



**GOVT 2305.011IN**  
**Federal Government**  
**Fall 2021**  
**August 23, 2021 – December 10, 2021**  
**Online**

**Instructor Information:**

Will Geisler, wgeisler@com.edu, 972.983.1816

**Student hours and location:**

Three credit hours, online

**Required Textbook:**

American Government, Openstax, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (this is free and is provided in the course in Blackboard as a digital e-text)

**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.

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

Grade Scale (based on 1000 total points possible):

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 0-599

**Intro and Concluding Discussion Forums and Orientation Quiz (15 points)**

The introductory discussion forum and the orientation quiz are in the Start Here folder. Do the Concluding Discussion Forum at the end of the course (end of Lesson Eight).

**Lesson Quizzes (200 points):**

Each lesson quiz is worth 25 points. The format for each exam is "open book" and each exam has a time limit of 30 minutes. Utilize the PowerPoint chapter presentations as well as the textbook to prepare for each exam.

Each student will have one attempt per exam, so study hard before you attempt to take an exam. Exam questions are pulled from a larger group of questions. By design, there is not enough time to look up each question, so study prior to taking the exam. The grade will post immediately after submission.

You must be prepared for each exam by reading the assigned chapter, doing the chapter discussion forum, doing any written assignments associated with the chapter. Do not procrastinate; give yourself time to complete each exam in sequence as you progress through the chapters and the units. You may, of course, move at your own pace ahead of each deadline.

On rare occasions, there may be an issue with the exam questions. Please let me know if that is the case. I always appreciate help in catching errors in the exam. Always feel free to check the answers against the book – if you have a question about an answer marked wrong, just email me with the question and your evidence (a pic) from the book.

Unforeseen glitches during an exam attempt can occur from time to time. There are several steps you can take to ensure you do not have a problem during an attempt. Go ahead and contact me if you have any problems with the exam, **if it is a tech support problem, consult tech support.**

### **Midterm and Final Exam (200 points)**

There is a midterm and final exam each worth 100 points. The midterm will cover Lessons 1-4, the final will cover Lessons 5-8.

### **Written Projects (240 points):**

There are five written projects for the course.

- Legislative Profiles (60 points)
- President Profile (60 points)
- Supreme Court Project (60 points)
- Interest Group Project (60 points)

See instructions for each assignment in Blackboard. There will be an attached rubric given with the grade on the written assignment. Be sure to answer all questions for each assignment. Questions that require more work are always worth more points. Do not skip questions that require paragraph summaries or extended replies, you're grade on the assignment will suffer greatly if you do. Incomplete written assignment may not be accepted and may be given a 0, so do not turn in half-completed work or skip any of the questions. Do not cut and paste any answers for the written assignments unless otherwise indicated. That is plagiarism. Students who plagiarize will get a 0 on the assignment and may fail the course and be reported to the college.

**Discussion Forums (320 points)**

There are 16 chapter discussion forums worth 20 points each for a total of 320 points. For each Discussion Forum, write a **250-300-word response** (use your word processor to count the number of words and include that at the end of your post). Your response should carefully address all parts of the question in a coherent, organized, and professional manner. You must also respond to someone else's post with a **100-word response** (use word count again). Your responses should be your own words. **Do not cut and paste - this is plagiarism.** If you do quote the textbook or other sources, be sure to use parenthetical citation or footnotes for proper attribution. Use proper grammar and spelling – posts with excessive grammar and spelling errors may receive a lowered grade or a 0.

**Facebook Group (25 points):**

There is a Facebook group assigned to your class. See the Facebook menu item on Blackboard for details.

**Late Work/Make-Up, and Extra Credit Policy**

Late work is generally not accepted. If late work is accepted, the grade may be lowered or given a 0 at the discretion of the instructor.

Make-up work is generally not accepted. If make-up work is accepted, the grade may be lowered or given a 0 at the discretion of the instructor.

Unless otherwise indicated during the course, there is no extra credit in this course.

**Attendance Policy:**

You should login to the course a minimum of three times per week. You are welcome to work ahead, but do not turn in work late, it may not be accepted

**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. Emails will generally be returned within 48 hours. Email [wgeisler@com.edu](mailto:wgeisler@com.edu) if you have any questions during the course.

STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOME	CONNECTSTO CORE OBJECTIVES	ASSESSED VIA
Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment

Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
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/ Written Assignment

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

Any student who has been found to have been academically dishonest due to plagiarism, cheating, or collusion on an assignment by the instructor may receive a grade of zero for the assignment and may be given an F for the course and reported to the college for disciplinary action at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Here are some links regarding plagiarism:

[Avoiding Plagiarism Guide – Purdue University Online Writing Lab \(Opens in new tab/window\)](#)  
[Plagiarism: Don't Let This Happen to You: College of the Mainland Library Guide](#)  
<http://en.writecheck.com/ways-to-avoid-plagiarism/>

### **Student Concerns:**

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me at [wgeisler@com.edu](mailto:wgeisler@com.edu). If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Stacey Henderson at 409-933-8212.

### **Course Schedule/Outline**

Read all information in "Getting Started" including the Course Syllabus  
 Plagiarism Tutorial (due 8-23)  
 Introductory Discussion Board (due by 8-23)  
 Orientation Quiz (due by 8-23)

#### Lesson 1 – Foundations

Chapter 1: The More Things Change...The More They Stay the Same

Chapter 1 Discussion Forum - Citizenship (due by 8-29)

Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution

Chapter 2 Discussion Forum – Chipman on Equality (due by 9-5)

Chapter 3: Federalism

Chapter 3 Discussion Forum (due by 9-11)

Lesson 1 Exam (due by 9-12)

Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

## Lesson 2 – The National Legislature

### Chapter 11: Congress

*Written Assignment #1: Legislative Profiles (due by 9-15)*

Chapter 11 Discussion Forum - Immigration (due by 9-18)

Lesson 2 Exam (due by 9-19)

Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

## Lesson 3 – The National Executive

### Chapter 12: The Presidency

Chapter 12 Discussion Forum – Presidential Speech (due by 9-25)

### Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy

*Written Assignment #2: Executive Profiles (due by 9-28)*

Chapter 15 Discussion Forum – The Administrative State (due by 10-2)

Lesson 3 Exam (due by 10-3)

Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

## Lesson 4 – The National Judiciary

### Chapter 13: The Courts

Chapter 13 Discussion Forum – Scalia v. Breyer on the Supreme Court (due by 10-9)

Lesson 4 Exam (due by 10-10)

Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

Midterm Exam (due by 10-11)

## Lesson 5 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

### Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Chapter 4 Discussion Forum – The Bill of Rights (due by 10-16)

### Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Chapter 5 Discussion Forum – Franklin Roosevelt v. The Bill of Rights (due by 10-22)

*Written Assignment #3: Supreme Court Chart and Summary (due by 10-23)*

Lesson 5 Exam (due by 10-24)

Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

## Lesson 6 – Public Opinion and Interest Groups

### Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

Chapter 6 Discussion Forum – Voter ID (due by 10-29)

### Chapter 10: Interest Groups

*Written Assignment #4 – Interest Group Project (due by 11-1)*

Chapter 10 Discussion Forum – Interest Group Discussion (due by 11-4)

Lesson 6 Exam (due by 11-5)

Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

## Lesson 7 – Political Parties, Voting, and Elections

### Chapter 7: Voting and Elections

Chapter 7 Discussion Forum – Presidential Election (due by 11-11)  
Chapter 8: The Media  
Chapter 8 Discussion Forum – Carlson v. Maddow (due by 11-17)  
Chapter 9: Political Parties  
Chapter 9 Discussion Forum – COVID Discussion (due by 11-22)  
Lesson 7 Exam (due by 11-23)  
Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

Lesson 8 – Public Policy  
Chapter 16: Domestic Policy  
Chapter 16 Discussion Forum – Law Enforcement - (due by 12-1)  
Chapter 17: Foreign Policy  
Chapter 17 Discussion Forum (due by 12-3)  
Lesson 8 Exam (due by 12-5)  
Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)

Final Exam (due 12-7)

Concluding Discussion Board (due by 12-7)  
Facebook Group Posts and Comments (two posts, two replies per week)  
Alternate Film Essay for those who did not do the Facebook Group (due by 12-7)

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## 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://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student\\_Handbook\\_2019-2020v5.pdf](https://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student_Handbook_2019-2020v5.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.*

[https://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student\\_Handbook\\_2019-2020v5.pdf](https://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student_Handbook_2019-2020v5.pdf)

**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 Holly Bankston at 409-933-8520 or [hbankston@com.edu](mailto:hbankston@com.edu). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the Student Success Center.

**Counseling Statement:** Any student that is needing counseling services is requested to please contact Holly Bankston in the student success center at 409-933-8520 or [hbankston@com.edu](mailto:hbankston@com.edu). Counseling services are available on campus in the student center for free and students can also email [counseling@com.edu](mailto:counseling@com.edu) to setup their appointment. Appointments are strongly encouraged; however, some concerns may be addressed on a walk-in basis.

**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 October 6, 2021. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 19, 2021. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is December 2, 2021.

**F<sub>N</sub> Grading:** The F<sub>N</sub> grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The F<sub>N</sub> 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 F<sub>N</sub> grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an F<sub>N</sub> 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.

**COVID-19 Statement:** All students, faculty, and staff are expected to familiarize themselves with materials and information contained on the College of the Mainland’s Coronavirus Information site at [www.com.edu/coronavirus](http://www.com.edu/coronavirus). In compliance with Governor Abbott's May 18 Executive Order, face coverings/masks will no longer be required on COM campus. Protocols and college signage are being updated. We will no longer enforce any COM protocol that requires face coverings. We continue to encourage all members of the COM community to distance when possible, use hygiene measures, and get vaccinated to protect against COVID-19. Please visit [com.edu/coronavirus](http://com.edu/coronavirus) for future updates.