



GOVT 2305.013I1 (4469)
Federal Government
Fall 2025
August 18, 2025 – October 9, 2025
Online

Instructor Information:

Will Geisler, wgeisler@com.edu, 972.983.1816

Office hours and location:

M-F 9:00am-10:00am, online or via Zoom by appointment.

Required Textbook:

American Government, Openstax, 3rd Edition (this is free and is provided in the course in D2L 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 (40 points)
- President Profile (40 points)
- Supreme Court Project (40 points)
- Interest Group Project (40 points)
- Final Paper (80 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.

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 if you have any questions during the course.

STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOME	CONNECTS TO 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. Any use of AI, generative or otherwise is strictly prohibited and constitutes academic dishonesty and may result in a 0 on the assignment and an F in the course.

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 or by phone at 972.983.1816. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Dr. Shinya Wakao at 409-933-8107.

Course Schedule/Outline

Read all information in "Getting Started" including the Course Syllabus

Plagiarism Tutorial (due 8-19)

Introductory Discussion Board (due by 8-19)

Orientation Quiz (due by 8-19)

Lesson 1 – Foundations

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

Chapter 1 Discussion Forum - Citizenship (due by 8-22)

Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution

Chapter 2 Discussion Forum – Chipman on Equality (due by 10-24)

Chapter 3: Federalism

Chapter 3 Discussion Forum (due by 10-27)

Lesson 1 Exam (due by 8-31)

Lesson 2 – The National Legislature

Chapter 11: Congress

Written Assignment #1: Legislative Profiles (due by 9-2)

Chapter 11 Discussion Forum - Immigration (due by 9-5)

Lesson 2 Exam (due by 9-7)

Lesson 3 – The National Executive

Chapter 12: The Presidency

Chapter 12 Discussion Forum – Presidential Speech (due by 9-8)

Written Assignment #2: Executive Profiles (due by 9-10)

Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy

Chapter 15 Discussion Forum – The Administrative State (due by 9-11)

Lesson 3 Exam (due by 9-13)

Lesson 4 – The National Judiciary

Chapter 13: The Courts

Chapter 13 Discussion Forum – Scalia v. Breyer on the Supreme Court (due by 9-15)

Lesson 4 Exam (due by 9-17)
Midterm Exam (due by 9-18)

Lesson 5 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Chapter 4 Discussion Forum – The Bill of Rights (due by 9-19)

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Chapter 5 Discussion Forum – Franklin Roosevelt v. The Bill of Rights (due by 9-20)

Written Assignment #3: Supreme Court Chart and Summary (due by 9-22)

Lesson 5 Exam (due by 9-23)

Lesson 6 – Public Opinion and Interest Groups

Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

Chapter 6 Discussion Forum – Voter ID (due by 9-24)

Chapter 10: Interest Groups

Written Assignment #4 – Interest Group Project (due by 9-25)

Chapter 10 Discussion Forum – Interest Group Discussion (due by 9-26)

Lesson 6 Exam (due by 9-27)

Lesson 7 – Political Parties, Voting, and Elections

Chapter 7: Voting and Elections

Chapter 7 Discussion Forum – Presidential Election (due by 9-28)

Chapter 8: The Media

Chapter 8 Discussion Forum – Hayes v. Maddow (due by 9-29)

Chapter 9: Political Parties

Chapter 9 Discussion Forum – COVID Discussion (due by 9-30)

Lesson 7 Exam (due by 10-1)

Lesson 8 – Public Policy

Chapter 16: Domestic Policy

Chapter 16 Discussion Forum – Law Enforcement - (due by 10-2)

Chapter 17: Foreign Policy

Chapter 17 Discussion Forum (due by 10-4)

Lesson 8 Exam (due by 10-6)

Final Exam (due 10-7)

Concluding Discussion Board (due by 10-7)

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/student-handbook.html>

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 1. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 14. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 8-week session is November 25.

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.