Moberly Area Community College
Common Syllabus
PSC105 Introduction to American Government

Instructor:
Office number:
Office hours:
Contact information:
Classroom number:
Class days and time:

Catalog Description:  PSC105 Introduction to American Government  (3-0-3)
This course covers the study of national government, including its organization, functions, and policies. Detailed attention is given to the policy-making process and to the roles of various government functions. Attempts are made to relate government to everyday life. The course identifies major problems of American society affecting the policy-making process. A study of the federal and Missouri constitutions is included in this course. (FA, SP)

Prerequisite / Co-requisite:  None

Texts:  The text is an ebook included with the class. Print books are not available in the MACC bookstore.
Title:  Government in America:  People, Politics, and Policy 2020
Author:  Edwards
Edition:  18th Edition
Publisher:  Pearson

Other Required Materials:  None

Purpose of Course:  To further general knowledge of government as an institution in civilized society and to directly put emphasis on the current “experiment” underway in the United States, and to that end; to continually ask ourselves whether this government is fulfilling its proper function through observed policy.

Course Objectives:  Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
•  Understand the origin of “basic laws” in societies, and define the difference between these common or folk laws and those of a statute nature.
•  Demonstrate knowledge of the philosophical and political foundations of American government.
•  Analyze our first Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, and why it lacked the cohesive qualities for a truly national government.
• Examine the basic features of our Constitution in terms of the structure and function of American government, and compare these features to the structure and function of the Missouri state government as set up by the Missouri Constitution.
• Analyze the granting of civil liberties through the Bill of Rights, and how these civil liberties and civil rights have since been affected by subsequent constitutional amendments and by judicial decisions.
• Demonstrate knowledge of the role of political parties, government agencies, and the bureaucracy in fulfilling the aims of government.
• Analyze the “give and take” required for the American government to pay due attention to critical issues in both foreign and domestic policy.
• Demonstrate basic skills in critical thinking and reading.
• Write college-level English.

Course Content:

Philosophical and political foundations of American government:
1. Enlightenment thinkers and the foundations of the Declaration of Independence.
2. A new United States and the first attempt at an American government
   a. The Articles of Confederation – structure, strengths, and weaknesses
3. Road to the Constitution
   a. The Constitution amended – the Bill of Rights and the granting of civil liberties
   b. Later amendments and court cases further define civil liberties and civil rights.

A study of the domestic application of the law:
1. Separation of powers at the national and state levels – the concept of checks and balances in government functions.
   a. Constructing legislation
   b. Enforcing legislation
   c. Interpreting legislation and the examination of pertinent court cases.
2. Bureaucracy:
   a. Civil Service
   b. Government Agencies
3. The evolution of political parties:
   a. Their role in elections and legislation
   b. A study of the major political parties on the contemporary scene
4. The role of the military establishment in a democratic republic

The role of US foreign policy:
1. Economic strategies
2. Military arrangements
3. Direct relations with foreign nation states
   The Diplomatic Scene:
   a. How diplomacy is constructed
   b. The Department of State
c. Embassies and Consulates
4. The United Nations
5. Uses of propaganda

Assessment of Student Learning:
1. Four major examinations, combining essay and objective forms.
2. Quizzes
3. Discussion of examples of media sources
4. Written reports on a weekly basis concerning current problems.
6. An end-of-term essay
7. Class discussion

Grading Scale:
- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 0-59

Class Work
- Class Participation: 15%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Exams: 50%
- Essays: 10%
- Book Reviews: 15%

Expected Study Time Commitments: Students should expect to spend approximately 2 to 4 hours per week studying, reading, and working on assignments for each registered credit hour. For example, 6 to 12 study hours per week may be expected for a 3 credit hour class.

Description of Major Assignments / Projects: Per instructor’s policy

Schedule of Student Assignments/Activities:
1. Assignments are made for writing and study for each class meeting.
2. Guide or study sheets are distributed for each assignment.
3. A collecting of current media items relating to government activity each week.

Statement to Connect Course with General Education Outcomes: In compliance with MACC’s General Education outcomes, the student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Higher Order Thinking: Students will demonstrate the ability to distinguish among opinions, facts, and inferences; to identify underlying or implicit assumptions; to make informed judgments; to solve problems by applying evaluative standards; and to reflect upon and refine those problem-solving skills. This outcome involves creative thinking, critical thinking, and
quantitative literacy.

- **Communication:** Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through oral, written, or digital channels using the English language or quantitative or other symbolic systems. Students should be able to write and speak with thoughtfulness, clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness; read and listen critically; and select channels appropriate to the audience and message.

- **Managing Information:** Students will demonstrate the ability to discern when there is a need for information; and to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand.

- **Valuing:** Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the moral and ethical values of a diverse society; and to appreciate the values of diversity, equity, and sustainability.

**College / Instructor Policies:**

**Academic Dishonesty:** MACC board policy is as follows: “Academic dishonesty by students damages institutional credibility and unfairly jeopardizes honest students; therefore, it will not be tolerated in any form.” Forms of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following: violations of copyright law, plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, collusion, and other academic misconduct. Incidents of dishonesty regarding assignments, examinations, classroom/laboratory activities, and/or the submission of misleading or false information to the College will be treated seriously. The procedure for handling academic dishonesty is outlined in the Student Handbook (*Policy Handbook M.010*). In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, the burden of proof is on the student, not on the instructor.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions for which they are enrolled. The College reserves the right to drop or withdraw students from courses due to lack of attendance.

Students need to be aware that dropping/being dropped from a course and their last date of attendance in the course may impact their financial aid.

MACC faculty are required to track attendance and report lack of attendance. An instructor must complete the appropriate steps to drop a student within one week following the student’s violation of the attendance policy. Additionally, a student’s attendance rate will be calculated based upon the first day the academic session begins (not the student’s date of enrollment in the course). If a student does not attend a course as defined below, the student will be dropped as “Never Attended.”

**Term Length Drop Calculations**

- **16-week:** Any student who misses two (2) consecutive weeks of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

- **8-week:** Any student who misses one (1) consecutive week of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student.
the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

4-week: Any student who misses two (2) consecutive days of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

Intersession: Any student who misses one (1) day of class will be dropped from the course by the instructor unless acceptable justification is provided by the student and the student still has the opportunity to be successful in the course.

Acceptable justification may include, but is not limited to, family emergencies, illness or injury, college-approved co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and religious holidays.

**Definition of Course Attendance**

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<tr>
<th>In Seat Course</th>
<th>Physically attending scheduled, face-to-face, class meetings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Course</td>
<td>Being present, via appropriate platform, for scheduled class meetings/activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid Course</td>
<td>Physically attending scheduled, face-to-face, class meetings and active participation in the online portion of the course which may include any or all of the following:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Completion of quizzes or exams during class meetings and online</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Submission of assignments during class meetings and online</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation in discussions during class meetings and online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Course</td>
<td>Active participation in an online course includes the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Completion of quizzes or exams</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Submission of assignments</td>
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<td>• Participation in threaded discussions</td>
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Simply logging into the Learning Management System (Canvas) and/or accessing the course and course related material does not constitute active participation for the online component of hybrid courses or for online courses. (*Policy Handbook*, I.090 & M.095)

**Tardiness:** Per instructor’s policy

**Make-up and late work:** Per instructor’s policy

**Extra-credit work:** Per instructor’s policy
**Student Email:** MACC Mail is the official student email system at MACC. Official college communication is sent via this email system. Students are responsible for checking their MACC Mail account regularly. Students may also receive notifications and reminders from MACC through the online learning platform. However, students should remain aware that the online learning platform messaging system and MACC Mail (student email) system are two separate systems.

**ADA Statement:** Students who have disabilities that qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act may register for assistance through the Office of Access and ADA Services. Students are invited to contact the Access Office to confidentially discuss disability information, academic accommodations, appropriate documentation and procedures. For more information, please call either the Moberly office at (660) 263-4100 x11240 or the Columbia office at (573) 234-1067 x12120, or visit our web page at [http://www.macc.edu/index.php/services/access-office](http://www.macc.edu/index.php/services/access-office).

**Title IX Statement:** MACC maintains a strict policy prohibiting sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, and sexual violence. All MACC employees, including faculty members, are considered mandated reporters of sexual misconduct and as such are expected to contact the Title IX Coordinator when they become aware, in conversation or in writing, of an incident of sexual misconduct. For more information on this policy or to learn about support resources, please see [http://www.macc.edu/sexual-misconduct-policy](http://www.macc.edu/sexual-misconduct-policy) (links to an external site) or contact Ms. Cheryl Lybarger, MACC’s Title IX Coordinator, at 660-263-4110, ext. 11369 or CherylLybarger@macc.edu.