



**Government 2305-022I2
Federal Government
Fall 2025
INTERNET COURSE
10/18/2025-12/2/2025**

Instructor Information

Name: Mr. John Presnall

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Phone: 409.933.8126 (Leave Message)

Student/Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:00 AM; TTH 10:00-11:00 AM; TTH 1:30-3:00 PM; M (Online Hours) 3:00-3:30 PM

Office Location: COM D2L Brightspace; Learning Resource Center (Bldg. # 8), Suite A, Rm. 215C

Required Textbook: Glen Krutz, *American Government 3e* (Houston: Openstax, 2019.) <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

Course Description: Government 2305 is an introduction to politics and government of the United States. The purpose of this introduction is to acquire knowledge of the basic principles and practices of the federal government.

This semester we will study the origins and development of the federal government; the political science of the Declaration of Independence and the Federalist Papers; the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution; the idea of constitutionalism, separation of powers and checks and balances; the idea of federalism; the institutions of Congress, the Presidency, the public administration, and the Judiciary; civil rights and civil liberties; public opinion, political parties, and elections; and issues in public policy.

This introductory course will also attempt to understand some of the basic questions and problems encountered in political science and political philosophy. For an introduction to these questions, we will read the essay "In Defense of Politics" by Steven B. Smith and explore the basic concepts of political science.

This is an online course consisting of four (4) Units in which each Unit will be open for approximately four (4) weeks. Each Unit is self-paced, but students should log into D2L Brightspace at least five times a week. They can complete the assigned work at their own most convenient time, but they must remain

mindful of the course outline and due dates. Please keep abreast of posted announcements.

Course Requirements

Course Discussion Boards: Discussion Boards represent the interactive component of this course. There are 4 discussion assignments with specific opening dates and closing dates for each. Please be mindful of the closing due dates. The discussions are a way of exchanging information and insight with your fellow students. Your grade will be based on your full and thoughtful participation, and not on the content of your ideas and opinions.

Content from the discussion topics will be on each exam.

For each topic you are required to **post 1 initial response** to the topic (at a minimum of 300 words). You must also make **at least 2 comments** to other students' initial responses (at a minimum of 150 words). Points will be deducted for insufficient initial responses, as well as for comments (e.g., "You're right!" "I agree." Are not sufficient comments.) Please write in clear prose, and refrain from using text speech, net speech, and online slang.

DO NOT WAIT until the due date to begin posting. Post throughout the window between the opening dates and closing due dates.

Follow the discussion guidelines posted in the Getting Started section of the course.

Papers: There are **4 short papers** (2 pages at a minimum) over a selected topic. Additional information on grading rubric, submission, format, citations, etc. will be provided in the assignment file. Content from the paper topics will be on each exam.

Course Exams: There are **4 Unit Exams**. Each exam will cover the required textbook chapter readings, lecture notes, additional readings, and videos/podcasts for that unit. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions.

Research Paper: Write a **Position Paper** on a specific controversy in current public policy discourse and debate in the United States (e.g., Should private businesses in the US have the right to deny service based on their religious beliefs and practices?; Should marijuana be legalized in the US?; Should the United States place strict limitations on immigration, whether legal or illegal?; What should US policy be in regard China and Taiwan?; Or Russia and Ukraine?; Should Medicare be expanded to all US citizens?; Should the US adopt the "Green New Deal?"; Should Congress pass the "John Lewis Voting Rights Act?"; etc.).

Make sure that your paper is on a topic that is national in scope, and not an issue that is specific to one state. The paper can cover an already existing policy or a proposed policy.

Write a paper on an issue in public policy. Describe the issue and explain it in detail (what is the question or controversy at hand?). Explain and describe the policy or proposed policy, and explain and describe how it relates to and deals with the issue (what is the law, the executive action, the administrative regulation, or the judicial ruling that has determined or could determine the policy? What does the policy do or intend to do?). Take a position on the policy or proposed policy (whether in favor of it or against it) and make an argument in defense of the position.

Conduct research on the topic, citing at least three sources from credible and reliable publications, web sites, journals, books, etc. The COM Library has a database accessible online to assist in research on many topics. Formulate an argument based on evidence in defense of the position you are taking. Also, respond to the most common objections to this position.

Explain how this position impacts the issues of personal responsibility and social responsibility.

The paper should be 1200 words (approximately 5 pages), double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Use a standard style for references, citations, and the list of sources (e.g., MLA, Chicago, or APA).

Determination of Grade

Unit Exams—	40% (10% each) toward final grade.
Discussions—	20% (5% each) toward final grade.
Papers—	20% (5% each) toward final grade.
Research Paper—	20% toward final grade.

Grading Timeframe: I will grade exams and papers on the Monday after each due date, and grades will appear in Gradebook during that week. Discussion grades will not appear until after the final closing due date for each discussion. Your grade will be based on the totality of your initial response posts and your two comments.

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra Credit Policy: Late and make-up work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students need to notify the instructor via

email of any problems in this regard. Extra Credit assignments will be offered toward the end of the semester. Keep abreast of posted announcements.

Attendance Policy: Frequent attendance is required. In a sixteen-week online course, this means you should log into D2L Brightspace at a minimum of five times a week. Please keep abreast of posted announcements.

You should expect to spend at least three hours a week in D2L Brightspace reviewing notes and watching videos, completing unit discussions and exams, and completing other course materials.

Much of the reading and studying can be done outside of D2L Brightspace. Each Unit is self-paced. Students can complete the assigned work at their own most convenient time, but they must remain mindful of the course outline and due dates.

Communicating with your instructor: All 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.

Do not use the internal Brightspace D2L message to communicate. Use the email tool, which will send your communication to my COM email.

Log onto class regularly to keep abreast of posted announcements.

Student Learner Outcome (SLO)	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.		Exam
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.		Exam
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.		Exam
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.		Exam
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest	Communication	Paper

groups, and political parties.		
6. Analyze the election process.		Exam
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.		Exam
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.	Communication	Paper
9. Complete a required paper on a selected writing pertaining to issues in American government and politics.	Communication	Paper
10. Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Communication	Paper

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. The student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate disciplinary action.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas in a written assignment without giving proper citation. Without citation, it includes paraphrasing someone else's words, copying directly from a website and pasting it into a written assignment, and using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any written assignment containing any plagiarized material will receive a grade of zero and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate 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 Department Chair, Shinya Wakao at 409-933-8107 or swakao@com.edu.

Federal Government Course Outline

Monday, October 13, 2025—Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Introduction—Monday, October 13

Required Reading

Read Me First and Syllabus

Required Assignments

Complete Initial Tasks—Test Email and Discussion Board

Introduction Post

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, October 15

Unit 1—Political Science and the Declaration of Independence—Monday October 13—Sunday, October 26

Required Reading (Found in Content)

Textbook Chapter 1—Political Science

Steven B. Smith, “In Defense of Politics”

The Declaration of Independence

Suggested video links to topics

Required Assignments

Discussion 1—Topic: In Defense of Politics (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Responses (3 posts in total)

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, October 26

Paper 1—Topic: The Declaration of Independence (Found in Assignments)—Opens Monday, October 13

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, October 26

Unit 1 Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday, October 13

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, October 26

Research Paper—Position Paper (Found in Assignments)—Opens Monday, October 14

DUE: 11:59 PM, Friday, November 30, 2025

Unit 2—The U.S. Constitution and *The Federalist Papers*—Monday, October 27—Sunday, Sunday, November 9

Required Reading (Found in Content)

Textbook Chapter 2 and Notes—U.S. Constitution

Text of the Constitution of the United States (with amendments)

The Federalist Papers, nos. 10 & 51

Notes on *The Federalist Papers*

Suggested video links to topics

Required Assignments

Discussion 2—Topic: *The Federalist Papers* (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Responses

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, November 9

Paper 2—Topic: U.S. Constitution (Found in Assignments)—
Opens Monday, October 27

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, November 9

Unit 2 Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday,
October 27

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, November 9

Unit 3—Political Participation in the United States—Monday, November 10—Sunday, November 23

Required Reading (Found in Content)

Textbook Chapter 7 and Notes—Voting and Elections in the United States

Textbook Chapter 9 and Notes—Political Parties in the United States

Textbook Chapter 10 and Notes—Organized Interests

Textbook Chapters 6 & 8 and Notes—Public Opinion and Media

Required video links to topics

Required Assignments

Discussion 3—Topic: Public Opinion (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Responses

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, November 23

Paper 3—Topic: Political Parties (Found in Assignments)
Opens Monday, November 10

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, November 23

Unit 3 Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday, November 10

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, November 23

Unit 4—Political Institutions—Monday, November 24—Tuesday, December 2

Required Reading (Found in Content)

Chapter 11 and Notes—Congress

Chapters 12 and Notes—Presidency

Chapters 13 and Notes—United States Judiciary

Chapter 15 and Notes—United States Bureaucracy
Chapter 4 & 5 and Notes—Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Suggested video links to topics

Required Assignments

Discussion 4—Topic: Constitutional Interpretation (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Response

DUE: 11:59 PM, Tuesday, December 2

Paper 4—Congress & the Presidency (Found in Assignments)—

Opens Monday, November 24

DUE: 11:59 PM, Tuesday, December 2

Unit 4 Exam—Opens Monday, November 24

DUE: 11:59 PM, Tuesday, December 2

Research Paper—Position Paper (Found in Assignments)

Opens Monday, October 13

DUE: 11:59 PM, Friday, November 30

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 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:

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 only permitted to withdraw six times during their college career according to state law. The last day to withdraw 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 for 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.