

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
Course Content Summary

Course Description :

Teaches the political structure, processes, institutions, and policymaking of the US national government. Focuses on the three branches of government, their interrelationships, and how they shape policy. Addresses federalism; civil liberties and civil rights; political socialization and participation; public opinion, the media; interest groups; political parties; elections; and policymaking. The assignments in the course require college-level reading fluency and coherent communication through written reports. This is a Passport and UCGS transfer course. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week. 3 credits

General Course Purpose:

To enable students to demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge of American government and politics; demonstrate an understanding of how political scientists analyze and interpret the foundations, institutions, processes, and actors that constitute American government and politics; and, demonstrate critical thought about American government and politics.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites:

None

Course Objectives:

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

Civic

and several of the philosophical concepts that contributed to the development of U. S. democracy.

- ” Describe the origin and history of the U. S. Constitution and how the Constitution has adapted to our changing society.
- ” Explain the concept of Federalism and how the distribution of power between the national and state governments affords possibilities for conflict or cooperation.
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- ” Explain the influence of the bureaucracy on American politics.
- ” Explain the policy and budget-making processes.
- ” Explain ideologies underlying U.S. foreign policies throughout history.
- ” Compose a major essay, using peer-reviewed sources, critically evaluating a contemporary political issue being debated in America differentiating various points of view, and proposing an equitable resolution.

Professional Readiness

- ” Participate in collaborative assignments and presentations in the classroom or online.
- ” Adhere to classroom attendance and behavior requirements.
- ” Timely submission of assignments.
- ” Identify career opportunities within the federal government.

Quantitative Literacy

- ” Interpret and communicate quantitative information using language appropriate to the context and intended audience.
- ” Use appropriate quantitative methods to analyze voter turnout data; generally, assess polling information; and assess budget goals and proposals vs. costs and actual spending.
- ” Read and interpret graphs and descriptive statistics.
- ” Analyze how political and economic trends influence public policy, using demographic information and other data sources.

Scientific Literacy

- ” Describe the role of Enlightenment philosophers and their use of scientific reasoning in proposing political theories as well as their influence on the core values of American political thought.

Written Communication

- ” Compose a major essay and/or multiple smaller essays, using peer-reviewed sources, critically evaluating a contemporary political issue being debated in America differentiating various points of view, and proposing an equitable resolution.
- ” Written short essays addressing the topics addressed in the Critical Thinking section.

American Government and Civic Engagement

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- ” Compare different conceptions of federalism.
- ” Explain how federal intergovernmental grants have evolved.
- ” Identify the types of federal intergovernmental grants.
- ” Discuss the advantages of federalism.
- ” Explain the disadvantages and controversies of federalism.

Civil Liberties

- ” Define civil liberties and civil rights.
- ” Describe the development of civil liberties in the U.S. context and the conflicts that have been involved.

Civil Rights

- ” Define the concept of civil rights.
- ” Discuss the development of relevant concepts and controversies through American history, and the roles that various institutions and actors have played in this history.
- ” Consider the efforts of various groups to appeal for recognition of equality in America.

Public Opinion and Political Socialization

- ” Define public opinion and political socialization.
- ” Explain the process and role of political socialization in the U.S. political system.
- ” Compare how citizens learn political information.
- ” Explain how information about public opinion is gathered.
- ” Identify factors that change public opinion.
- ” Compare levels of public support for the branches of government.

Voting and Elections

- ” Consider the factors that influence Americans to vote as they do or why they chose not to.
- ” Describe important processes and terms in the process of electoral campaigns.

The Media

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