



**Course Name:** Introduction to American Government

**Course Number:** POL\*E111

**Credits:** 3

**Catalog description:**

This course is a study of the origins, development, structure and functions of American national government. Topics include the constitutional framework; federalism; the three branches of government, including the bureaucracy; civil rights and liberties; political participation and behavior; and policy formation. It also encompasses an overview of state and local governments, their relationship to the federal government and their role in the American political system.

**Prerequisite or Parallel:** ENG\*E101 – Composition

**General Education Competencies Satisfied:**

**HCC General Education Requirement Designated Competency Attribute Code(s):**

**SOPX**                      **Social Phenomena Knowledge & Understanding II**  
*(not within the fields of anthropology, psychology or sociology)*

**Discipline-Specific Attribute Code(s):**

**SSCI**                      **Social Science elective**

**Course objectives:**

**General Education Goals and Outcomes:**

**Social Phenomena Knowledge & Understanding I and II:** Students will develop an increased understanding of the influences that shape a person's, or group's attitudes, beliefs, emotions, symbols, and actions, and how these systems of influence are created, maintained, and altered by individual, familial, group, situational, or cultural means.

**Course Specific Objectives:**

1. Develop an understanding of the basic framework and branches of American government.
2. Read and comprehend relevant sections of the United States Constitution.
3. Develop a basic understanding of civil liberties and civil rights.
4. Define the concept of federalism, and evaluate its history and impact on the American political system.



5. Analyze the functions and roles of state and local governments in the American political system.
6. Make students better-informed American citizens and residents.
7. Appreciate and analyze the role of diversity in the formulation of public policy, and in the overall American political system.
8. Interpret case law as a means of understanding the evolution of civil liberties and civil rights.
9. Analyze and interpret data as a means of assessing political systems and citizen behavior in American politics.
10. Evaluate polling methodology, and its role in determining public policy.
11. Apply course concepts to interpret current political events.

**Course Content:**

1. General theories and functions of governments.
2. Historical overview of American government: from colonial government to the (Institutional convention, and the creation of the United States.
3. Constitutional principles of our government: origins and definitions.
4. Federalism: definition, evolution and significance.
5. Civil Rights: overview, court interpretation of the Constitution, states vs. national government in the civil rights arena.
6. Individualism vs. government: individual participation in the decision-making process.
7. Citizenship and voting: the electoral process and its implications for the individual,
8. Political interest groups: functions and effectiveness
9. Political parties: overview and functions
10. Congress powers, organization, functions.
11. Presidency: powers, organization, functions.
12. Judiciary: powers, organization, functions.
13. Political policy: formulation and functions, with discussion of contemporary issues in foreign and domestic policy.

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