



Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Year: 2025

Course Prefix: POLS

Course and Section #: 1100 W50

Course Title: American National Government

Credits: 3

Course Description

Studies history and structure of American National Government, rights and responsibilities of citizens, political institutions, political processes, and governmental policies.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Steven M. Sylvester

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the key principles and philosophies that influenced the creation of the U.S. Constitution and the American system of government.
 2. Differentiate between the civil rights and civil liberties protected by the U.S. Constitution.
 3. Discuss the development and influence of public opinion in the American system of government.
 4. Describe the American election process, including the nomination and general election processes for local, state, and national offices.
 5. Explain the function and operation of the institutions of government at the national, state, and local levels of the American political system.
 6. Analyze current political debates, trends, and challenges facing American society and government.
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Course Materials and Texts

Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, Andrea L. Campbell, Megan Min Francis, and Robert J. Spitzer. 2023. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 9780393887846

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Quizzes: 15%

Class Participation: 15%

Discussion Board Questions: 20%

Exams: 50%

Grading Scale: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; E 0-59

A - Work demonstrates consistently excellent academic performance; thorough comprehension; ability to correlate the material with other ideas, to communicate with course concepts and skills; reliability in attendance, and attention to assignments.

B - Work demonstrates superior academic performance overall; reliability in attendance and attention to assignments; may demonstrate excellence but with less consistency than an A student.

C - Work demonstrates satisfactory performance overall, as well as reliability in attendance and attention to assignments.

D - Work demonstrates minimal performance overall and limited knowledge of the subject area.

E - Work demonstrates unsatisfactory performance or unfulfilled requirements.

A note on rounding: Rounding for grades .5 to .99 is considered based on my perception of outstanding participation in the course, and requests for rounding or grade changes are not entertained.

A note on grades: Do your best, care primarily about learning the material, and don't stress over grades too much (to the best of your ability). I am happy to discuss your grade or standing in the class at any time, but I encourage you to initiate these conversations sooner rather than later, so our discussion can have the most impact.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, Andrea L. Campbell, Megan Min Francis, and Robert J. Spitzer. 2023. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 9780393887846

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Module No.	Topic	Readings
1	Course Intro/Americans and Their Political Values	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 1

2	The Founding and the Constitution	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 2
3	Federalism	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 3
4	Civil Liberties	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 4
5	Civil Rights	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 5
6	Public Opinion	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 6
7	The Media	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 7
8	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 8
9	Participation, Campaigns, and Elections	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 9
10	Domestic Policy	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 14
11	Congress	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 10
12	The President	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 11
13	The Bureaucracy	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 12
14	The Courts	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 13
15	Foreign Policy	Ginsberg et al. – Chapter 15

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and researching are crafts you must develop over time to develop your voice. At the same time, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can be helpful to you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
- Fine-tuning your research questions;
- Finding information on your topic;
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts and
- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.

- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work. Students who are seen using AI will receive a 0 for the assignment and could potentially be reported to student misconduct.

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions

of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.