

# American Federal Government

POS 2041 | Credits: 3.00

Summer B 2025

June 30, 2025 – August 8, 2025

M, T, W, R, F 11:00 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.

Anderson Hall, Room 0101

Instructor: Juliana Mucci

Office Hours: T/R 2:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. (or by appt.)

[Calendly Link](#) (Also available on Canvas Homepage)

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## Course Description

In this course, students will investigate how the national government is structured and how the American constitutional republic operates. It covers the philosophical and historical foundations of American government, including but not limited to the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and all its Amendments, and the Federalist Papers. The course examines the branches of government and the government's laws, policies, and programs. It also examines the ways in which citizens participate in their government and the ways their government responds to citizens.

The course will address questions such as: How does government work in the United States? How do the three branches of government interact with the public and each other? What is a democracy, and how does the United States fit into this framework? What are some suggestions for how to better our institutions? Students will engage in thinking through these questions through a combination of lectures, civic discussions, readings, and exams. Ultimately, students should leave with a better understanding of how to think critically about politics and government, how to understand our political institutions, and how to engage in civic life.

*Note: This syllabus is subject to change as needed. Students are required to check Canvas and their UF email regularly to ensure they maintain the most current version of the syllabus, which may include changes to deadlines or assigned readings. Please note that aspects such as the course's grading scheme, learning objectives, and University policies are not subject to change.*

## Required Texts

Our main text will be Greenberg et al.'s ***The Struggle for Democracy: 2020 Presidential Election Edition*** (ISBN-13: 9780136901051). In the course schedule below, this book will be referred to as "TSD". This textbook is available for purchase in both physical and digital form, and either format is acceptable. A physical copy of this textbook is also available to use via Library West, as are earlier editions, which are perfectly acceptable to use (though it is important to note that examples will be outdated). This text provides a thorough understanding of our government's structure, our relationship to government, and what the government does.

We will also be reading from the *Constitution of the United States* and the *Federalist Papers* as we progress through the course. You are more than welcome to purchase your own copies of these documents, but know that links to these readings will be available through Canvas.

### **Materials and Supplies Fee**

N/A

### **Student Learning Outcomes & Civic Literacy Requirement:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to do the following, per the state of Florida's Civic Literacy Competencies (as required by [Florida Statute 1007.25](#)):

- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of the U.S.'s constitutional republic.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the nation's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and its Amendments, and the Federalist Papers.
- Demonstrate knowledge of landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the American Federal Government and its impact on law and society.
- Demonstrate an ability to apply course material to contemporary political issues and debates.
- Demonstrate the ability to engage in discussion and civil debate on American politics that are associated with multiple points of view.

### **General Education**

This course fulfills a Social and Behavioral Sciences (S) General Education requirement. Please note that a minimum grade of C (73%) is required to obtain the general education credit. More information on general education requirements can be found [here](#).

UF's Student Learning Outcomes for General Education courses can be found [here](#), and the Subject Area Objectives for the General Education courses can be found [here](#). To review the Subject Area Objectives for this course, please read from the section for Social Science (S).

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

#### Attendance (10%):

In a condensed semester like this one, every class session matters. Your presence is key to staying on track with the material and getting the most out of the course. Attendance is the simplest part of your grade to get, as just showing up earns full credit. But beyond the grade, being present gives you the opportunity to ask questions in real time, build a deeper understanding of the course material, and learn alongside your peers.

That being said, I understand that things happen, and I appreciate communication. If you are unable to attend class, please let me know. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.

Lastly, in recognition of how intense Summer B can feel (it can be kind of a slog!), I've built in *two (2)* catch-up/rest/study days: Thursday, July 24, and Thursday, August 7. Consider this a mutual exchange: I'm giving you a couple of days to recharge; in return, I ask that you show up and be engaged when class is in session.

*In-Class Discussions (20%):*

During our class time on Fridays (except for Friday, July 4) when we will not have exams, we will have in-class discussions on the broad topics and themes that we have discussed up to that point in the course, as well as any relevant current events. This means that we will have *three (3)* in-class discussions for the term on the following days:

- In-Class Discussion #1: Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup> (as Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup> is a holiday)
- In-Class Discussion #2: Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>
- In-Class Discussion #3: Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup>

Participation in the discussion will be graded on these days. Below is the grading rubric for discussion participation. This portion of your grade is based on the quality of your participation, including listening, preparation, and quality of contributions. Opinions held by other students and the instructor should be respected in the discussions.

	<b>Strong (A+ to B+)</b>	<b>Needs Development (B to C)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (C- or lower)</b>
<b>Listening</b> (15 points possible)	Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor.  (15 – 13 points)	Actively listens most of the time, though sometimes displays lack of interest in discussion.  (13 – 11 points)	Projects lack of interest or disrespect for others (including browsing other materials during class).  (11 – 0 points)
<b>Preparation</b> (20 points possible)	Arrives fully prepared for discussion and is eager to contribute observations and questions.  (20 – 17.4 points)	Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation.  (17.4 – 14.6 points)	Little evidence of having prepared or thought about the upcoming discussion.  (14.6 – 0 points)
<b>Quality of Contributions</b>	Comments are relevant and reflect understanding and insights about content and previous remarks of other students; comments and	Comments and questions are sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate a lack of attention to previous remarks of other students; sometimes advance	Comments reflect little understanding of either the content or previous remarks in class; comments and questions do not advance the

(35 points possible)	questions frequently help move the discussion forward.  (35 – 30.5 points)	the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward.  (30.5 – 25.6 points)	conversation or are actively harmful to it.  (25.6 – 0 points)
<b>Attendance</b> (30 points possible)	Has attended every discussion period or has an excused absence for missed discussions.  (30 – 26 points)	Missed a discussion period with no excused absence.  (26 – 22 points)	Missed more than one discussion period or never attended a discussion period with no excused absences.  (22 – 0 points)

### Exams (60%):

On the Fridays when we are not having our discussions, we will have exams. Each exam is equally weighted (20% per exam). This means that we will have *three (3)* exams for the term on the following days:

- Exam 1: Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>
- Exam 2: Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>
- Exam 3: Friday, August 8<sup>th</sup>

The exams are *not* cumulative. Exam 1 will cover the information from Weeks 1 and 2, Exam 2 will cover the information from Weeks 3 and 4, and Exam 3 will cover the information from Weeks 5 and 6. More information about the exams will be provided in class a week in advance of each exam date.

### Viewing Grades:

Students will be made aware of their grades through Canvas. Course attendance will be updated every day through Canvas's "Attendance" feature. Discussion participation will be graded and entered into Canvas with comments following each discussion day. Exam grades will also be entered into Canvas, and students will be able to keep their exams if they wish.

### **UF's Grading Policy**

This course will follow UF's grading scheme. The following cutoffs will be used for grades:

93.0 – 100% (A)	83.0 – 86.9% (B)	73.0 – 76.9% (C)	63.0 – 66.9% (D)
90.0 – 92.9% (A-)	80.0 – 82.9% (B-)	70.0 – 72.9% (C-)	60.0 – 62.9% (D+)
87.0 – 89.9% (B+)	77.0 – 79.9% (C+)	67.0 – 69.9% (D+)	<60% (F)

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found [here](#).

## Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways: [1] The email they receive from GatorEvals; [2] Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals; or [3] The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluer.com>. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## Resources

### Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See “Get Started With the DRC” Disability Resource Center webpage (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

### Health & Wellness Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling with any crisis including, but not limited to, gender, sexual, racial, or domestic violence, there are many community and University of Florida resources available. Some of these include:

- U Matter, We Care: 352-392-1575, [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu)
- Counseling and Wellness Center: 352-392-1575, [counseling@ufl.edu](mailto:counseling@ufl.edu) (available 24/7)
- Alachua County Crisis Center’s Crisis Line: 352-264-6789
- Student Health Care Center: 352-392-1161, [shcc@ufl.edu](mailto:shcc@ufl.edu)
- UFPD Office of Victim Services: 352-392-1111, [police@ufl.edu](mailto:police@ufl.edu)
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: 352-733-0111

### Academic Resources

The resources listed below are not exhaustive of all the academic resources that are available to students, but these encapsulate those that are helpful for students seeking library support or those looking for help with writing, tutoring, and general study skills:

- Library Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138, <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.
- Academic Resources: provides services like tutoring, <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu>.

## Academic Integrity

Every UF student is subject to the following [Honor Pledge](#):

*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. On all*

*work submitted for credit by Students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

As the Honor Pledge relates to work in this course, this means cheating on exams is unacceptable. In addition to harming your professional career, and especially your grade, academic dishonesty will ultimately destroy your ability to learn from this class. Honor code violations often occur when students feel rushed and overwhelmed, especially during a shorter academic term such as this one. If this happens, do not panic, and instead reach out to me so we can address the situation together.

### **In-Class Recording**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures; however, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. **Please note that this means that any in-class discussions cannot be recorded.** Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. More information about in-class recording can be found [here](#).

## Schedule

Week 1		
6/30	Monday	Syllabus & Course Introduction
7/1	Tuesday	TSD Ch. 1: Democracy & American Politics To read: <i>The Declaration of Independence and The Preamble to the Constitution</i>
7/2	Wednesday	TSD Ch. 2: The Constitution To read: <i>Federalist Papers #10 and #51</i>
7/3	Thursday	TSD Ch. 2: The Constitution To read: <i>Federalist Papers #10 and #51</i>
7/4	Friday	<b>** NO CLASS, HOLIDAY **</b>

Week 2		
7/7	Monday	In-Class Discussion #1
7/8	Tuesday	TSD Ch. 3: Federalism
7/9	Wednesday	TSD Ch. 3: Federalism
7/10	Thursday	TSD Ch. 4: Structural Foundations of Am. Govt & Politics
7/11	Friday	<b><u>Exam 1:</u></b> <b>Ch. 1, 2, 3, &amp; 4</b>

Week 3		
7/14	Monday	TSD Ch. 11: Congress To read: <i>Article I of the Constitution</i>
7/15	Tuesday	TSD Ch. 11: Congress To read: <i>Article I of the Constitution</i>
7/16	Wednesday	TSD Ch. 12: The Presidency To read: <i>Article II of the Constitution</i>
7/17	Thursday	TSD Ch. 13: The Executive Branch (Bureaucracy)
7/18	Friday	In-Class Discussion #2

Week 4		
7/21	Monday	TSD Ch. 14: The Courts To read: <i>Article III of the Constitution</i>
7/22	Tuesday	TSD Ch. 15: Civil Liberties To read: <i>The Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10)</i>
7/23	Wednesday	TSD Ch. 15 & 16: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
7/24	Thursday	Catch-Up/Rest/Study Day
7/25	Friday	<b><u>Exam 2:</u></b> <b>Ch. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, &amp; 16</b>

Week 5		
7/28	Monday	TSD Ch. 9: Political Parties
7/29	Tuesday	TSD Ch. 10: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections  <b>Class Visit from the Bob Graham Center for Public Service:</b> The visit will cover the Center's academic programs, student organizations, upcoming events, and information on voting and registration as college students.
7/30	Wednesday	TSD Ch. 10: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
7/31	Thursday	TSD Ch. 5: Public Opinion
8/1	Friday	In-Class Discussion #3

Week 6		
8/4	Monday	TSD Ch. 6: The News Media
8/5	Tuesday	TSD Ch. 7: Interest Groups and Business Power
8/6	Wednesday	TSD Ch. 8: Social Movements
8/7	Thursday	We almost made it! Catch-Up/Rest/Study Day
8/8	Friday	<b>Exam 3:</b> <b>Ch. 9, 10, 5, 6, 7, &amp; 8</b>

*Last updated: June 3, 2025*