

Moberly Area Community College **Common Syllabus**

PSC 103 American Government **Current Term**

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

Catalog Description: PSC 103 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
Edition: 11th Edition 2009
Publisher: McGraw Hill
ISBN: 978-0-07-340390-8

Title: Government in America w/Ebook (Looseleaf)
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:

- I. Defining politics and government
- II. Road to democratic government in the U.S. / Federalism
- III. Civil rights and civil liberties
- IV. Political in the world – understanding the “isms”
- V. “Other” political entities – media, political parties, interest groups
- VI. 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.

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 1 ½ - 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).

Statement to Connect Course with General Education Outcomes or Technical Program Outcome

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

- Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills.
 - Construct logical and ethical arguments with evidence to support the conclusions
 - Conform to the rules of Standard English
 - Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate a variety of course material and points of view.
- Assess and appreciate artifacts in language, art, music, or philosophy and be able to evaluate those artifacts as representations of form, cultural context, and individual expression.
 - Demonstrate critical thought in the evaluation of artifacts of diverse culture.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how history has shaped society and culture, understand how the individual relates to society and culture, appreciate cultural diversity, understand human behavior and mental processes, and understand human development.
 - Will identify social and cultural changes over time.
 - Will compare cultures.
 - Will analyze the reciprocal relationship between the individual and culture.

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: Any student who misses two consecutive weeks of class during a regular sixteen-week semester or the equivalent proportion of class time during a shorter session will be dropped from the class by the instructor unless acceptable justification is supplied. An instructor must complete and file the appropriate forms to drop the student within one week following the student’s violation of the attendance policy. Additionally, any student who misses more than one-fourth of the entire number of in-seat class meetings in a regular 16-week semester or the equivalent proportion of class time during a shorter session, may be dropped from that class by the instructor if, in the opinion of the instructor, the student does not have reasonable opportunity to succeed in the class. A student’s attendance rate will be calculated based upon the first day of the semester (not the student’s date of enrollment in the course.)

Student attendance must be defined in a different manner for online, hybrid, and virtual courses. Student attendance in these courses is defined as active participation in the course. Online, hybrid, and virtual courses will, at a minimum, have weekly mechanisms for student participation, such as any or all of the following methods:

- a. Completion of quizzes or exams
- b. Submission of assignments
- c. Participation in threaded discussions
- d. Communication with the instructor

A student who does not participate in an online, hybrid, or virtual course for two consecutive weeks will be dropped by the instructor unless acceptable justification is supplied. An instructor must complete and file the appropriate forms to drop the student within one week following the student's violation of the attendance policy. As with ground courses, a student's attendance rate in online courses will also be calculated based upon the first day of the semester. If a student does not demonstrate active participation in the online course within the first two weeks (or the equivalent proportion of class time during a short session), the student will be dropped as "never attended." Simply logging into an online class does not constitute active participation.

Students should be aware that their dropping a course and their last date of attendance in the course may impact their financial aid. (Policy Handbook I.090 and 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.

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)

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>.

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> or contact Dr. Jackie Fischer, MACC's Title IX Coordinator, at 660-263-4110, ext. 11236 or jackief@maccedu.