Moberly Area Community College
Common Syllabus

PSC103 American Government

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

Catalog Description: PSC103 American Government (5-0-5)
This course deals with the fundamental principles of political science and the organization, principles, and functions of American Government in all of its divisions: national, state, and local. A study of the federal and Missouri constitutions is included in this course. (SP)

Prerequisite/Co-requisite: None

Text: Title: Points of View: Readings in American Government and Politics
Author: DiClerico
Publisher: McGraw Hill
ISBN: 978-0-07-340390-8

Title: Government in America w/eBook (Loose-leaf)
Author: Edwards
Edition: 16th Edition
Publisher: Pearson
ISBN: 978-1-2694-1627-6

Other Required Materials: None

Purpose of Course: American Government is designed to help students understand the formation and evolution of American government. Attention will be focused on the structure of government, political parties, interest groups, constitutional issues past and present, and on problems facing our government today.

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

- Demonstrate knowledge of the reasons behind the formation first of a confederal then a federal system of government in the United States.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic features of the U.S. Constitution, including checks and balances, and separation of powers.
- Explain the basic structure and functions of the three branches of American government.
• Compare structure and function of the U.S. government and Missouri state government as set up in both the U.S. Constitution and Missouri Constitution
• Understand the ideological difference between federalism, socialism, and communism and what these ideologies mean in terms of the structure and function of government.
• Use course material to develop and articulate one's own ideological beliefs.
• Analyze the impact of political socialization and voting behavior on the structure and function of American government.
• Understand the role of interest groups, political parties, the media, and the bureaucracy in the functioning of the American political system.
• Demonstrate basic skills in critical thinking and reading.
• Write college-level English

Course Content:
1. Defining politics and government
2. Road to democratic government in the U.S. / Federalism
3. Civil rights and civil liberties
4. Political in the world – understanding the “isms’
5. “Other” political entities – media, political parties, interest groups
6. Institutions of government – structure and function

Assessment of Student Learning: Student outcomes of the above objectives will be measured through essay assignments and objective/essay examinations. Class participation is used only in determining borderline grades; this participation is measured by attendance and by participation in class discussions.

Grading Scale:
- A = 90%  450 - 500 points
- B = 80%  400 – 449 points
- C = 70%  350 – 399 points
- D = 60%  300 – 349 points
- F = below 60%   Below 300 points

You are responsible for any assigned text material as well as lecture materials and videos for exams. I strongly encourage you to take notes. If you miss class, please see me or one of your classmates to find out what you missed.

Although no pop quizzes are listed on the syllabus, they are always an option, so it pays to be prepared. Read your assigned text before coming to class; this will also help you to understand the material better.

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: Instead of one long term paper, this class will utilize shorter focused essay writings on topics related to class work. All work must be typed unless done
during class time. These writings should be about 1½ - 2 pages, double-spaced and typed unless otherwise assigned. Writing assignments are either 10 or 20 points and most of them will be based on readings from your supplementary text. For writing assignments from the supplementary text, each topic has two articles by different authors. You will need to summarize both authors’ viewpoints and then give your own opinion on the issue. Most of these will be individual writings, but a few will be group projects. Any material quoted directly from a source must be properly cited (see examples below). Failure to properly cite source material is plagiarism and will not be tolerated.

**Examples of in-text citing:**
Beard claims that the Founding Fathers “had only their own property claims in mind when writing the Constitution” (35).

**Schedule of Student Assignments / Activities:**
This is a tentative schedule. The list of topics given is a general description of some of the topics we will be covering.

**UNIT 1**

**Chapter 1**
Defining Politics
Two Major Influences on Politics
The Purposes of Government
Conflict and Consensus

**Chapter 2**
What Is Democracy?
Road to the Constitution / Features of the Constitution
Changing the Constitution

**Chapter 3**
Fundamentals of Federalism
Relationships between Federal and State Governments

**Chapter 4**
The Bill of Rights
Civil Liberties
Freedoms v. Rights

**Chapter 5**
A History of Discrimination
Civil Rights – Legalities and Limits?

**EXAM # 1 (100 PTS)**

**UNIT 2**

**Chapter 6**
Political Socialization -- What Do We Think Politically?
Political Ideologies -- From Liberal to Conservative And Beyond
What Is Public Opinion? / Measuring Public Opinion

**Chapter 7**
Political Participation
Elections -- The Voter's Perspective and the Candidate's Perspective
Chapter 10**
Constitutional Freedoms and the Press
Politicians and the "Fifth Branch"
Missouri Constitution Information and Quiz (10 pts)

Chapter 8
Functions of Political Parties
Characteristics of the American Party System
The Future of American Political Parties

Chapter 9
What Are Interest Groups and What Do They Do?
Major Types of Interest Groups
Political Action Committees

EXAM # 2 (100 PTS)

UNIT 3
Chapter 11
Congress -- Who Serves and Why?
Structure and Function of Congress
Simulation: Lobbies and Congress

Chapter 12
Constitutional Powers of the President
Theories of Presidential Power
The President's Relationship to Other Branches of Government

Chapter 13
The Role of Bureaucracies
Types of Bureaucracies
Competence and Responsiveness of Bureaucracies

Chapter 14
Basic Structure of the American Judicial System
The Supreme Court at Work
Influences on Decision-Making in the Court

Chapter 15
Stages of the Public Policy Process
Issues of Economic Policy
Fiscal and Monetary Policy
The Budgeting Process

EXAM # 3 (100 PTS)

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 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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Completion of quizzes or exams during class meetings and online</td>
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<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Submission of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation in threaded discussions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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)

Excused absences include hospitalization for you or a member of your immediate family or a death in the family and these absences do not count towards the drop policies, but these absences must be cleared with me. *Attendance is a factor in deciding borderline grades.*

**Tardiness:** I realize you might be late for a class for various reasons, but please do not walk in 4 or 5 minutes late every day; it’s very disruptive and annoying, not only to me but to your fellow classmates. Repeated tardies will result in the student being counted absent. Please turn cell phones/pagers off while in class (for exceptions to this rule, see me).
**Make-up and late work:** Work must be turned in by class time on the due date unless there is a justifiable reason for you to miss class that day. If your excuse is acceptable, then you may turn the work in the following class period with no penalty. Other than that, I will accept late work only up to 1 week after the due date, but it will have points deducted.

**Extra-credit work:** Any opportunities for extra credit will be assigned during the course of the semester and would involve things such as writing summaries of documentary videos or investigating articles/books related to class and writing summaries of those materials. Extra credit chances, if given, will amount to a maximum of 20 points.

**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.