

COURSE SYLLABUS

POLS 1113 American Federal Government

Spring 2025

COURSE INFORMATION: [Where to be and when](#)

Section: 101

CRN: 21362

Start Date: January 13, 2025

End Date: May 11, 2025

Format: Face-to-face

Class Meetings

Day(s) and Time(s): T/R 8:00-9:20

Campus/Room Number: MC Academic 624

At times, a crisis, emergency, or weather-related event, may interrupt college operations that affect teaching and learning. In the event that TCC campuses are closed, all operations will switch to remote work and our class will: pivot asynchronously online.

CONTACTING YOUR PROFESSOR: [How to get ahold of me](#)

Instructor: Dr. Jamie Smith

Campus/Office Number: SEC 4225

Student Hours: W 10-12 or by appointment

Phone: 918-595-8206

Email: Jamie.Smith10@tulsacc.edu

Email is the best way to contact me. I will return emails with 24 hours. Response times will be longer for emails sent after business hours and on weekends.

TCC Email

You were assigned a TCC email when you enrolled (ex: jane.doe@tulsacc.edu). You will do best in this course if you use that college-assigned email to send to and receive email me about this course. You can access your college email via MyTCC (<https://mytcc.tulsacc.edu>).

Please keep in mind that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prevents me from discussing your grades or course performance with anyone but you. Only when you use your college email can I be (legally) sure that you are you. Similarly, I will not respond—even if they come from your college assigned email—to emails from parents, grandparents, spouses, or anyone else except in the most extreme circumstances.

Email Guidelines

1. Use appropriate address and sign off. Address emails to Dr. Smith and use your first and last name as a sign off. This will help me find you quickly in blackboard.
2. Include your course section number in the email. This is a three-digit number that can be found in the syllabus. I teach anywhere from three to seven sections of a course in a semester. You will get your answer so much faster if you tell me specifically what course you're in so I can find you quickly.
3. Use a clear and concise subject line. Rather than something like "course question" use something like "question about syllabus quiz".
4. Be professional in the body of your email. This means make sure you use professional language (no sarcasm, rude language, or all caps, etc.). Make sure you use appropriate spelling and grammar.
5. Be kind. Give me the benefit of the doubt. I am not trying to trip you up. If there is something out of place, it was an accident. Let me know and I will get it fixed.
6. Give me time to answer emails. Usually, I will answer them within 24 during the week but I try not to check emails on the weekend, unless there is an exam due during that period. There is almost nothing that happens over the weekend that we can't effectively address on Monday.

7. Please do not email me assignments, all assignments should be turned into the appropriate folder on blackboard.
8. Please do not email the whole class roster. This often creates confusion for your classmates. Please email me directly and then if necessary, I will address the class as a whole.
9. Because of federal privacy law, I will only answer emails from you and those emails must come from your TCC email.

STUDENT SUPPORT: [TCC Resources to support your learning](#)

Technical Support

Call the [Student Support Center](#) at 918-595-2000 or email StudentSupportCenter@tulsacc.edu for help with technology, such as Blackboard, TCC email, or MyTCC.

Academic & Student Services

Information about [Student Resources](#) is available on the TCC Website, and Safety and Wellness information is available on the [MyTCC Safety and Wellness page](#).

Well-being Syllabus Statement: Being successful in this course is dependent on many factors, including your personal well-being. TCC recognizes each student has a multitude of needs, roles and responsibilities. We believe college is a time of tremendous growth and fulfillment but acknowledge the stress you accrue when managing your academic, personal, and professional life. You are a priority, and there are a number of TCC support staff waiting to assist you in your academic journey. It is your responsibility to reach out to me if you are experiencing any type of difficulty that may impact your success in this course. I encourage you to do so and look forward to supporting you on your road to success!

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES: [What this course is about](#)

Course Catalog Description

A study of the principles, structure, processes, and functions of the United States federal government. Lecture 3 hours. No laboratory.

Dr. Smith's Expanded Course Description

Political Science 1113 is an introduction to the American federal government and the politics in which it operates. We will focus on the structure and function of the national government, leaving questions about and comparisons of state governance to another course. Instead, we will focus on questions like what is government? How can we have a government that is powerful enough to meet our needs but not so powerful it becomes tyrannical? How much power does the president actually have? Why do we have just two main parties? But this course is also, for many of you, a first experience with the study of political science. Sometimes, when non-political scientists hear this term, they think of political punditry—the loud *opinions* you see on cable news in primetime. Rather, political science applies the scientific method to understanding the parts and whole of the political world. It is nonpartisan and data driven. In this course, we will be focused on the ever-growing body of knowledge generated by the scientific contributions of political science research rather than the political positions and partisan opinions of pundits or casual observers. We will bring the knowledge accrued over more than a century of this study to discuss the concepts and questions embodied by the course. As we begin to examine and apply these contributions to American federal government, we will explore two themes, or units: the Constitution—how we got it and its limits and limitations with special focus on the branches of government—their powers, limitations, and failures; and the action of citizens—how people can and do affect the government.

Course Prerequisites

N/A

Next Course in Sequence

N/A

TEXTBOOKS, SUPPLIES, & OTHER RESOURCES: [Books and supplies you will need to succeed in this course](#)

Required Textbook(s)

Title: American Government 3e

Publisher: Open Stax

Template Revised 07.20.2023

Author: Krutz et al

ISBN: 1-947172-65-4

The textbook for this course available online for free. You can find it for free at <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

All assignments are submitted online. Therefore, you will also need access to the internet and a device on which to complete assignments (e.g., computer, tablet, or at minimum a smart phone).

LEARNING OUTCOMES: **Why you will get out of this course**

Institutional Learning Outcomes:

Tulsa Community College graduates value cultural diversity, ethical behavior, and the unique role of public education in sustaining a free society. The following institutional learning outcomes function independently and in concert. TCC graduates demonstrate: 1. Communication Skills; 2. Critical Thinking; 3. Personal Responsibility; and 4. Social Responsibility.

Program Learning Outcomes:

To access program learning outcomes specific to your degree or certificate, go to the [online catalog](#) and click Programs, then select your program from the list and scroll down to Program Learning Outcomes.

Dr. Smith's Course Goals:

1. Examine the function each of and relationship among the branches of the US government.
2. Identify groups and individuals with whom you are aligned and communicate why
3. Advocate for candidates and causes in a factual and articulate way
4. Demonstrate empathy for those in a different political situation than yourself

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Examine fundamental political processes, institutions, actors and ideas
2. Critically evaluate major arguments in the discipline
3. Effectively debate, in both oral and written forms, logical arguments
4. Recognize how factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, class and region influence political narratives
5. Analyze major political events and historical political figures.

WHAT TO EXPECT: **How the class will work**

This course will primarily rely on lecture and class activities. Students will be expected to attend class, take notes, and answer questions. To support lecture, the class will engage in group or individual work within the classroom setting to help students apply the concepts discussed in the text and lecture.

GRADING POLICY AND ASSIGNMENT LIST: **What you'll be graded on and how**

Category	Description	Value
Slido Questions	Students do best in this course when they come to class regularly and participate. Additionally, studies show students are more likely to remember material if they are asked to apply it soon after learning it. Therefore, the purpose of slido thinking questions is to (1) incentivize you coming to class, (2) give those who may be a little shy an opportunity to engage with course materials and receive feedback during class without becoming the focus of class, and (3) give you an opportunity to apply concepts discussed in class with immediate feedback. In each class session, you will be given at least one slido question. These questions may be factual review of material, ask you to apply concepts to an example, or ask for your opinion. Some issues may be controversial and some of you will, likely, disagree with other students. That's fine! Politics is a murky entity that deals with issues that often have more than one "right" answer. Some of the topics discussed may be sensitive for some people in the class and you should be sympathetic towards that. Intellectual	150 Points 30 @ 5 points each

	exchange and disagreement are expected; however, any personal attacks, insults, or disrespectful behavior will result in a grade of zero for anyone who exhibits this kind of behavior. Disrespect or intolerance toward your fellow students or any marginalized group will not be tolerated. Completion of these questions will be assessed as, effectively, attendance. You must come to class to receive these points.	
Journals	Thoughtfully engaging and evaluating arguments is a key part of effective political participation. Therefore, throughout the semester, you will be asked to respond to provided prompts in informal journals. Each journal assigns an article, video, podcast, or other media for you to consume and respond to. These media will often express a specific opinion or viewpoint. The selection these pieces is not an endorsement of the perspectives in the pieces, it's merely an effort to get you to grapple with real world applications of the content we will cover in the course. Each journal will also give you a specific question related to the media to prompt your response. You will write <u>a response of at least 300 words in length</u> that addresses the prompt. You are not expected to agree with the perspective of all (or any) of the authors. Many of the topics addressed in these pieces do not have a "right" answer. Rather, you are asked to engage the content and the specifics of the arguments. A quality response will provide an articulate argument that explains why you agree or disagree with the perspective offered in the piece or the prompt, using specifics of the assigned piece to agree or disagree.	100 points 10 @ 10 points each
Chapter Quizzes	To help prepare you for the course exams, each chapter will have a quiz. The quiz will use matching, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. Performance on these quizzes can be used to understand the concepts on which you have a strong grasp and those on which you may want to brush up before the exam. There will also be a syllabus quiz that covers content in the syllabus. Each quiz will open one week before we begin the chapter and will be due the Sunday after we finish covering the chapter in class. You may take each quiz up to three times and your highest score will be counted toward your final grade. (These questions come from a pool so you may receive different questions on each attempt.) The lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final grade. One great way to utilize these attempts is to take the quiz after reading the chapter, before we cover it in class, and then use the remaining attempts after we cover the material in class. This will highlight for you areas of content you might want to pay special attention to in class. Additionally, each lesson has a set of key questions in the lesson overview on blackboard that serve as a study guide for the exams and quizzes in this course. It would be a good idea to answer these questions as we work through each chapter to better facilitate your learning. All answers to quiz questions are expected to come from the content covered in the course. Answers that come from other sources—such as Google searches—will be considered a violation of the course academic integrity policy. Any answer that was not covered in the course will be considered to have come from outside sources.	150 points 16 @ 10 points each Lowest score is dropped
Constitution Test	We will center the Constitution in this study of American government. To assess how much you learned from that exercise, you will take an exam that covers the specifics of the Constitution. This test will focus on what the Constitution says, as opposed to the evolving interpretations that we will talk about throughout the course of this semester. This test will cover Articles I-III, the Constitution and federalism, and the Amendments.	100 Points

Exams	You will take two exams—a midterm and a final. Each exam will cover only the content from that unit. Exams will consist of matching, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and/or ordering questions. You can compile your answers to the key questions from each lesson overview as a study guide. If you submit that study guide on Blackboard, you may use that study guide on the exam. You can take each exam twice, but the attempts will be averaged. All answers to exam questions are expected to come from the content covered in the course. Answers that come from other sources—such as Google searches—will be considered a violation of the course academic integrity policy. Any answer that was not covered in the course will be considered to have come from outside sources.	500 2 @ 250 points each
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Feedback and Grades: [when can you expect feedback and grades on your assignments](#)

Feedback and grades on each quiz and exam is available to you instantaneously, though you will only be able to see which questions you missed and broad feedback. This feedback also includes information about where in the course that information has been covered: pointing you to specific sections of the text and class. After the quiz closes, you will be able to see all questions, answers, and feedback. For written work, you will receive feedback and grades on those assignments within two weeks of the due date. Slido questions are graded largely as completion though feedback on will also be given during class discussions.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Course Grading Scale	
A	900 to 1000 points
B	800 to 899.9 points
C	700 to 799.9 points
D	600 to 699.9 points
F	599.9 points or fewer

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:

You will always do best in this course when you both come to class and participate. Yet, life sometimes gets in the way. Please reach out and let me know if problems arise that may prevent you from coming to class and/or participating. I am required to assign a grade of WN (Withdrawal for Nonattendance) if you do not attend class during the open drop period. This is the first week of the course for 16-week courses or the first three days in 8-week courses. If something will prevent you from attending during this period, it is imperative that you reach out and let me know so that you are not dropped from the course.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE-UP WORK: [How late work and make up work will be graded](#)

In your professional lives, you will be expected to complete work on a deadline. To help prepare you for this, this course has firm deadlines. Late slido questions, quizzes, and exams are not accepted. Late written work may be turned in for four days after the due date with a 10% deduction for each day it is late.

Most work in this course has a window in which it can be completed. The hope is that you will be able to work ahead or around of complications that may arise. However, if you miss an assignment or exam, you should reach out to me and explain the circumstances. In many cases, if you reach out ahead of time, we can find a compromise. However, if this becomes a pattern, you may want to consider if now is the best time to complete this course.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL: [What to do if you can't or don't want to complete the course](#)

See [Course Enrollment and Withdrawal](#) for information on withdrawing from a course. I will only give an AW upon request due to an inability to complete the course work and in accordance with TCC policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: [What is cheating and what are the consequences](#)

Students at Tulsa Community College are expected to behave as responsible members of the College community and to be honest and ethical in their academic work. To falsify or fabricate the results of one's research; to present words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own; or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process of higher education and violates [TCC's Academic Integrity Policy](#). Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy are addressed based on their severity as outlined in the currently policy included in the Student Handbook.

. The following are examples of academic dishonesty violations in this course with their respective sanctions:

- MINOR VIOLATIONS (e.g., including only weblinks rather than full works cited)
 - Letter grade reduction
- MODERATE VIOLATIONS (e.g., overreliance on quotes, failure to cite sources)
 - Revise assignment for max of 50%
- MAJOR VIOLATIONS (e.g., purchased papers, use of AI on any assignment, quiz or exam questions that come from outside sources, copied answers on exams/major assignments, etc.)
 - Zero for the assignment
- MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS
 - Grade of "F" for the course

SYLLABUS CHANGE: [How you'll know if things change](#)

Occasionally, changes to the syllabus may be necessary. Students will be notified of any changes to the syllabus in writing on Blackboard and via your TCC email. Keep in mind that given the uncertainty caused Oklahoma weather, things may have to change suddenly. I will do my best to keep everyone informed in the event that we need to make a quick change to content delivery or due dates.

SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT: [Where to find information about TCC policy](#)

The [Syllabus Attachment](#) provides critical student information for all TCC courses and is considered to be a part of this syllabus. Students are responsible for reading the statements contained within.

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR: What we'll cover (and what's due) when

Week	Date	Lesson Topic	Reading	Assignments**
Week 1	January 14	Getting Started	Syllabus	Syllabus Quiz Chapter 1 Quiz
	January 16	Basics of Politics and Governance	Chapter 1	
Week 2	January 21	Legacy of Self-Governance	Chapter 2	Journal 1 Chapter 2 Quiz
	January 23	Articles and Constitution		
Week 3	January 28	Constitutional Congress	Chapter 11	
	January 30	Political Congress	Chapter 11	
Week 4	February 4	The Broken Branch	Chapter 11	Chapter 11 Quiz
	February 6	Constitutional Presidency	Chapter 12	
Week 5	February 11	Political Presidency	Chapter 12	Journal 2 Chapter 12 Quiz
	February 13	Staffing the Bureaucracy	Chapter 15	
Week 6	February 18	Political Executive	Chapter 15	Chapter 15 Quiz
	February 29	Constitutional Judiciary	Chapter 13	
Week 8	February 25	The US Legal System	Chapter 13	Journal 3 Chapter 13 Quiz
	February 27	Federalism	Chapter 3	Journal 4 Chapter 3 Quiz
Week 7	March 4	Midterm Exam		
	March 6	First Amendment	Chapter 4	
Week 9	March 11	Amendments 2 to 8	Chapter 4	Journal 5 Chapter 4 Quiz Journal 6
	March 13	Civil Rights I	Chapter 5	
Spring Break	March 17-23	NO CLASS		
Week 10	March 25	Civil Rights II	Chapter 5	Chapter 5 Quiz
	March 27	Civil Rights III	Chapter 5	
Week 11	April 1	Forming Political Opinions	Chapter 6	Chapter 6 Quiz
	April 3	Measuring Public Opinion	Chapter 6	
Week 12	April 8	Voting	Chapter 7	Journal 7 **Constitution Test**
	April 10	Elections	Chapter 7	
Week 13	April 15	Campaign Finance	Chapter 7	Chapter 7 Quiz
	April 17	Foundations of the Media	Chapter 8	
Week 14	April 22	Impact of the Media	Chapter 8	Journal 8 Chapter 8 Quiz Journal 9
	April 24	Why Parties?	Chapter 9	
Week 16	April 29	History of American Parties	Chapter 9	Chapter 9 Quiz Journal 10 Chapter 16 Quiz
	May 1	Policy	Chapter 16	
Finals Week	May 9	Final Exam		
*Occasionally, changes to the course schedule will be necessary. I will notify the class of any changes to the syllabus in writing via email and Blackboard announcements. In the event that we have to move online suddenly due to COVID-19 or other concerns, the course schedule will remain the same, but video lectures will be substituted for face-to-face content.				