

NorthWest Arkansas Community College
American National Government

PLSC 2003 American National Government

Catalog Description

Theory, organization, politics, functions and problems of the federal system and general aspects of American government are studies, including national institutions, their powers, functions and related activities.

Prerequisite:
None

Credit hours/Contact hours/Load hours:
3/3/3

Target Audience & Transfer:

Designed for students seeking an Associate of Arts degree and as one of the required course options in various programs and for students transferring to other colleges. PLSC 2003 will transfer to the University of Arkansas as PLSC 2003.

General Course Outcomes

Upon completing this course students should:

1. be able to describe the major institutions of the U.S. government
2. be able to evaluate the activities of political parties, interest groups, the election process, and the impact of Supreme Court decisions
3. be a more informed citizen, better able to relate his/her knowledge of American government to issues concerning us all
4. be more aware of current events in the United States
5. have further developed his/her critical thinking skills

Required Text

Bardes, Barbara, and others, American government and Politics Today, 2002-03, Thompson Learning/Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2002

Topical/Unit Outline

American Democracy and Political Culture

- Forms of Democratic Government
- Principles of Democratic Government
- Political Culture and Political Socialization
- Political Ideology

The Constitution

- Historical Beginnings
- Early Political Document
- The Constitution and Constitutional Principles
- Amendments to the Constitution

Federalism

- Systems of Government
- Our Federal System
- State-to-State Relationships
- Federal-to-State Relationships
- Federalism in Action

Civil Liberties and the Bill of Rights

- First Amendments Protections
- Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments
- The Right to Privacy

Civil Rights and Equal Rights for All

- The Civil Rights Movement
- Racial Discrimination
- Gender Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment

Public Opinion

- Defining, Expressing, and Measuring Public Opinion
- Qualities of and Influences Upon Public Opinion
- Public Opinion Polls
- Political Socialization

Interest Groups

- Types of Interest Groups
- Techniques of Interest Groups
- Regulations

Political Parties

- Functions of Political Parties
- History of Republican and Democratic Parties
- Structure of Political Parties
- Political Party Identification
- Reasons for Only Two Major Parties
- Minor Parties

Elections, Campaigns, and Voting

- Candidates and the Nomination Process
- The Campaign and Campaign Financing
- Voting Requirements and Voter Turnout
- The Media and Politics

The Legislative Branch

- The structure and Powers of Congress
- Functions of Members of Congress
- House and Senate Leadership
- Committees
- The legislative Process: How a Bill becomes a Law

The Executive Branch

- The Presidency: The Election Process, The Electoral College
- The Twenty-fifth Amendment
- The Roles of the President

The Bureaucracy

- the Civil Service
- the Cabinet and Executive Departments
- Other agencies

The Judiciary

- Structure of the Federal Court System
- The Appeals Process
- The Supreme Court in Action
- Judicial Appointments

Required Methods of Instruction:

Individual teachers may design the course in any number of ways, keeping the course objectives in mind. They may include lecture, audio-visual materials, guest speakers, or any other things that teachers may feel will enhance the class.

Required Forms of Assessment

Individual instructors have broad latitude in assessing students. However, each instructor will include some form of essay question on the exam(s).