

POS 2041
AMERICAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
Summer B 2022

Instructor: James Fahey, Ph.D. (he/his)

Email: jamesfahey@ufl.edu

Lectures: MWF 9:30-10:45 A.M

Class Meeting: LIT 0109

Office Hours: MW 11:00 A.M - 12:00 P.M or by appointment

TA	Email	Discussion Sections	Office Hours
Jonathan Chiarella	chiarella.jj@ufl.edu	T1 (19531), T2 (12736)	TBD
Kristen Gary	kristengary@ufl.edu	T4 (19532), R3 (19530)	TBD
Spencer Corp	spencer.corp@ufl.edu	R5 (19533), R6 (19534)	TBD

Class Materials: This course uses Greenberg & Page's The Struggle for Democracy online edition as its primary textbook. The course comes in many editions, and we will be using the 12th Edition (ISBN 9780135202760). All other course materials including videos, articles, and podcasts will be freely available on either the course website or through relevant links in the syllabus.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course designed to familiarize students with the basic institutions and core concepts of American politics, as well as examine some of the consequences for our daily lives. Our basic guiding question is who governs, and how? Some of the topics we cover will be the fundamentals of democratic governance; the Constitutional debate and its ramifications; federalism; civil rights and liberties; elections and public opinion. Throughout the course, we will examine how linkage institutions (such as the media and interest groups) and electoral pressures create incentive structures which influence the behavior of politicians and individuals. Throughout, this course will take special care to examine the fundamental tension between the traditions of liberalism and racism/white supremacy, and what the consequences are for our politics.

Note: this syllabus is subject to change as needed, though I will endeavor to give you as much advance warning as possible of any changes.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS

This course will use a variety of different assessments to measure your engagement and mastery of the material. I have also designed assignments to help set you up for success in the future inside and outside the classroom. The breakdown of your grade is as follows:

Exams (60%): You will take three multiple-choice exams. Exams will cover material from lecture, discussion, the readings, and current events. While exams are not cumulative, some issues are revisited later in the semester and could appear on a later exam. Multiple choice exams

are machine graded. Exams must be taken on the scheduled date, except in documented emergencies. Each exam is worth 20% of your course grade.

Reaction Posts (15%): At the beginning of each week, an assignment will be posted on Canvas asking you to engage with the course material for the week. Formats could include a short reaction to one or more of the readings; a reflection of how contemporary topics relate to the readings; or a personal reflection on the topics' relation to your lived experience. These tasks are designed to help you reflect and think critically of how these topics relate to your own life. You must complete **3 reaction posts** over the course of the semester. You may choose any week, but I strongly recommend not waiting until the end of the semester. Each post must be between 300-400 words and submitted via discussion boards on Canvas. These posts will be graded by your TA.

Discussion Group Attendance and Participation (15%): Your discussion sections are not lectures by your TAs--instead, they represent an opportunity for you to discuss and engage with the readings in a smaller environment with your classmates. Your TA will grade you based on your attendance (5%) and the quality of your discussion contribution (10%).

Lecture Attendance and Participation (10%): You will not be able to succeed in this course if you do not attend lectures. Attendance is required and is taken via iClicker student, an app on your phone or tablet. Each lecture will include both a question when you arrive in class, as well as multiple questions throughout the class session. Your score is a simple percentage of the number of questions that you answer over the course of the semester.

iClicker

iclicker Student: Students should go to their device's "store" to download the iClicker Student App. Then search for UF, the course (American Federal Government (POS 2041). Upon arriving to class, open the app, check in, and answer any questions on screen. Please use your UFL email address when signing up (or it won't send your scores to Canvas).

CIVIC LITERACY REQUIREMENT

Beginning July 1, 2021, students entering the University of Florida must satisfy the State of Florida's Civic Literacy requirement. This means this course must and will provide you with opportunities to engage synchronously in political discussions and civil debates with multiple points of view and to master the ability to synthesize information that informs civic decision-making. To facilitate this, we have created 6 discussion sections to accommodate your schedules. For more info: [BOG Regulation 8.006](#); [UF's Civic Literacy web site](#).

GENERAL EDUCATION

This course fulfills a Social Science General Education Requirement. More information on general education requirements [can be found here](#).

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All work submitted must be the students own. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the student honor and conduct code and will lead to failing the assignment immediately. Repeated violations or particularly flagrant transgressions may result in a formal complaint under the [Student Conduct Code](#). Honor code violations often occur when students feel rushed and overwhelmed--if this happens, do not panic, and instead reach out to me so we can address the situation together. It is far better to take a late penalty than to commit academic dishonesty.

While plagiarism is perhaps the most common violation of the honor code, other violations include (but are not limited to) falsifying or forging documents; manufacturing fake data; or receiving impermissible assistance on an exam or assignment without clearing it first with the instructor. Students are responsible for ensuring that their actions do not violate the code of conduct.

DISABILITIES RESOURCES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the instructor will endeavor to make the course as accessible as possible. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) offers a range of resources for those with alternative learning abilities and challenges. Please contact the DRC if you feel that you need/would like to take advantage of these services at the following link: [DRC](#). If unforeseen circumstances arise during the term which require the use of DRC resources, please contact me as early as possible so we can ensure your continued academic success. Given the compressed nature of the Summer term, it is of paramount importance that you submit your requests as soon as possible.

COURSE ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required in lecture and discussion section. Students failing to attend class during the first week may be dropped from the course; excessive absences could result in a failing grade. Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are [consistent with university policies](#). Please contact Dr. Fahey if you will miss lecture and your TA if you will miss discussion for documented absences (e.g., illness, quarantine, academic/athletic competitions).

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

COUNSELING/MENTAL HEALTH

College can be a stressful and difficult time, and your health and wellbeing are paramount. [The Counseling and Wellness Center](#) (CWC) is available for group, individual, and immediate emergency crisis counseling for students. If you are experiencing a mental health/personal crisis, please call the free Alachua 24-hour crisis line at 352-264-6789, or the National Suicide

Prevention Line at 1-800-273-8255. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please call 911.

TITLE IX/MANDATORY REPORTING

It is my hope that you will feel comfortable in class and written assignments to discuss elements of your personal experience that are relevant to the course. I hope to foster an environment of trust and mutual respect and will maintain your privacy wherever possible. However, as an instructor, I am mandated by federal law to report any information related to sexual violence or sexual misconduct (e.g., domestic violence, harassment, stalking) to the school’s Title IX coordinator.

Students may find more information about Title IX at the following link: [Title IX](#). Concerns about yourself, a fellow student, or member of the community [can also be submitted at this link](#).

CURRENT UF GRADING POLICIES/GRADE POINTS

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

RECORDING LECTURES/DISCUSSION

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. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

MONDAY		WEDNESDAY		FRIDAY	
6/27	G&P Chapter 1 (Democracy and American Politics)	6/29	G&P Chapter 2 (The Constitution) Watch/Listen: From “Hamilton: The Musical,” Non-Stop, Cabinet Battle #1	7/1	G&P Chapter 2 (The Constitution)
7/4	NO CLASS (HOLIDAY)	7/6	G&P Chapter 3 (Federalism: States and Nation)	7/8	EXAM 1
7/11	G&P Chapter 5 (Public Opinion)	7/13	G&P Chapter 6 (The News Media)	7/15	G&P Chapter 9 (Political Parties)
7/18	G&P Chapter 10 (Voting, Campaigns and Elections) Watch: Last Week	7/20	G&P Chapter 10 (Voting, Campaigns and Elections)	7/22	EXAM 2

	Tonight, "Voting"				
7/25	G&P Chapter 11 (Congress)	7/27	G&P Chapter 11 (Congress)	7/29	G&P Chapter 12 (The Presidency)
8/1	G&P Chapter 14 (The Courts)	8/3	G&P Chapter 16 (Civil Rights)	8/5	EXAM 2

DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

	Topic	Readings
Week 1	The Constitution: Who and what is it for?	<p>Federalist No. 10</p> <p>“What to the slave is the fourth of July?”, Frederick Douglass. (Note: full PDF provided on Canvas).</p> <p>David Brian Robertson, <i>The Original Compromise: What the Constitution’s Framers Were Really Thinking</i>, “Introduction” (pp. 1-22) (Note: full PDF provided on Canvas).</p>
Week 2		<i>No discussion section</i>
Week 3	Political Parties	<p>Read: Duverger’s Law and the Study of Electoral Systems, Kenneth Benoit. (Full PDF provided on Canvas).</p> <p>Read: U.S Third parties can rein in the extremism of the two-party system, Bernard Tamas.</p>
Week 4	Congress	<p>Watch: The Roots of America’s Democracy Problem.</p> <p>David Brian Robertson, <i>The Original Compromise: What the Constitution’s Framers Were Really Thinking</i>, “Selecting U.S Senators” (pp. 94-105).</p>
Week 5	The Courts	<p>Listen: More Perfect (NPR): American Pendulum I (Korematsu v. United States).</p> <p>Read: Facts and Case Summary: Korematsu v. United States.</p>