

**Syllabus**

**American Government**

**POS 2041-25898**

**Fall 2019 – 3 credit hours**

Instructor: **Dr. Nicolè (Nik) Ford**

Email: [nford10@hccfl.edu](mailto:nford10@hccfl.edu)

Class Location: BACA 209

Class Time: Monday/ Wednesday 3:30pm-9:50pm

Office location: Ybor Building 213

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 3-3:30

**1. Course Description**

Covers the structure and function of the American government, the dynamics of political change and contemporary issues.

Prerequisites: College level reading and writing skills are required.

**2. Required Text**

*Living Democracy*. Shea, Green, and Smith. Pearson Publishing. 2018.

**3. Overview and Expectations**

This class will introduce you to the structure of American government, its historical origins, and the ideological dimensions to governmental and political issues. Specifically, the course is organized into four parts. First, the class considers the historical, ideological, and rights-based issues and debates underpinning American government. Second, we will cover the branches of government and the political and institutional issues and challenges facing them. Third, we will turn to those actors in America’s political system including the media, interest groups, and most importantly you – the citizen. Last, we will consider fundamental contemporary political issues, how the government addresses these issues, and how they affect you.

In general, students will be introduced to the historical, structural, agentic, and policy related dimensions to American government. Throughout the course, students will consider these dimensions in order to discuss and analyze governmental issues and how they impact the citizen and others around the world. It is expected that you be engaged by asking questions and contribute to the discussion, which requires that you both read the material and complete the assignments before we meet for class that day.

It is expected that you keep up with the news and stay informed in some way as the class will discuss many political, economic, and social issues facing us today. Be prepared to have some knowledge, then, regarding the political and economic state of affairs in the United States.

Additionally, critical thinking is a major part of the class and your grade. Your success in this class will be determined not only by your ability to evidence your knowledge about government and political activity in class exams but, more importantly, your ability to demonstrate your efforts in critical thought about relevant issues in your writing and class discussions. In other words, be prepared to question long-standing and popular political assumptions – even your own!

It is also expected that you respect the learning environment and your fellow classmates.  The class will discuss several controversial issues and your classmates will have different opinions than you.  Not only is it normal to exchange different opinions and ideas in a political science class, but it’s healthy as it offers us a chance to learn from one another and discover new ways of thinking. In this regard, I hope that you can learn from each other and that I, also, can learn from you.

Finally, this should be an enjoyable learning experience.  My hope is that you could be comfortable with each other to make this a meaningful class where we share ideas and critically discuss the issues that affect us and others around the world.

**4. Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss and explain the roots, history and evolution of the United States Constitution.
2. Discuss and explain the roots, history and evolution of constitutionally-guaranteed liberties and rights of United States’ citizens.
3. Discuss and explain the roots, history and evolution of “inputs” to the United States’ political system including but not limited to the role of public opinion, the media, elections, political parties, and interest groups.
4. Discuss and explain the roots, history and evolution of the structure and functions of the formal branches of the national government (legislative, executive/bureaucratic, judicial).
5. In regard to all the above objectives, be able to understand and explain the evolution of the United States’ political system through time in response to changing national needs.
6. Follow and understand current domestic and global events involving the national government of the United States.
7. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.
8. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of the United States Constitution and its application.
9. Students will develop and demonstrate knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.
10. Students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases, landmark legislation, and landmark executive actions and their impact on law and society.

**5. Assignments and Grading**

*Exams: 2 Exams \* 25 points each = 50 points total*

You will have two exams that will test your knowledge and understanding of the class material. Everything discussed in the class is a potential exam question whether it is from the book, lecture, or class discussion. Exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, matching, and true false.

*Paper: 25 points total*

You will construct a research question that must meet my approval. Your paper will be FIVE pages minimum and it should demonstrate basic knowledge about the issue as well as express your analysis, criticisms, and prescriptions concerning the issue. You must include terms from the text/ course throughout your paper, grounding your work in the course material. This is not merely a descriptive essay but should put forth some argument and back it up with some fact-based analysis. I will give you more information throughout the course as to how to structures the paper.

*Quizzes: TBD totaling 25 total points.*

These will appear throughout the semester on Canvas. Consider these as preparation for your exams. You will be notified through Canvas once they have launched and you will have 3 days to complete them.

*Attendance*

Attending class is necessary for a passing grade. I allow two unexcused absence.  Save these for sick days because beyond that point, every absence or tardiness will require documentation explaining your absence (a note from a doctor for example). You do not receive credit for attending class, but an unexcused absence will dock two points from your final total grade.

**6. Grade Breakdown and Scaling**

90 - 100 = A; 80 - 89 = B; 70 - 79 = C; 60 - 69 = D; 59 and below = F

**7. Standard HCC Policies**

*Academic Integrity*

You are responsible for knowing and observing the HCC Academic Integrity Policy. Students are expected to meet the highest standards of Academic Honesty. Students who violate academic honesty policies will receive a failing grade in this course. All work is expected to be the students’ original work and any sources that are consulted or borrowed should have a citation in MLA style. Plagiarism will result in an F for this course and referral to the college for disciplinary action. Remember this rule: when in doubt, cite the source! Additionally, cheating on exams will not be tolerated. Students who cheat on exams will receive a failing grade in this course and be referred to the college for disciplinary action. Any violation of academic integrity will be handled in accordance with the University’s policies.

*Academic Success Centers*

Success centers are located throughout the college. **Don’t wait to get academic help.** Your instructors are available during office hours and tutorial centers offering a wide variety of tutorial services are available at each campus. The Communication Center (writing/reading/bilingual services) is available in BACA 207 and can assist students with all English and Gordon Rule assignments. STEM (science/math) tutoring is available in BLRC 200, and Business & Technology (business/economics/accounting/computers) in BTEC 206. However, it should be noted that these resources are not for making up for missed classes.

* ASC General Line: 813-259-6598 or [myascbrandon@hccfl.edu](mailto:myascbrandon@hccfl.edu)
* For helpful resources: <https://www.hccfl.edu/asc>
* Success Coach: [mysuccesscoach@hccfl.edu](mailto:mysuccesscoach@hccfl.edu) for an appointment

*Recordings for Class Session*

A student shall not, without my express authorization, make or receive any recording, including but not limited to audio and video recordings, of any class, co-curricular meeting, organizational meeting, or meeting with me. Further, it is not permissible to post my class lectures/course materials on the web.

*Request for Accommodation*

Any student whose disability falls within the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. The Brandon office is located in the Student Service Building Room 109. You may also reach the office by phone at (813) 253-7914. Requests for accommodations should be submitted to the instructor within the first two weeks of the course. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive.

*Student Assistance Program*

HCC’s Student Assistance Program offers resources tailored to student life, providing you with the right tools to help you through some of life’s toughest challenges. The college has contracted with Baycare Health Management to provide free, professional, confidential counseling by telephone and in person. A wide range of topics may be addressed through this program, including mental health counseling, budgeting, and financial concerns. Please call 800-878-5470 or email [baycaresap@baycare.org](mailto:baycaresap@baycare.org) for further information.

*Gordon Rule:*

This course is a Gordon Rule course. Essays are be used to meet the writing requirement for this course. Therefore, the essays are notoptional. Failure to submit all essays that meet the minimum word count may result in an automatic minimum grade of a D in this course. Please remember that a D is not considered a passing grade in a Gordon Rule class.

*Religious Observances*

HCC will reasonably accommodate the religious observances, practices, and beliefs of students in its admissions, class attendance, and examination policies and work assignments. Students must notify instructors, **in writing, at least one week prior** to a religious observance.

*Safety and Security*

Students who notice situations that represent potential or real safety or security problems should notify the local campus Public Safety Office:  **813-253-7911**

*Equity Policy*

Hillsborough Community College is an equal access/equal opportunity employer that makes employment and education-related decisions without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or any other bias that is or may be prohibited by laws. In addition, the college does not discriminate in employment practices or in the admission and treatment of students. HCC is committed to equitable treatment for all students and employees and to a learning and working environment free of discrimination and harassment for current as well as future students and employees. The college provides equal educational opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities and complies with, as well as, supports the Americans with Disabilities Act. HCC’s Equity Officer ensures compliance with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment. Employees and students who believe they have been a victim of discrimination or sexual harassment should contact:

Elina “Tina” Bivins, MBA, CLI  
Equity Manager & Title IX Coordinator  
Hillsborough Community College  
Dr. Gwendolyn W. Stephenson District Administration Center  
39 Columbia Drive, Room 717  
Tampa, Florida 33606-3584  
Telephone:  813.253.7591  
Email:  ebivins2@hccfl.edu

**8. Class Schedule (subject to change based on a variety of factors)**

Week of 8/19 Introduction Chapter 1

Week of 8/26 Chapter 2

Week of 9/2 Chapter 3

Week of 9/9 Chapter 4

Week of 9/16 Chapter 5

Week of 9/23 Chapter 6

Week of 9/30 Chapter 7

Week of 10/7 Midterm Exam  
  
Week of 10/14 Chapter 8

Week of 10/21 Chapter 9

Week of 10/28 Chapter 10

Week of 11/4 Chapter 11

Week of 11/11 Chapter 12 Paper Due TBD

Week of 11/18 Chapter 13

Week of 11/25 Chapter 14 (It is Thanksgiving however that is Thursday—we will still have class Monday, we will cover a lot of ground that day so please don’t miss class.)

Week of 12/2 Final Exam TBD