

POLS 101

American Government and Politics

3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County
Common Course Outline

Description

POLS 101 – American Government and Politics: is a course which introduces students to the historical foundation of the American political system and United States Constitution and their impact on citizens. Students analyze how the institutions of the federal government, the Congress, the presidency, and the courts operate, both in theory and in practice, and how they interact with one another. Students examine the role of campaigns and elections in American politics and how political parties, interest groups, and the media influence the domestic and foreign policy making process. Students question political conflicts and how conflicts have affected the process of politics and governmental institutions.

Pre-requisites: ACLT 052

Co-requisites: ACLT 053 or (ESOL 052 and ESOL 054)

Overall Course Objectives

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

1. define the terms politics and government;
2. examine the historical foundations of American government;
3. outline the rights and responsibilities of a United States citizen;
4. explain the compromises, conflicts, concepts, events, and ideas that led to the evolution of the American political system;
5. examine why issues of Constitutional individual civil rights, and/or civil liberties have become more complex in contemporary times;
6. summarize the development of measures designed to promote equality in America;
7. analyze the Constitutional and traditional functions, organization, and responsibilities of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of American government;
8. illustrate how factors such as money and the media influence political behavior and ethics;
9. analyze the relationship and impact between interest groups and institutions of government that are influential in shaping laws and creating public policy;
10. evaluate the public policy making process from agenda setting and problem recognition to policy evaluation;
11. analyze the major elements of previous and current American foreign policy such as; human/civil rights, cyber and military security, international relations, the environment, finance and trade;
12. analyze government decisions and political issues related to local and global diversity;
13. interpret issues and events affecting the current political environment;

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For more information, see your professor's syllabus.

14. defend issues facing American democracy, using contemporary technology to solve problems, validate information, and to meet challenges as a member of an evolving technological society; and
15. find, evaluate, use, and cite academic sources on political issues and events based on criteria discussed in the course according to timeliness, credibility, and reliability.

Major Topics

- I. Foundations of American Government
 - a. Articles of Confederation
 - b. U.S. Constitution/Constitutional Rights
 - c. Federalism
- II. Role of the Federal Government
 - a. Responsibilities of the Executive Branch
 - b. Responsibilities of the Legislative Branch
 - c. Responsibilities of the Judicial Branch
- III. Politics and Political Behavior
 - a. Political Socialization and Ideology
 - b. Interest Groups and Political Parties
 - c. Media and Public Opinion
 - d. Campaigns and Elections
- IV. Domestic Policy Making Process
 - a. Development of Domestic Policy
 - b. Role of Bureaucracy
- V. Foreign Policy Making Process
 - a. Development of Foreign Policy
 - b. Principle Players and Decision Making
 - c. Measuring Outcomes

Course Requirements

Grading will be determined by the individual faculty member, but shall include the following, at minimum:

- Participation in the following: debates, oral presentations, and/or online discussion forums about current political events and topics
- Four exams
- Research assignment or project

Written assignments and research projects: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources in their research and cite sources according to the style selected by their professor.

Other Course Information

This course is an approved 3–credit General Education course in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.

One or more assignments will infuse CCBC General Education Program outcomes and will account for a minimum of 10% of the total course grade. The assignment(s) will allow students to demonstrate at least 5 of the 7 General Education program outcomes.

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