



GOVT 2305.201CL
Federal Government
Spring 2024
Mondays 6:00 – 8:50 pm LRC 255

Instructor Information:

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

Student Hours and Location:

TR 8:00 -8:30 am via Brightspace instant messages (during this time I will also be immediately available via phone or email).

TR - ½ hour before and after class - Social Science Suite.

Companion Course is accessible at: [COM Brightspace Login Page](https://com.brightspace.com) (Link Address: <https://com.brightspace.com>)

Required Textbook:

- Title: American Government
- Author: Glen Krutz - OPENSTAX
- Edition: 3rd
- Published Date: 2021

The textbook can be accessed **free of charge** online and downloaded as a pdf file at:

<https://openstax.org/books/american-government-3e/pages/1-introduction-Government>

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 of the textbook from any retailer, but that is optional.

Course Description:

This course examines the 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:

This course primarily consists instructor led lessons 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

Term Paper

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 – Parts 1-3 are each worth 5% of your final grade and the final part – the paper itself is worth 25%).

You will need to research on the topic, citing at least five 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. Additionally, you should explain how this position impacts the issues of personal responsibility and social responsibility. Additional details on the assignments such as length, required elements, and format and citation requirements will be detailed in the assignment file located in Brightspace. Detailed grading rubrics will also be posted to guide your research.

Unit Exams

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

Extra Credit

In addition to the regularly assigned materials there are several opportunities to increase your grade through extra credit material. Each unit has a ten-point extra credit assignment associated with it. Please pay attention to due dates as late extra credit will not be accepted. You can earn up to 4 points added to your final average

Late work

Late work will have a 10% penalty. Not all work can be submitted late – see below. Pay careful attention to the list of due dates in the class. Do not solely rely on the Brightspace App or calendar as the dates do not always appear there. Most work is submitted for grading online. Work can only be submitted up to 3 days (NOT CLASS PERIODS) late. Extra Credit May not be submitted late. If you miss an exam for any reason, please contact me within 24 hours via email.

Detailed Grading Formula:

Grading Weights

Graded Work	Weight
Unit Exams	40%
Unit Assignments	20%
Written Assignment	40%
• Part 1-Proposal	5%
• Part 2-Sources	5%
• Part 3-Outline	5%
• Part 4 – Final Paper	25%

Grading 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 an evening class, we cover a weeks' worth of material each session. This material goes beyond just the assigned textbook material. Additionally, some of the unit assignments will be completed in-class. Remember it is your responsibility to drop the course if you no longer wish to attend.

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. I make every effort to return messages (course messages, email, phone, discussion postings) within 36 hours (weekends and holidays excepted). See the "Contact Instructor" link on the Brightspace course menu for detailed information.

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 separation of powers and checks and balances in both 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 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 up to, and

including, a **grade of zero** on that exam/assignment/etc. and possible referral 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 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.

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.

Please -- if you are having trouble of any kind, discuss it with me. The tiny advantage you would get from cheating is vastly outweighed by the risk you would be taking. I am willing to help you in any way I can, but I will NOT excuse academic dishonesty no matter how much I like you or feel sorry for you.

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. Wakao at swakao@com.edu or 409-933-8107.

Course Outline

Type	Name	Date / Due Date
In- Class Lecture	Intro to Politics/Culture and Ideology	Monday, January 22
In- Class Lecture	Constitution and Federalism	Monday, January 29
Online Submission	Assignment 1, Paper Part 1, Extra Credit 1	Sunday, February 4
In-Class Exam	Exam	Monday, February 5
In- Class Lecture	Socialization and Public Opinion	Monday, February 12
No Class – Online Lecture	Media	Monday, February 19
In- Class Lecture	Parties, Elections and Interest Groups	Monday, February 26
Online Submission	Assignment 2, Paper Part 2, Extra Credit #2	Sunday, March 3
In-Class Exam	Exam 2	Monday, March 4
No- Class / Holiday	Spring Break	March 10 – March 17
In- Class Lecture	Legislature	Monday, March 18
In- Class Lecture	Presidency	Monday, March 25
In- Class Lecture	Policy	Monday, March 1
Online Submission	Assignment 3, Paper Part 3, Extra Credit #3	Sunday, April 7
In-Class Exam	Exam 3	Monday, April 8
In- Class Lecture	Courts and Law	Monday, April 15
W-Day	Last Day to Withdraw with a W	Monday, April 22
In- Class Lecture	Civil Liberties	Monday, April 22
In- Class Lecture	Civil Rights	Monday, April 29
Online Submission	Assignment 4, Paper Part 4, Extra Credit #4	Sunday, May 5
In-Class Exam	Exam 4	Monday, May 6

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. *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. 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 1st 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 2nd 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 or communityresources@com.edu.