



Course Syllabus

Course Number: POLS 231L

Course Title/Modality: American Government (Online/Asynchronous)

Credit Hours: 3 Semester Hours

Semester: Spring 2026

Faculty Name: Elisabeth Conn

Faculty Email: econn@ccsnh.edu

Office Hours: By appointment via 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 Required:

Required Textbook: Krutz, G. (2021). *American government 3e*. OpenStax.

Recommended: [Concise Guide to APA Style 7th Edition](#)

Other materials: Additional materials will be posted on Canvas and may include articles, essays, podcasts, videos, and other media.

GRADING:

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

Grading Scale:

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|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 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.

Late Work Policy

Late work is not accepted, however there are occasions in which life happens. The instructor will consider makeup 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 BEFORE the deadline. 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.

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.

****The use of AI is not permitted. This includes sites or tools that modify or edit grammar, such as Grammarly. Additionally, this course has a heavy emphasis on correct sourcing of information through citations and references in APA format.**

Non-Discrimination Policy

Lakes Region Community College does not discriminate in the administration of its admissions and educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, gender identity and expression, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or marital status. This statement is a reflection of the mission

of the Community College System of New Hampshire and LRCC and refers to, but is not limited to, the provisions of the following laws:

- Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1967
- Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
- Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974
- NH Law Against Discrimination (RSA 354-A)
- NH Law RSA 188-F:3-a
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

LRCC degree, certificate, and career training programs are designed to meet the educational and workforce needs of the Lakes Region. Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities will be offered regardless of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or veteran status. LRCC reduces barriers to future career and educational opportunities for area residents by helping them upskill with general academic and technical education, as well as customized business and industry training. View the CTE program details at LRCC.edu.

Inquiries regarding discrimination may be directed to Laura LeMien, Associate Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs and Title IX Coordinator, at LLeMien@ccsnh.edu

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.

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 6. 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.

References, Citations, and Formatting

This course uses APA format. A recommended guide is linked for you on the first page of the syllabus however any APA 7th edition manual is fine. The format for student papers will be used, not professional papers. Ongoing feedback, examples, tips, and other formatting/referencing information will be provided each week to help you do this correctly. In addition, point penalties are imposed for errors. I am happy to conference with anyone who wants more help with this.

COURSE SCHEDULE/OUTLINE

| Week | Dates | Tentative Topics | Readings/Media | Assignments | Targeted Outcomes |
|------|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Jan 20 - Jan 24 | <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 25 – Jan 31 | <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 1 – Feb 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federalism• Separation of powers• Federal relationships | Krutz Chapter 3 Kettl's Federalism Federalism maps | Discussion and reply EBR Book review title | Meets outcomes 1, 3 |

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|---------------------------|---------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 4 | Feb 8 – Feb 14 | • Congress | Krutz Chapter 11 Civics101 podcast | Discussion and reply EBR | Meets outcomes 1, 2, 5 |
| 5 | Feb 15 – Feb 21 | • The presidency • Presidential elections | Krutz Chapter 12 | Discussion and reply Current Event | Meets outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5 |
| 6 | Feb 22 – Feb 28 | • Federal bureaucracy | Krutz Chapter 15 Who is Government excerpts | Discussion and reply EBR Research Question | Meets outcomes 1, 3 |
| 7 | Mar 1 – Mar 7 | • The Courts | Krutz Chapter 13 Civics101 podcast | Discussion and reply EBR | Meets outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5 |
| 8 | Mar 8 – Mar 14 | • 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 |
| Spring Break - no classes | | | | | |
| 9 | Mar 15 – Mar 28 | • Civil Liberties | Krutz Chapter 4 | Discussion and reply Infographic | Meets outcomes 1, 3, 5 |
| 10 | Mar 29 – April 4 | • Civil Rights | Krutz Chapter 5 | Discussion and reply Annotated Bibliography | Meets outcomes 1, 3, 5 |
| 11 | April 5 – April 11 | • 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 12 – April 18 | • 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 19 – April 25 | • Interest groups and the Media | Krutz Chapter 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 8.3, 8.4 | Discussion and reply Research Paper Due | Meets outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5 |
| 14 | April 26 - May 2 | • Domestic policy | Krutz Chapter 16 ProCon Policy Issues | Discussion and reply EBR Letter to Public Official | Meets outcomes 1, 2, 3 |
| 15 | May 3 – May 9 | • Foreign policy | Krutz Chapter 17 | Discussion and reply Final assignment | Meets outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |