



## Course Syllabus

- **COURSE NUMBER:** POLS 231L

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- **COURSE TITLE/MODALITY:** American Government (online)

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- **CREDIT HOURS:** 3

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- **SEMESTER:** Spring 2024

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- **FACULTY NAME:** Elisabeth Conn

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- **E-MAIL ADDRESS:** econn@ccsnh.edu

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- **OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment via Zoom. Email instructor to request a meeting time.

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- **PRE-REQUISITES:** None

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- **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

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- **TEXT/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:**
  1. Krutz, G. (2021). *American Government 3e*. OpenStax.  
  
Available to read online for free: <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>  
  
The textbook can also be ordered online if you prefer a physical copy: [Amazon Link](#)
  2. *APA 7th Manual Made Easy: Full Concise Guide Simplified for Students*. [Amazon Link](#)
  3. Additional materials will be posted on Canvas and may include articles, essays, podcasts, videos, and other media.

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- **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.

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- **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.](#)

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 at [sfreeborn@ccsnh.edu](mailto:sfreeborn@ccsnh.edu).

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- **COURSE SCHEDULE/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

### **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 7-9 double-spaced pages in length (not counting any cover or References pages) and is due by the end of Week 13. 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 14.

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.

**American Government (POL 231L) – Class Schedule Spring 2024  
100% ONLINE**

**Always refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date list of assignments.**

Week	Week Ending	Tentative Topics	Major Deadlines
Week 1	Jan 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• Engagement in a democracy</li> <li>• Political theory</li> </ul>	
Week 2	Jan 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutional origins</li> </ul>	
Week 3	Jan 3	<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	Feb 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congress</li> </ul>	
Week 5	Feb 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presidency</li> <li>• Presidential elections</li> </ul>	
Week 6	Feb 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal bureaucracy</li> </ul>	
Week 7	Mar 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Courts</li> </ul>	Research Question due
Week 8	Mar 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State governments</li> <li>• Direct democracy</li> <li>• Initiatives and referenda</li> </ul>	Book Review due
<b>LRCC Spring Break</b>			
Week 9	Mar 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Liberties</li> </ul>	
Week 10	Mar 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Rights</li> </ul>	Annotated Bibliography due
Week 11	Apr 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political ideologies</li> <li>• Public opinion</li> <li>• Elections and voting</li> </ul>	Research paper benchmark: outline
Week 12	Apr 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties</li> </ul>	Research paper benchmark: rough draft. Feedback will be given on citations only.
Week 13	Apr 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest groups and lobbying</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>	Research paper due
Week 14	Apr 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic policy</li> </ul>	Letter to Public Official due
Week 15	May 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign policy</li> <li>• Course wrap-up</li> </ul>	