



LAKES
REGION
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

Course Syllabus

- **Course Number:** POLS 231L

- **Course Title/Modality:** American Government (online)

- **Credit Hours:** 3

- **Semester:** Spring 2025

- **Faculty Name:** Elisabeth Conn

- **E-Mail Address:** econn@ccsnh.edu

- **Office Hours:** By appointment via Zoom. Email instructor to request a meeting time.

- **Pre-Requisites:** 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 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*. [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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- **Academic Integrity, Cheating, and Plagiarism**

Honesty is expected of all LRCC students. In academic matters this includes the submission of work that clearly indicates its sources. Dishonest acts include cheating and plagiarism, as well as other forms of academic misconduct.

Cheating is defined as copying or otherwise using material from others, or using sources not approved by faculty.

Plagiarism is defined as using the work (ideas, words, artwork, etc.) of another person as one's own. The failure to cite sources or the extensive use of others' work in written material are the most common types of plagiarism.

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are considered serious disciplinary matters and are subject to the same penalties and procedures as other LRCC disciplinary matters. Students should be aware that penalties levied in substantiated cases of cheating or plagiarism may include, but are not limited to, the issuance of a grade of F, which may in turn lead to delay of graduation. Repeated offenses may lead to dismissal from a program or from the college.

Refer to the Academic Honesty Policy in the Student Handbook.

- **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.

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 must be between 400-500 words and needs to be completed by **Wednesday at 11:59pm**. A reply to a classmate of 250-300 words needs to be 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 an evidence-based response (EBR) in which you read/listen/view an additional resource and respond to an open-ended question. Other assignments could include current events, or mini-research assignments.

Book Review

You will choose, in collaboration with me and with my approval, one nonfiction book 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 1300-word 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 must be 2000-3000 words 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 how professionally and articulately your concerns are communicated, the strength of your evidence, formatting, and mechanics. 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 2025
100% ONLINE**

Always refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date list of assignments as I try to keep our resources relevant. As events in American Government evolve, our work may evolve too.

Week	Dates	Tentative Topics	Readings/Media	Assignments	Targeted Outcomes
1	Jan 21 - Jan 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to course ● Democratic Engagement ● Political theory 	Krutz Chapter 1 Schudson’s America’s Ignorant Voters	Discussion and reply Evidence based response (EBR)	Meets outcomes 1, 3, 5
2	Jan 26 – Feb 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constitutional origins 	Krutz Chapter 2 Creating a Constitution (video) Brutus excerpts	Discussion and reply EBR	Meets outcomes 1, 3, 5
3	Feb 2 – Feb 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Federalism ● Separation of powers 	Krutz Chapter 3 Kettl’s Federalism	Discussion and reply EBR	Meets outcomes 1, 3

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal relationships 	Federalism maps	Book review title	
4	Feb 9 – Feb 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congress 	Krutz Chapter 11 Civics101 podcast	Discussion and reply EBR	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 5
5	Feb 16 – Feb 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presidency Presidential elections 	Krutz Chapter 12	Discussion and reply Current Event	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5
6	Feb 23 – Mar 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal bureaucracy 	Krutz Chapter 15	Discussion and reply Mini-research assignment	Meets outcomes 1, 3
7	Mar 2 – Mar 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Courts 	Krutz Chapter 13 Civics101 podcast	Discussion and reply EBR Research Question	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5
8	Mar 9 – Mar 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State governments Direct democracy Initiatives and referenda 	Krutz Chapter 14 and 7.4 Conn's Political Culture	Discussion and reply EBR Book Review	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4
Mar 17 – Mar 22 Spring Break					
9	Mar 23 – Mar 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Liberties 	Krutz Chapter 4	Discussion and reply Infographic	Meets outcomes 1, 3, 5
10	Mar 30 – April 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Rights 	Krutz Chapter 5	Discussion and reply Annotated Bibliography	Meets outcomes 1, 3, 5
11	April 6 – April 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political ideologies Public opinion Elections and voting 	Krutz Chapter 6.1, 6.3, 7.1-7.4 Electoral Dysfunction (video)	Discussion and reply EBR	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5
12	April 13 – April 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political parties 	Krutz Chapter 9 Bishop's The Big Sort and 2023 update	Discussion and reply EBR	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5
13	April 20 – April 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest groups and the Media 	Krutz Chapter 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 8.3, 8.4	Discussion and reply Research paper	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5
14	April 27 – May 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic policy 	Krutz Chapter 16 ProCon Policy Issues	Discussion and reply EBR Letter to Public Official	Meets outcomes 1, 2, 3