

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

PLSC 27533 American National Government

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory Hours: 0

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

A study of the narrow and the broad aspects of American government. Areas of concentration include, but are not limited to, political behavior, Congress, the judicial system, bureaucracy, the executive branch, and intergovernmental relations. (ACTS: PLSC 2003)

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the evolution of the modern government from the early national period.
2. Discuss theories of representation.
3. Document the organizational structure of the three branches of government.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the motivations and activities of political leaders.
5. Analyze the process of law-making.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills - Students will analyze complex ideas by the study of the theory of representation and separation of powers.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate proficiently through written assignments.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon important issues relating to the international role of American government in foreign and economic policy.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. The historical and structural evolution of the U.S. Constitution
- B. Elections and political parties
- C. Goals and strategies of the various branches of government
- D. The role of leadership
- E. Lawmaking
- F. The relationship of Congress to the Presidency and the Supreme Court
- G. Policy issues, bureaucratic function and foreign policy