

# LAKES REGION COMMUNITY COLLEGE

379 Belmont Road  
Laconia, NH 03246  
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## COURSE OUTLINE/SYLLABUS SHEET

**COURSE NO:** POLS 231L

**COURSE TITLE:** American Government

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3 Semester Hours

**SEMESTER:** Fall 2022

**INSTRUCTOR NAME:** Elisabeth Conn

**INSTRUCTOR'S EMAIL:** econn@ccsnh.edu

**CONFERENCE HOURS:** By appointment, conducted over Zoom

**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:** *American Government 3e*, available to read online for free at  
<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

**Other materials:** These materials will be posted on Canvas and will include the U.S. Constitution, the NH Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, U.S. Declaration of Independence, articles, essays, and other readings.

### **GRADING:**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Weekly Discussions & Assignments | 25% |
| Annotated Bibliography           | 15% |
| Book Review                      | 15% |
| Research Paper                   | 30% |
| Letter to Public Official        | 15% |

### **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  |

## **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.

## **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 LRCC 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.

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM, COURTESY, AND RESPECT**

The instructor is dedicated to academic freedom. Etiquette for this online course is the same as it would be in a classroom setting: While you can disagree with others, please be respectful and don't make it personal. *All* opinions and viewpoints are welcome in this class. It is always okay to express one's own 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.

If you feel that someone has overstepped on proper etiquette, please let me know and we will find an appropriate response.

## **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 we fail to arrive at a mutually satisfactory understanding, you should take the matter to my immediate supervisor, Stephen Freeborn: [sfreeborn@ccsnh.edu](mailto:sfreeborn@ccsnh.edu).

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION STATEMENT**

The content of this course is designed to challenge your viewpoints and perspective as part of your learning experience. It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives are well-served by this course. Students' learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class, and the diversity of students will benefit the class and will be considered a resource and strength. Materials and activities presented in class will respect diversity including: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture.

- Discuss privately with me if you feel your success in the class is being impacted by experiences outside of class. I am always open to listening to students' experiences and want to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
- If you feel that something offensive occurred regarding DEI topics in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please let me know.
- Please make me aware if you have a name and/or set of pronouns that are different from those appearing on your official records.

I encourage you to seek out other resources, such as an academic advisor or another trusted faculty member, if you feel more comfortable addressing issues with these individuals. Anonymous feedback can be submitted [here](#).

## **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

You can expect a discussion board question posted almost every week based on assigned readings and I will be clear in the instructions which readings correspond with that week's topic. Your initial post needs to be completed by Tuesday at 11:59pm and replies completed by 11:59pm on the Saturday of the same week. Effective participation involves demonstrating your familiarity with the class readings and applying these concepts to specific cases and reflection questions. Other weekly assignments can vary depending on the material we are covering, but examples might be a shorter reading to write about, a podcast/video to view and respond to, current event responses, or mini-research assignments.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

You 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. Send me your possible book titles by the end of Week 3. Submit two or three books related to the course material and I will either tell you which one sounds best to review or tell you that any are ok. There will be an ungraded assignment in Canvas for this. Once your book has been approved, you will read it and write a 4-page review of the book. If the book is on the same topic as your research paper, you may use it as ONE of the required five sources for the research paper. More information on the book review will be provided on Canvas. This assignment is due at the end of Week 8.

## **RESEARCH PAPER**

You will develop a research question that deals with politics, domestic policy, foreign policy, or our structure of government. Questions must be submitted on Canvas for approval by the end of Week 7. An annotated bibliography with a minimum of 5 sources will be required and is due at the end of Week 10. Your paper should be 6-8 double-spaced pages in length (not counting any cover or References pages) and is due by the end of Week 14. More information will be provided on Canvas.

## **LETTER TO PUBLIC OFFICIAL**

To practice civic engagement, you will write a letter to a public official regarding an issue, problem, or concern that is important to you. This is due by the end of Week 15. Letters should be addressed to the recipient using their full address, name and title, and using business letter format. I will print a copy and send it directly to the recipient, using your own address as the return. Your letter will not be judged on the opinion that it expresses but rather on grammar, structure, and accurate knowledge of the issue involved. More information will be provided on Canvas.

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

Students are expected to turn in their work on time. I will consider makeup and late work for good reasons and on a case-by-case basis. It is up to YOU to contact me if this is the case. In non-emergency situations, you should contact me by email BEFORE the deadline and in emergency situations, as soon as possible. If you do not submit the work on time and have not contacted me, you will get a zero on the assignment. Failure to submit any work in the first two weeks of the course will result in your being dropped from the class.

## **NEED HELP?**

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

## COURSE SCHEDULE/OUTLINE

| Week    | Week Ending | Tentative Topics  | Major Deadlines                     |
|---------|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Week 1  | Sep 3       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• Engagement in a democracy</li> <li>• Political theory</li> </ul> |                                     |
| Week 2  | Sep 10      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutional origins</li> </ul>  |                                     |
| Week 3  | Sep 17      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federalism</li> <li>• Separation of powers</li> <li>• Federal relationships</li> </ul>             | Possible titles for Book Review due |
| Week 4  | Sep 24      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congress</li> </ul>  |                                     |
| Week 5  | Oct 1       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presidency</li> <li>• Presidential elections</li> </ul>  |                                     |
| Week 6  | Oct 8       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal bureaucracy</li> </ul>   |                                     |
| Week 7  | Oct 15      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The judiciary</li> </ul>   | Research Question due               |
| Week 8  | Oct 22      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State governments</li> <li>• Direct democracy</li> <li>• Initiatives and referenda</li> </ul>      | Book Review due                     |
| Week 9  | Oct 29      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Liberties</li> </ul>   | Annotated Bibliography due          |
| Week 10 | Nov 5       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Rights</li> </ul>  |                                     |
| Week 11 | Nov 12      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political ideologies</li> <li>• Public opinion</li> <li>• Elections and voting</li> </ul>          | Suggested benchmark: outline        |
| Week 12 | Nov 19      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties</li> </ul>   | Suggested benchmark: rough draft    |
| Week 13 | Nov 26      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest groups and lobbying</li> </ul>  |                                     |
| Week 14 | Dec 3       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media</li> </ul>   | Research paper due                  |
| Week 15 | Dec 10      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic policy</li> </ul>   | Letter to Public Official due       |
| Week 16 | Dec 17      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign policy</li> <li>• Course wrap-up</li> </ul>  |                                     |