

# LAKES REGION COMMUNITY COLLEGE

379 Belmont Road  
Laconia, NH 03246  
(603) 524-3207

## COURSE OUTLINE/SYLLABUS SHEET

- **COURSE NO:** POLS 231L

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- **COURSE TITLE:** American Government

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- **CREDIT HOURS:** 3 Semester Hours

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- **SEMESTER:** Spring, 2022
- **CLASS MEETINGS:** Online Class

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- **INSTRUCTOR:** E. Scott Cracraft
- **INSTRUCTOR'S EMAIL:** ecracraft@ccsnh.edu

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- **OFFICE LOCATION:** Room # 109 C.A.T. Building

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- **CONFERENCE HOURS:** Monday, 12-3 p. m.  
Wednesdays, 11-1 p. m.  
  
Or, by appointment

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- **PREREQUISITES:** None

- **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This introductory course in government examines the relationship between government, politics and power. Students discuss how people in a representative democracy can effect change in government to address current and future needs.

- **TEXT/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED:**

**Text:**

The good news is that in this course, you will NOT have to purchase a textbook! Instead, as a primary text, we will be using an Online Educational Resource which is free to you. Here is the link to the OER:

*American Government* <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e>

**“Outside” Book:**

Read and review and outside book that is related to you research paper topic.

**Other materials:**

These materials will be posted in the Modules on Canvas. These will include the U.S. Constitution, the NH Constitution, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and other primary documents. These will also include links to websites, yy Online written lectures, articles, videos, and very likely. recorded ZOOM lectures.

**Note:** Students are responsible for all material posted in the Canvas Modules.

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• **GRADING:**

**Grades are assigned based on a percentage of total points earned:**

Weekly Assignments (13 of 14 at up to 25 pts. ea.):	325 points
Weekly Discussion Board Questions (14 of 15, up to 25 pts. ea.):	350 points
Book Review:	50 points
Research Prospectus:	25 points
Final Paper:	100 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>950 points</b>

**Grading Scale:**

A 93-100	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62
B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 0-59

**NOTE:** *Grades will be posted on an electronic grade books on Canvas which class members can access.*

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• **COURSE OUTCOMES/COMPETENCIES**

**At the conclusion of the course, the student will be able to**

1. Analyze how our political system is supposed to work.
2. Define government, politics, power, and democracy.
3. Analyze the shift in the balance of power and the rise of a strong national government within the American federal system.
4. Evaluate the impact of the media on political campaigns and elections.
5. Assess our individual importance for the quality of American society and American Government.

## **COLLEGE IN THE TIME OF COVID**

Although this is an online course, if you do come to the Lakes Region Community College campus, it is imperative that you follow the COVID health and safety measures in place. These sometimes change and to keep up to date, read the information on the College's website.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Class members are expected to adhere to the highest standards of *academic honesty*. Other people can take your house, your money, your car, or even your freedom. Time will certainly take your youth, health, and good looks. Only *you*, however, can give up your integrity. Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating on exams and other assignments as well as plagiarism, which means presenting someone else's work as your own.

Proven cases of academic dishonesty may result in an "F" for the course as well as other disciplinary action per NHCTC policy. When in doubt, the instructor reserves the right to investigate suspected cases of academic dishonesty, such as by ascertaining independently the student's knowledge of the material.

***IMPORTANT NOTE:*** Students should be aware that since all work is submitted online, I will be using Turnitin, an app that shows the percentage of how much of what you write can be found elsewhere. A small percentage is to be expected but if it comes up with a high percentage of things that can be found elsewhere, that is not good and will be reflected in your grade for the assignment.

Even if I know where you got it and you cite it but quote it verbatim, it might not be true plagiarism but here is the problem: if you copy something directly from a source, all the instructor knows is that you are good at copying! He will not be sure that you really understand the question or the course material. Make sure you put your answers into your own words as much as possible so I will know you know what you are talking about!

- **ACADEMIC FREEDOM, COURTESY, AND RESPECT**

A class dealing with social and political issues is hardly "neutral." The social sciences are different from the "hard" or "natural" sciences. Opinions matter and everyone,

including the instructor, has one! We will be having weekly discussions and debates in this course on discussion boards.

The instructor is dedicated to *academic freedom*. All opinions and viewpoints are welcome in this class. A class member will never be graded based on his or her opinion or ideology but only on performance on such measures as exams and other activities.

The only rule is that all members of the class should conduct themselves as mature members of an academic community. This means *listening* to the positions of people with whom one disagrees. It is always O.K. to express one's one opinion but respect should be shown to those of opposing opinions, no matter how unpopular they may be at a given time. Debate and argument—even *intense* debate and argument--are welcome but disagreement should never descend to *personal* attacks.

After all, one can learn more about her or his own viewpoint when there is an understanding of, and even grudging respect for, the “other” point of view.

## **CANVAS AND COLLEGE EMAIL**

Since this is a completely online class, we will be doing everything on Canvas. That is where you will learn the material and submit your work. If you are not familiar with Canvas, I expect you to be before the class starts. If you have problems, there is a Canvas help desk or you can contact me. The Canvas site for this course will be available in advance of when the class actually starts and that will give you time to familiarize yourselves.

Since some of you may be at another college or taking this course in high school, you should contact someone at your school who is familiar with Canvas such as your IT person, a teacher, or a librarian. Not being functional in Canvas is not an excuse for not submitting your work on time! You should be checking the Canvas site for this course regularly

When I communicate with you, it will be through your COLLEGE email and not your Personal email account like Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo. So, you should also be checking your college email regularly. Typically, when I have something to say to the entire class, I will post an announcement on Canvas and send it to everyone.

## **CANVAS MODULES**

The Canvas site for this course will be divided into weekly Modules. To make it easy for you, everything will be accessible to you in the Canvas Modules. I will be posting your OER readings and other material for that week as well as the assignments and discussion board questions.

The assignments and discussion boards as well as the material for that week will be posted no later than the Monday beginning that week. Assignments

and Discussions should be completed and submitted the following Sunday by 5 p. m.

I will likely be putting things up in the module in advance so that even though something is not yet due, you can “study ahead.”

### **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be 14 assignments (almost every week) during the semester. These assignments can vary. They could be an essay, a couple of short essays, a test with short answer questions, definitions and I.D. tests, or a combination. They are due by 11: 59 on the Saturday ending the week in which they were assigned.

Each assignment will count for up to 25 points toward the final grade. Only the highest 13 scores will be counted BUT if you do all 14, your lowest score will be added as extra credit points!

### **WEEKLY DISCUSSION BOARDS**

Throughout the semester, there will be a discussion board every week where I will post one or more questions for discussion and debate. Each discussion board discussion is worth up to 25 points toward your final grade. Your lowest grade will be dropped but if you do them all, your lowest grade will count as extra credit. You should start posting no later than the Wednesday in which it is assign and have your posts completed by 11:59 p . m. on the Saturday ending the week. Your grade will depend on how much you contribute to the discussion and interaction with your classmates. More information on the Discussion Boards will be provide on Canvas.

### **LETTER TO A PUBLIC OFFICIAL**

Each student will write a public official on an issue of concern to him or her. This is not due until the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the course when the letters will be the Discussion Board topic for that week. You will then post your letters and any replies and we will discuss them. Even though they are not due until the 12<sup>th</sup> week, you should write your letter as soon as possible to increase the chances that you will get a reply.

Your letter should be in a “business” format with the name and title of the recipient and your return address. While you may email your letter, some studies show that public officials often take more seriously a “snail mail” letter because of the extra effort.

Part of this exercise will be determining the “right” official to write to about your concern. For example, if your garbage is not being picked up, the best place to write is probably not the White House!

### **REVIEW BOOK AND FINAL PAPER PROSPECTUS**

By the end of the fourth week of class, you should submit a prospectus or proposal

for your “outside” book to review and your final paper. Your book should be one you can use for your final paper. This assignment is worth up to 25 points toward your final grade.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

Each student will choose, in collaboration with me and with my approval, one monographic work (not a textbook) that deals with a political problem, question, or issue. It should also relate to your final paper topic and you can use it as ONE source for your paper. The instructor needs your possible books submitted by the end of the fifth week along with a prospectus for your final paper

Once your book has been approved, you will write a review of the book. Book reviews should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in . based on a #12 font. If you use a larger font, you must compensate in the page length. The book review should also be carefully *proofread* for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, and style.

Your book review should contain the following: the title of the book, the name of the author, the place and date of publication (e.g. New York, 2015) a bit of information about the author (you may find this in the book itself or you may have to google it) and a brief synopsis of the book and its main points or theses. You should conclude the book review with a critical conclusion. Did the author make his or her point? What did you think of the book? Would you recommend it?

The book review is worth up to 50 points toward the final grade.

## **FINAL PAPER**

Each student will pick a topic of interest to the student that deals with politics, a political or social issue, or other related topic. Your topic should be narrowed down. You must submit a prospectus for this by the end of the fifth week. This so I can help you narrow down your topic and otherwise help you.

You need to use at least five sources to back up your argument and these sources need to be CITED using the APA format. It should also include an ANNOTATED bibliography or works-cited page.

Your position paper should be 4-5 double-spaced pages in length (not counting any cover or works-cited pages). It should be carefully proofread for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage and style. The position paper is worth up to 100 points toward the final grade. More information on the position paper will be provided on Canvas.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

The instructor *may* provide opportunities for extra credit. This is solely at the

discretion of the instructor. It should be remembered that any extra credit offered will be not “substitute” credit. In other words, it will only be offered to all members of the class and not just to individual students who have done poorly on other assignments and exams.

- **DUE DATES/MAKEUP AND LATE WORK**

Students are expected to turn in their work on time. All work should be submitted by 11:59 p. m. on the Saturday after the week in which it was assigned. The instructor will consider make up and late work for good reasons and on a case-by-case basis. It is up to YOU to contact the instructor if this is the case. In non-emergency situations, you should contact the instructor by email or phone BEFORE the deadline and in emergency situations, as soon as possible. If you do not submit the work on time and have not contacted the instructor, you will get a “zero” on the assignment.

### **NEED HELP?**

Every student sometimes needs additional help. That is part of the instructor’s job. Student’s experiencing difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties or issues should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

If the student has an issue, problem, question. or needs help the instructor cannot help him or her with, he will do his best to refer the student to resources that can help!

The instructor is not a psychic or a mind reader. He does not know if a student is having difficulty unless the student makes him aware!

### **DEPARTMENT CHAIR INFORMATION:**

It is my hope that this course meets your every expectation as a challenging, engaging, and respectful learning experience. If you find this not to be the case, I would welcome the opportunity to address your concerns. This is not only a courtesy, it is a matter of process and procedure. Should be fail to arrive at a mutually satisfactory understanding, you should take the matter to my immediate supervisor, Professor Stephen Freeborn, [sfreeborn@ccsnh.edu](mailto:sfreeborn@ccsnh.edu).

- **COURSE SCHEDULE/OUTLINE**

<b>Wk. Ending</b>	<b><i>Tentative Topics</i></b>	<b>OER Readings</b>
<b>Jan 22</b>	introduction to course; types of polities: introduction to the U.S. Constitution	Ch. 1
<b>Jan 29</b>	political theory; Enlightenment political philosophy; the British System	
<b>Feb 5</b>	the American Revolution; the Declaration of Independence; the Articles of Confederation: The 1787 Constitutional Convention	Ch. 2
<b>Feb 12</b>	federalism; the separation of powers; unitary, confederal and federal systems of government: federal relationships; majority rule vs. minority rights; separation of powers; amending the Constitution	Ch. 3
<b>Feb 19</b>	Congress; comparative legislative systems; the duties of Congress; the term limits debate; the “filibuster”; <b>Book and Final Paper Prospectus Due</b>	Ch. 11
<b>Feb 26</b>	the Federal executive branch; powers and roles of the U.S. President; the Electoral College: Presidential elections; the Vice President; the Presidential Succession; the impeachment process	Ch 12
<b>Mar 5</b>	the Federal bureaucracy; state and local government; Federal and state budgetary processes	Ch. 14, 15
<b>Mar 12</b>	law and comparative legal systems; criminal justice	
<b>Mar 19</b>	<b>Spring Break! No Work!</b>	
<b>Mar 26</b>	the Federal judiciary; the military justice system state court systems	Ch. 13
<b>Apr 2</b>	human and civil rights and liberties; the Bill of Rights; rights in the body (Articles) of the Constitution	Ch. 4,5
<b>Apr 9</b>	political ideologies; public opinion; political participation; elections and voting	Ch. 6,7
<b>Apr 16</b>	interest groups; PACs; political parties; <b>Book Review Due</b>	Ch. 8, 9,10
<b>Apr 23</b>	domestic policy	Ch. 16
<b>Apr 30</b>	foreign policy	Ch. 17
<b>May 7</b>	wrap up; <b>Final Paper Due</b>	

*Note: If there are any differences between what is in this schedule and that which is in the weekly Canvas Modules, the Canvas Modules take precedence.*