



GOVT 2305 322H3
Federal Government
Fall 2024 8/19/20-12/5/2024
Wednesdays: 7:00 AM - 8:20 AM, DHS Library

Instructor Information: Karina M. Lovas

Instructor Email: klovas@com.edu

Student hours and location: Available before and after class, Wednesdays 8:05am-9:05am at DHS, and 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 so you can keep up with class announcements and access the book and notes.

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.

- This is hybrid class, some lectures we will have in person but **some material you will be responsible for outside of class meetings-** this will entail listening to recorded lecture, reading textbook chapters, and completing participation activities outside of class. Please be sure you are making time in your schedule to do that!
- 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 generative AI and tools like paraphrasing generators/translators, etc.) 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 take.

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

Syllabus Quiz due Sunday August 25th by 11:59pm!

Exams (2 x15 points)

2 exams will be given throughout the semester. They will be mostly multiple-choice questions with 5 short answer questions. I usually add 3-4 extra credit short answer questions. I provide a study guide on D2L to help prepare for the exam (but the test will be taken without use of reviews, books, notes, etc.).

You will take the exam in class. The only thing you need to bring on test day is a pen or pencil.

The tests will encompass only material presented since the last examination. The exams will not be cumulative.

Cheating will be taken very seriously and result in a 0 on the exam and F in the course.

You are expected to be in class for the exam. If you cannot be in class, you need to email me before/during the exam to make a plan to take the test. Coming to me the week after the test will **not result in a make-up exam.**

**Exam 1 will be in class (assuming there are not schedule changes)
September 25th**

Exam 2 will be in class: December 4th

Participation Activities (10 x3 points)

Up to 30 points will be awarded for regular participation and attendance in class as best that you can.

I will introduce regular participation activities during some class meetings, and open them on D2L to complete before Sunday evenings, weekly. Each participation activity will be worth 3 points each (towards 30 total participation points).

Completed activities 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.

These activities will only be accepted for credit until the Sunday after they were assigned (with one exception that is reliant on class attendance). There will be no make ups for missed participation activities the following class, however, I will offer extra credit throughout the semester to earn back lost points.

Topic Assignment and Position Paper (30 total points)

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 members of the U.S Congress?
- Should there be term limits for federal judges?
- Should political donations and election spending be more strictly limited?
- Should the federal government legalize recreational drugs?
- Should the federal government ban all animal testing?
- Should the federal government ensure everyone earns a living wage?
- Should the federal government ensure everyone has access to mental health care?
- Should the federal government assume control of public K-12 education in the United States?

Topic Assignment (10 points) **DUE: September 15th, 2024 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 November 3rd 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. Paper is at least 1,000 words.	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. Paper is not long enough.	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 Nov. 24th 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

Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy:

- This is a hybrid course! We will only meet for class once a week, that means there will be material you are responsible for and assignments due outside of our class meeting time. Be sure you are making time in your schedule to complete that.
- While email is important and I ask you to check it regularly, I don't grade assignments via email! So please be sure you submit your work on D2L.
- **The syllabus quiz needs to be taken on time, it will not be reopened.**
- **You need to be in class for the exams or let me know BEFOREHAND (or during, an email from your sickbed is fine) so we can plan what to do. If you come to me a week later and say you missed the exam, there will NOT be a makeup.**
- Participation activities are to be completed the week they are assigned. If you do not turn it in by then, I will not accept it. If you miss a participation activity for whatever reason, there will **not** be a make up in the following class. However, there will be extra participation that can earn points towards the end of the semester to earn back some points lost for missed participation activities.
- 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.
- I will accept the written assignments (topic assignment, paper, and current event paper) with a 24-hour grace period with no points lost, no need to inform me. Anything more than 24 hours late than that 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 late. I cannot accept anything after December 3rd as the semester ends.
- **You are expected to write your assignments in your own words- assignments that are obviously generated by AI¹ will receive no credit. After one 0 and a warning, 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, in class activities, extra exam questions, and possible events outside of

¹ includes tools like ChatGPT and Bing and other similar things, as well paraphrasing generators/translators.

class. Planned extra credit events will be announced in class and on D2L. 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:

COM students are required to attend classes and attendance will be taken in all class meetings. If an absence is unavoidable, do your best to get notes and any class updates from a classmate.

While I always want you to be in class, PLEASE do not come to class if you are feeling like you might be sick/are actually sick/are exhibiting symptoms (like runny nose/congestion, sore throat, coughing, shortness of breath, upset stomach, unexplained rash, and fever, etc.). You can make arrangements for any missed information.

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.

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.	Critical thinking and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments
Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system	Critical thinking and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments
Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice	Critical thinking and communication skills	Exams and participation assignments
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
Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	Social and personal responsibility and communication skills	Topic assignment and position paper
Analyze election process	Social and personal responsibility	Exam, position paper, participation assignments
Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens	Social and personal responsibility	Exams, participation assignments, position paper
Analyze issues and policies in U.S politics	Social and personal responsibility, critical thinking, communication skills	Exams, participation assignments, topic assignment, and position paper
Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication	Critical thinking and social and personal responsibility	Topic assignment and position paper and current event paper

Evaluate Choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision making	Social and personal responsibility	Position Paper and current event paper
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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 Department Chair, Shinya Wakao at 409-933-8107 or 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
August 21	1 & 2	Welcome Constitution Syllabus Quiz Due Sunday August 25th , 2024 by 11:59pm
August 28	3	Federalism
September 4	4 & 5	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
September 11	5	Civil Rights Movements September 15 th : Topic Assignment Due on D2L
September 18		Review
September 25		Exam 1 in class!
October 2	6 and 8	Public Opinion and Media
October 9	7 9	Campaigns and Elections Political Parties
October 16	10 11	Interest Groups Congress
October 23	12 15 and 16	The Presidency The Bureaucracy and Domestic Policy
October 30	13	The Judicial Branch Nov 3rd POSITION PAPER DUE ON D2L by 11:59pm
November 6	16	Foreign Policy
November 13		Catch up! Nov 15: Last day to drop for Spring 2024
November 20		Review Nov 24: Current Event Paper Due on D2L
November 27		NO CLASS- Thanksgiving Holiday Enjoy!
December 4		Exam 2 in class

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.