

# Course Syllabus



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## POS 2041 American Federal Government

University of Florida  
Distance Learning Course



Professor Conley (center) with UF Students, St. Stephen's Mission  
Wind River Indian Reservation, Wyoming, Spring Break 2017

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Email: Use the **Conversations (Inbox)** tool within Canvas

*Please also e-mail to arrange a virtual office hours appointment*

Internet homepage: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/rconley> (<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/rconley>)

## Course Description

This online (distance learning) course is designed to survey topics that are vital for an understanding of American national politics and government. Readings and videos will examine the structural foundations, institutions, citizen-government linkages, and processes that characterize the American political system.

This is a 3 credit hour course.

## Course Objectives

- Identify the processes that characterize the American political system, including voting, elections, representative institutions (Congress, Presidency, Courts), and structural components such as federalism
- Interpret competing accounts of the Founders' intent in designing the national government
- Examine interpretations of the Constitution, governmental power, and protections of individual freedoms
- Research, analyze and explain the importance of a major Supreme Court decision
- Analyze potential hurdles to registering to vote, and get registered for the 2018 election
- Evaluate democratic processes to take part in the American political system
- Critique and defend theoretical and empirical approaches to explaining the dynamics of American national government by engaging fellow students in civic debate
- Illustrate a superlative knowledge of processes and institutional features of the national government necessary for advanced study of politics and/or careers in journalism

## Required Readings

- Theodore Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power & Purpose* (15th edition). New York: WW Norton. [Brief edition is not advisable for the course; policy chapters in the extended book are not covered in this course]
- Ken Kollman (ed.), *Readings in American Politics: Analysis & Perspectives*, Fifth Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.
- The U.S. Constitution and Amendments I-XXVII. Available in Canvas [HERE](#).

## Grades

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Constitution exam                     | 10% |
| Mid-term exam                         | 20% |
| Final exam                            | 20% |
| Participation in the Discussion Board | 15% |
| Written assignments                   | 25% |
| Weekly quizzes                        | 10% |

Neither individual assignments nor final grades in this course will be subject to a “curve.” Letter grades for the final grade in the course will be assigned per the following schedule:

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| A 90+    | C 70-73  |
| A- 87-89 | C- 67-69 |

B+ 84-86 D+ 64-66  
B 80-83 D 60-63  
B- 77-79 D- 57-59  
C+ 74-76 E 57 (failing)

## ProctorU - Constitution Exam, Mid Term Exam, and Final Exam

The Constitution Exam, Mid Term Exam, and Final Exam require ProctorU. ProctorU is a service that monitors you remotely during the exam to prevent cheating, accessing web pages, notes, etc.. A webcam and an Ethernet connection are mandatory. Students must create a ProctorU account by clicking on "Proctor U" on the left side of the main menu.

More information on ProctorU is available at [www.proctoru.com/faq](http://www.proctoru.com/faq) (<http://www.proctoru.com/faq>). You can also test your connection and computer in advance of exams by going to [www.proctoru.com/helpdesk](http://www.proctoru.com/helpdesk) (<http://www.proctoru.com/helpdesk>). ProctorU may also be reached by telephone at 1-855-772-8678.

**It is students' responsibility to contact ProctorU a minimum of 72 hours in advance of each exam** and set up a time for them to be connected and monitored while taking the exam. **Failure to make advance arrangements with ProctorU to take the exam(s) on the dates in the syllabus will result in a grade of 0 on the exam(s), and no make up exams will be allowed. Moreover, students who disconnect from proctoring for more than 5 minutes while taking the exam without re-establishing a connection immediately will not have their score accepted; in such cases, the grade will be 0 for the exam, and it is at the discretion of the instructor whether a written, essay make-up exam may be accorded. Finally, students who disconnect from ProctorU BEFORE submitting their exam will NOT have their exam scores accepted.**

Normal business hours during which ProctorU is available are **between 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time. *The latest time at which you can schedule to take the exams is 10:00 p.m. (22:00h).*** ProctorU availability varies, so students who wish to take the exam at earlier times (e.g., 5:00 a.m.) should check with the organization well in advance to insure ProctorU can accommodate such schedules.

Please insure that you give yourself enough time to take the exams; the Constitution exam is 40 questions/40 minutes. The Mid-Term Exam and the Final Exam are both 100 questions/100 minutes. If you wait until the last minute (e.g., you start the Mid-Term or Final at 11:00 p.m.) you will be cut off by Canvas at 11:59 p.m., which is the deadline for all exams.

Weekly quizzes on chapter material are NOT required to be monitored by ProctorU. You are expected to take these quizzes **without** references to notes, books, Internet sources, etc., and you are not to collaborate with anyone else on the quizzes.



## Helpful Videos/Documentation

For a tutorial on ProctorU, click here for a [video \(https://vimeo.com/129576577\)](https://vimeo.com/129576577).

[Proctor U - Exam Preparations](#)  

[ProctorU - How it Works - TEST-TAKER.pdf](#)  

[ProctorU - Help Desk.pdf](#)  

## An Important Note on Due Dates in Canvas

All due dates (Quizzes/Discussion Board/Written Assignments) are **by** 11:59:00 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) or Eastern Standard Time (EST). Students must understand that *any* submission *later than* 11:59:00 EDT (e.g., 11:59:01, 11:59:05, 11:59:30, etc.) will be considered LATE on Canvas. The instructor cannot alter this setting to include "milliseconds." *The best advice is NOT to wait until the last minute to turn in assignments or post discussions.* Anticipate that your Internet connection may be slow, not available because of inclement weather and potential electrical outages, etc., and take appropriate measures to turn in assignments *earlier than the deadline*. Students are responsible for their own Internet connection. Failure to submit assignments/discussion posts on time due to loss of Internet connectivity or other such non-Canvas-related problems will result in late assignments that will NOT receive credit.

## Discussion Board/Blog

Discussions on the weekly discussion board are also to be exercises in formal writing. **Proper English grammar, syntax, structure and formatting are required** (i.e., do NOT write sentences in shorthand for text messaging. Utilize proper capitalization, make sure that verb/subject agreement is correct, use proper punctuation including apostrophes for possessive, etc.). Postings with poor grammar, syntax, punctuation, and incorrect structure are not acceptable.

The discussions are a forum for civic debate. Do not use curse words or make ad hominem remarks about other students. Critical thinking is encouraged, but must be done within an environment of mutual respect. Students who violate etiquette will have their postings deleted and will not receive credit for the week's assignment.

**IMPORTANT:** The discussion posts are a two-part process. Completion of your discussion board assignment each week includes your original posting by Friday at 11:59 p.m. (23:59) and replies to at least 2 of your classmates by Sunday at 11:59 p.m (23:59). Students are encouraged not to wait until the

last minute and to engage in the discussion throughout the week. Postings after the deadline will not receive credit.

Your original posting should include an analysis of the strong/weak points of the debate readings, and the conclusions you draw on where you stand on the issue while providing a solid rationale for your position. The responses to other students should be *thoughtful* and analytical. Responses that read "Hey, John, I really liked your post. Cool way to explain the problem" are not acceptable for credit. Full credit for responses will include posts that uncover nuance, add to the debate, and/or take issue with parts of a colleague's post that may not have included certain arguments and raise new questions based on the readings and your own analysis.

The discussion boards open on 31 August 2020; you may post your original commentary at any time up until the deadline (i.e., you may complete this portion of the assignment early).

## Written Assignments

All written assignments for the course are to be completed using **12 point font** with standard 1 inch margins, double spaced. Additionally, proper English grammar, syntax, structure and formatting are required (i.e., do NOT write sentences in shorthand for text messaging, etc.). Assignments with poor grammar, syntax, punctuation, and incorrect structure **will receive lower grades**. The written assignments are exercises in formal writing.

Written assignments are due on Friday by 11:59 p.m. (23:59) for the week they are assigned. Late assignments are not accepted.

Students may complete written assignments earlier than the deadline.

## Weekly Quizzes

Students must complete the weekly quizzes by Friday at 11:59 p.m. (23:59) to receive credit. Students will not be able to access weekly quizzes after the deadline.

All quizzes are available beginning on 31 August 2020 and may be completed in advance of the deadline (i.e., students may complete the quizzes early).

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism (using someone else's ideas without giving him proper credit) is a serious offense. Students are expected to comply with the [University of Florida's Student Code of Conduct](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>). Questions should be directed to the Dean of Students Office, Judicial Affairs.

The written assignments for this class are to be **your own work**. Discussing your ideas or general approach with me, other students or faculty, revising your work in response to a colleague's criticism, or using words or ideas from a text or another source with proper attribution or referencing is acceptable, and is, in fact, an important aspect of intellectual discourse. Plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty, including cutting/pasting material and the failure to cite proper references, are unacceptable at all times. All uploaded assignments are subject to automatic review by Turnitin.com, and if you plagiarize **you will get caught**. The mandatory Plagiarism Quiz you must take is aimed at apprising you about what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it.

**Cheating on examinations** (e.g., using Wikipedia or ANY resources like books, online programs, notes, cell phones, etc.) and plagiarism are violations of the academic honesty standards of the University of Florida, will have a serious effect upon your grade in this course, and will be referred to the appropriate University authorities for disciplinary action to the **full extent** provided for under the University's regulations. Engaging in cheating on exams, copying and pasting from the Internet for written assignments, etc., will result in stiff course penalties, including a grade of E, and additional penalties that can have a significantly negative impact on your academic career.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE PLAGIARISM TUTORIAL](#)

## Student Support Services

As a student in a distance learning course or program you have access to the same [student support services \(http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-services\)](#) that on campus students have. For course content questions contact your instructor.

For any technical issues you encounter with your course please contact the [UF Computing Help Desk \(http://helpdesk.ufl.edu\)](#) at 352-392-4357.

### Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ \(http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/\)](#)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.












## Complaints













Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit the [Distance Learning website \(http://%20http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints\)](#) to submit a complaint.

Below are important deadlines to assist your calendar and planning.



# Important Dates





## Course Summary:

| Date             | Details  |                |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Fri Sep 11, 2020 |  <b><u>M1 - Discussion Board: Introductions</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345215">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345215</a>                        | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>M1 Quiz</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345210">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345210</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>M2 Quiz</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345190">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345190</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>Plagiarism Quiz</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345194">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345194</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Sep 18, 2020 |  <b><u>M2 - Discussion Board - The Founding and the Constitution</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345226">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345226</a> | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>M2 - Who were the Founders?</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345233">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345233</a>                               | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Sep 25, 2020 |  <b><u>Constitution Exam</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345205">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345205</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>M3 - Discussion Board - Federalism</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345217">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345217</a>                        | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>M3 Quiz</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345200">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345200</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <b><u>M3 - Researching a Federal Policy Question: Part 1</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345234">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345234</a>        | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 2, 2020  |  <b><u>M4 Quiz</u></b><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345192">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345192</a>   | due by 11:59pm |

| Date             | Details  | due by 11:59pm |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Fri Oct 9, 2020  |  <a href="#">M4 - Researching a Federal Policy</a><br><a href="#">Question: Part 2</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345235">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345235</a> | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 9, 2020  |  <a href="#">M5 - Discussion Board - Civil Liberties and Civil Rights</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345227">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345227</a>              | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 9, 2020  |  <a href="#">M5 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345208">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345208</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 9, 2020  |  <a href="#">M5 - Researching a Federal Policy</a><br><a href="#">Question: Part 3</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345236">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345236</a> | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 16, 2020 |  <a href="#">M6 - Discussion Post - Congress and Institutional Balance</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345221">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345221</a>             | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 16, 2020 |  <a href="#">M6 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345202">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345202</a>  | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 16, 2020 |  <a href="#">M6 - Researching your members of Congress</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345237">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345237</a>                           | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 23, 2020 |  <a href="#">M7 - Discussion Board - The Presidency</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345220">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345220</a>                              | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 23, 2020 |  <a href="#">M7 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345191">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345191</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 30, 2020 |  <a href="#">M8 - Discussion Board - Supreme Court Rulings</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345219">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345219</a>                       | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 30, 2020 |  <a href="#">M8 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345197">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345197</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Oct 30, 2020 |  <a href="#">M8 - Designing a Policy Proposal: Part 1</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345238">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345238</a>                            | due by 11:59pm |



| Date             | Details  | due by 11:59pm |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Fri Nov 6, 2020  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345222">M9 - Discussion Board - Bureaucracy</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345222">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345222)</a>                  | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345196">M9 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345196">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345196)</a>  | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345199">Mid-term Exam</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345199">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345199)</a>  | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345239">M9 - Designing a Policy Proposal: Part 2</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345239">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345239)</a>             | due by 11:59pm |
| Mon Nov 9, 2020  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345203">Optional Mid Term Survey Assessment</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345203">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345203)</a>                  | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Nov 13, 2020 |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345218">M10 - Discussion Board - Public Opinion</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345218">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345218)</a>              | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345189">M10 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345189">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345189)</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345229">M10 - Designing a Policy Proposal: Part 3</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345229">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345229)</a>          | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Nov 20, 2020 |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345223">M11 - Discussion Board - Elections</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345223">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345223)</a>                 | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345188">M11 Quiz</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345188">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345188)</a>   | due by 11:59pm |
|                  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345230">M11 - Analyzing the hurdles in registering to vote</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345230">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345230)</a> | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Dec 4, 2020  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345224">M12 - Discussion Board - Political Parties</a><br><a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345224">(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345224)</a>         | due by 11:59pm |

| Date             | Details   |                |
|------------------|---|----------------|
| Wed Dec 9, 2020  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345198">M12 Quiz</a><br>( <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345198">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345198</a> )                    | due by 11:59pm |
| Wed Dec 9, 2020  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345187">M13 Quiz</a><br>( <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345187">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345187</a> )                    | due by 11:59pm |
| Wed Dec 9, 2020  |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345212">M14 Quiz</a><br>( <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345212">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345212</a> )                    | due by 11:59pm |
| Tue Dec 15, 2020 |  <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345195">Final Exam (non-cumulative)</a><br>( <a href="https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345195">https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406510/assignments/4345195</a> ) | due by 11:59pm |