro-Con.org
  - Editorials
  - Blogs (including posts on Medium, Thought Catalog, etc)
  - Random lawyers' websites
  - Avoid the lower tier news publications. This means NO Huffington Post, the Federalist, New York Post, CNN, Buzzfeed, The Daily Beast, Daily Mail, MSNBC, Fox News, OAN, The Blaze, Epoch Times, InfoWars, Occupy Democrats, Breitbart, Drudge Report, etc. etc.
  - Avoid interest group websites (e.g ACLU, Planned Parenthood, NRA, etc) as they have an agenda in providing information.
  - You may not use papers you wrote in other classes.

Rubric for Final Position Paper:

Content (10)	7-10 points Notes from the topic assignment were taken, content of the paper is topical to the assignment, correct and well presented, conveys understanding of the topic as a whole, a coherent argument is being made, with strong supporting points, and the overall point of the paper is well thought out and overall well done. Demonstrated importance of social and personal responsibility. Care was taken to proof-read.	3-6 points Not all of the content is relevant to the assignment, writing was not proof-read/lack of effort was put forth, there are obvious points to the argument that are left out, not enough elaboration/paper does not meet length requirements, some information is erroneous or factually wrong, no point is being made. Not enough discussion of responsibility.	0 -2 points The paper does follow the assignment, information is overwhelmingly wrong, no point is being made
Sources (5 points)	5 points Sources are reputable and scholarly, works cited page is correctly done, there are in-text citations in the paper	2-4 points Sources are not all from reputable places, citations have some problems, some errors within works cited page with formatting, notes not taken on the sources from topic assignment	0 points Citations are not used correctly or are missing, works cited page is incomplete or absent/has major errors
Formatting (5 points)	5 points Paper is double spaced, correct margins, header is correct and does not take up half the page, etc	0 points Directions not followed	

**Current Event Paper (5 points)**

Students will find a news article about a topic relevant to the class from a reputable news source (preferable print media reporting, such as *The Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *the Houston Chronicle* or another newspaper/ other reputable news is okay as well) and read it and consider how it applies to concepts they have learned in the course. The article chosen should be recent (**within a month of the due date**). The article must focus on news that is pertinent to the federal government's actions and/or the interaction between the government and the people.

For the paper, students will submit a 1-2 (at least 1 full page) paper about the article. Your paper should be a brief summary and then an analysis of the article you have chosen. Analysis within the context of political science means that you are putting an action or a topic in the broader scope of government and its interaction with citizens. **You will relate the article to what you have learned in class.** For example, if you pick an article about something Congress is doing you will explain that and then relate it to things we learned over the semester like concepts of federalism, what we learned about Congress, what we learned about the Constitution, etc.

Please provide in-text citations when you are summarizing the article and a properly composed citation (MLA or Chicago is acceptable, APA if you must) of the article. There should be an in-text citation as well as a works cited entry for your article at the end of the paper.

Formatting will be the same as the position paper and there is a template provided on D2L with the correct formatting.

**Current Event Paper is due April 28<sup>th</sup> on D2L**

**Determination of Course Grade/Detailed Grading Formula:**

Requirement	Points
Syllabus Quiz	5
Exam 1	15
Exam 2	15
Participation Activities (3 x 10)	30
Topic Assignment	10
Position Paper	20
Current Event Paper	5
Total	100

**LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENT:**

I will add up all your points earned over the semester to find your final grade.

Letter Grade	Final Score
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

### Course Polices: Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy:

- The syllabus quiz and 2 exams cannot be taken late, please plan on taking them during the time they are open. Give yourself a little time just in case you have technical difficulties.
- The weekly participation activities will be accepted the day after they were due and not accepted after that. If you miss one, later in the semester there will be an opportunity to complete extra credit earn back some missing points.
- I will accept the other written assignments (topic assignments, paper, and current event paper) late with a 24-hour grace period with no points lost, no need to inform me. Anything after 24 hours late will incur a penalty (starting with 2 points). Please inform me if you are having trouble so I can try and assist. I will not accept written assignments more than 7 days after they are due, and I cannot accept anything after May 6th as the semester ends.
- I do **not** re-grade assignments. If you submit something and it earns a poor grade or a 0, there is not a make-up. However, I do offer extra credit opportunities.
- Ensure that you upload the correct file for your assignment submissions. Take a moment to review your submission before finalizing.
  - If you submit something incorrectly you may immediately resubmit. However, once the due date has passed and I open the assignment to grade it, the wrong file will receive a 0. **It is important to verify your submission accuracy before the deadline to avoid any loss of credit.**
- **You are expected to write your assignments in your own words- assignments that are obviously generated by AI (or a paraphrasing generator or similar device) will receive no credit. After one time, I will submit an academic dishonesty report to the College. Please don't do that!**
- Extra Credit: There will be several opportunities to earn extra credit over the course of the semester. Opportunities to earn extra credit will include sporadic written assignments, exam questions, and possible events outside of class. I will not offer

extra credit on an individual basis, so coming to me at the end of the semester hoping to earn several extra points will not be possible.

**Attendance Policy: You are expected to be logging into class regularly and submitting assignments weekly! Not logging and participating can result in being dropped from the course.**

**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 performance in the class through other electronic means.

**Core objectives:**

1. Critical Thinking Skills: Students will demonstrate creative thinking, innovation, and the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.
2. Communication Skills: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
3. Social Responsibility: Students will demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
4. Personal Responsibility: Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own, and relate consequences to ethical decision-making.

<b>Student Learner Outcome</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.	Critical thinking and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system	Critical thinking and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice	Critical thinking and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government	Personal responsibility, critical thinking, and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments and position paper
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups,	Social and personal responsibility and communication skills	Topic assignment and position paper



and political parties in the political system.		
6. Analyze election process	Social and personal responsibility	Exam, position paper, participation assignments
7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens	Social and personal responsibility	Exams, participation assignments, position paper
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S politics	Social and personal responsibility, critical thinking, communication skills	Exams, participation assignments, topic assignment, and position paper
9. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication	Critical thinking and social and personal responsibility	Topic assignment and position paper
10. Evaluate Choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision making	Social and personal responsibility	Position 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 and claiming them as your own. Plagiarism is a very serious offense. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing someone else's words without giving proper citation, copying directly from a website, and pasting it into your paper, using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any 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.

You are expected to write your assignments in your own words- assignments that are obviously generated by AI will receive no credit. After one time, I will submit an academic dishonesty report to the College.

**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 the department chair, **Dr. Shinya Wakao** at [swakao@com.edu](mailto:swakao@com.edu)

## Course outline

This is the tentative schedule for the course. Please keep an eye on D2L and COM email in case changes need to be made.

Date	Chapters	Topic
Week 1 Jan 16- Jan 22	1 & 2	Welcome Constitution Syllabus Quiz Due Jan 21 <sup>st</sup> 11:59pm
Week 2 Jan 22- Jan 29	3	Federalism
Week 3 Jan 29- Feb. 5	4 and 5	Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
Week 4 Feb. 5- Feb. 12	5	Civil Rights Movements February 11 <sup>th</sup> : Topic Assignment Due on D2L
Week 5 Feb 12- Feb 19		Exam 1 on D2L, open Feb 16- Feb 20 <sup>th</sup> - Closes February 20 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm
Week 6 Feb 19-Feb 26	6 and 8	Public Opinion & Media
Week 7 Feb. 26-March 4	7	Campaigns and Elections
Week 8 March 4-March 11	9	Political Parties
Week 9 March 11- March 18		<b>Spring Break!</b> <b>Enjoy! Be safe!</b>
Week 10 March 18-March 25	10	Interest Groups
Week 11 March 25-April 1	11	Congress
Week 12 April 1-April 8	12 15 and 16	The Presidency Bureaucracy & Domestic Policy
Week 13 April 8- April 15		April 14 <sup>th</sup> : POSITION PAPER DUE ON D2L by 11:59pm
Week 14 April 15- April 22	13	The Judicial Branch April 22 <sup>nd</sup> : LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM Spring 2024 COURSES
Week 15 April 22- April 29		April 28: Current Event Paper Due on D2L

Week 16 April 29- May 6	17	Foreign Policy
“Finals Week” May 6-May 10 <sup>th</sup>		<b>Exam 2 open December 5-8<sup>th</sup></b> (Closes December 8 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm)

---

## 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\\_2023-2024\\_v2.pdf](https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2023-2024_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 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 permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is February 28. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 22. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is May 1. The last date to withdraw for spring mini session is May 29.

**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](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).