



**GOVT 2305-02112  
Federal Government  
Spring 2025  
Online**

**Name:** Fawaz Khammash

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

**Office Hours:** Available via Zoom or I can call you

**Required Textbook:**

Glen Krutz et al. *American Government* (3rd edition). You can access this e-book free at:  
<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

**Course Description:**

This course is intended to provide students with a fundamental understanding of government and politics in the United States. My goal for you in this class is to become an informed and critical thinker as well as a participant in American politics. You will also learn about current political debates as well as the 2024 elections to understand the impact of U.S. politics on your life.

**Grading Criteria:**

Exams: 4 - 1 = 3 X 20 Points Each = 60% (Lowest exam grade will be dropped)
Discussion board Posts: 4 X 5 Points Each = 20%
Reaction Paper: 20%

**Grading Scale:**

- A: 100 – 90%
- B: 89.99 – 80%
- C: 79.99 – 70%
- D: 69.99 – 60%
- F: Below 60%

**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.

**Course requirements:** Students are required to participate in 4 exams, 4 discussions, and write a reaction paper. Please read the instructions below regarding these assignments:

- **Discussions:**

You will also need to participate in (4) discussion boards during the course. In order to receive full credit you will need to make a post of your own in response to the given prompt, as well as replies to at least two of your fellow classmates' posts. Both are required for full credit and must be posted before the closing of the discussion board. There are minimum word counts for each of your posts and replies. Your original post, responding to the prompt, needs to be a minimum of 200 words and must answer each part of the prompt. Each of your two replies to your classmates' posts must be a minimum of 100 words, so you must do more than simply say "I agree" in order to receive credit. The window to participate in these discussion boards will be listed below in the course schedule. If you miss the window in which the discussions are open on D2L you can submit your responses to me via email, up to (7) days after the deadline, but these will be assessed 10% grade deduction. See details below under "Late Work and Make-Up Exams Policy."

- **Exams:**

This class will consist of four (4) exams, of these, the lowest exam grade will be dropped. Each remaining exam is worth 20% of your total class grade. Each of these will be non-comprehensive, so they will only cover material from those weeks of the course (i.e. Exam 1 covers material from Unit One, Exam 2 covers material from Unit Two, Exam 3 covers material from Unit Three and Exam 4 covers material from Unit Four). Exams will be made available on D2L, under the 'Course Activities' tab in the 'Quizzes' section, for multiple days. Please see the course schedule for availability dates. Each of the exams consists of 25 multiple choice questions, and you only have one attempt for each exam. The exams will be timed, and you have 40 minutes to complete the exam. At the end of this time, you will no longer be able to answer questions, so please be aware of time while taking the exam and make sure to begin your exam at least 40 minutes before it is due. Please note, once you open the exam in D2L the time will begin. You cannot exit the exam and return to it later, the clock continues to run.

- **Reaction Paper:**

**Description**

During this course I hope that you will become more aware of the current political events going on in the United States, and around the world, and establish a better base of knowledge for understanding the politics of the nation. This assignment requires you to write a (**minimum 1000 words**) reaction paper to a particular current event dealing with American politics and government.

You can choose to write your papers on any current events dealing with American politics and government. A few reputable new sources that you can consider (but certainly not the only ones) are:

- The Economist (economist.com)
- BBC ([http://www.bbc.com/news/world/us\\_and\\_canada](http://www.bbc.com/news/world/us_and_canada))
- NPR (<http://www.npr.org/sections/news/>)
- Newspapers: New York Times (nytimes.com), USA Today (usatoday.com), The Wall Street Journal (wsj.com), The Washington Post (washingtonpost.com), The Houston Chronicle (chron.com), etc.
- National News organizations (CNN, NBC, CBS, Fox)

**Requirements:**

You will need to do three major things in this paper. Each of these are required in the paper and account for substantial portions of the assignment grade:

1. The first part of the paper will be a brief summary of the current event **in your own words**. Overreliance on direct quotes from the article will result in deduction, as will using the bulk of the language of the original article with only minor revisions.
2. The second part of the paper will be your reaction, this can be a critique of the piece or event, or the significance of the event, simply your perspective on such. This is intended to be your thoughts, thus please use first person.
3. The third component of your paper will be relating the current event to course material in some manner (i.e., where does this article fit into the course material).

**Formatting:**

- The format for the paper can be any writing style that you are familiar with (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.), however there are a few things that I will require. Paper will be written double-spaced in 12-pt Times New Roman.
- Also, you will need to attach or provide a **working link** to the original article with your paper. You can put the link in your paper as a works cited. If you do not include a working URL link, a 10pt penalty will be assessed.
- Make sure the length of your paper is at least 1000 words, excluding the works cited or references page. Points will be deducted if your paper does not meet this requirement.

**Rubric:** Please refer to the separate rubric document on D2L for specific values.

**Due Date:** Please refer to the course schedule found in the syllabus for the due date.

**Late Work and Make-Up Exams Policy:**

- All assignments need to be turned in on or before their due dates through D2L. Late discussion posts will be accepted up to (7) days after their due dates. However, these will be assessed a 10% grade deduction. For discussion posts, if you miss the window of availability to post, you will need to email me your response to the prompt and 2 replies (indicating the students' names).
- Make-up exams will only be allowed at the discretion of the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to request permission from the instructor to make-up an exam. If no documented emergency is provided, a 10% grade deduction will be applied.
- Late submissions of the reaction paper will only be allowed at the discretion of the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to request permission to turn in this assignment after the deadline. If no documented emergency is provided, a 10% grade deduction will be applied.

**Attendance Policy:** Submitting class assignments on time is essential for success in this course. Students are expected to login to class in D2L on a regular basis. Students' attendance records will be reviewed by the instructor to ensure compliance.

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

**Artificial Intelligence:**

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly prohibited in this course. Students must complete all academic work without relying on artificial intelligence tools. The use of AI, including but not limited to language models, chatbots, or other similar technologies, to generate or complete assignments, quizzes, discussions, or exams is considered a form of academic misconduct and will result in disciplinary 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 Dr. Shinya Wakao at [swakao@com.edu](mailto:swakao@com.edu)

---

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

<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.	None	Exam
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.	None	Exam
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.	None	Exam
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.	None	Exam
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	Critical Thinking	Paper
6. Analyze election process.	None	Exam
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.	None	Exam
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. Politics.	Critical Thinking	Paper
9. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.	Critical Thinking	Paper
10. Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Critical Thinking	Paper

### Course Schedule

<p><b>Unit One: Chapters 1 – 3</b> <b>June 3 – June 9</b></p> <p>Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins Chapter 3: American Federalism</p>	<p><b>Discussion 1:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Monday March 10 – 11:59 PM Monday March 24.</p> <p><b>Exam 1:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday March 25 – 11:59 PM Monday March 31.</p>
<p><b>Spring Break</b></p> <p><b>Last Day to Drop without a Grade</b></p>	<p><b>March 17 – 23</b></p> <p><b>March 24</b></p>
<p><b>Unit Two: Chapters 4 – 6</b> <b>June 10 – June 16</b></p> <p>Chapter 4: Civil Liberties Chapter 5: Civil Rights Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion Chapter 7: Voting and Elections</p>	<p><b>Discussion 2:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday April 1 – 11:59 PM Monday April 7.</p> <p><b>Exam 2:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday April 1 – 11:59 PM Monday April 7.</p>
<p><b>Unit Three: Chapters 7 – 10</b> <b>June 17 – June 23</b></p> <p>Chapter 7: Voting and Elections Chapter 8: The Media Chapter 9: Political Parties Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying</p>	<p><b>Discussion 3:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday April 8 – 11:59 PM Monday April 14.</p> <p><b>Exam 3:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday April 8 – 11:59 PM Monday April 14.</p>
<p><b>Last Day to Withdraw</b></p>	<p><b>April 30, 2025</b></p>
<p><b>Unit Four: Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 17</b> <b>June 24 – July 3</b></p> <p>Chapter 11: Congress Chapter 12: The Presidency Chapter 13: The Courts Chapter 17: Foreign Policy</p>	<p><b>Discussion 4:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday April 15 – 11:59 PM Monday April 21.</p> <p><b>Exam 4:</b> Open between 12:00 AM Tuesday April 22 – 11:59 PM Monday April 28.</p>
<p><b>Reaction Paper:</b></p>	<p>Can be turned in at any time during the semester, but not later than 11:59 PM on Monday May 5.</p>

---

## 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\\_v6.pdf](https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2024-2025_v6.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](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is February 26. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 21. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is April 30.

**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).

**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.