



DIVISION OF ADULT LEARNING

SYLLABUS

POLS-256: Survey of American Government

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University Mission Statement:

Lee University is a Christian institution which offers liberal arts and professional education on both the baccalaureate and graduate levels through residential and distance programs. It seeks to provide education that integrates biblical truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures with truth discovered through the study of arts and sciences and in the practice of various professions. A personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior is the controlling perspective from which the educational enterprise is carried out. The foundational purpose of all educational programs is to develop within the students knowledge, appreciation, understanding, ability and skills which will prepare them for responsible Christian living in a complex world.

Catalog Description:

This course is a survey of the structure and operation of government in the United States at all levels: national, state and local.

Required Text(s) and/or Supporting Resources:**Required Text:**

Lowe, T. J., Ginsberg, B., Shepsle, K. A., & Ansolabehere, S. (2017). *American Government: Power and Purpose* (Core 14th ed.). NY: W.W. Norton. ISBN: 9780393283761.

Additional Supporting Resources:

Resources provided in the Learning Management System (LMS).

Prerequisite Skills and Knowledge:

None

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this course is to equip the student with knowledge of the structure and operation of government in the United States at the national, state and local jurisdictions of government.

General Learning Objectives (Course Goals):

This course seeks to:

1. Provide an overview of the proper role of government.
2. Provide an overview of the goals our Founding Fathers envisioned for a republic form of government, with three branches of government to prevent the rise of a tyrannical government.
3. Discuss the proper role of government and the role of federalism in meeting those goals.
4. Provide an overview of how the Senate and the Congress function within our government.
5. Discover what the powers of the President are and how the Executive Office functions in relation to the other branches.
6. Provide an overview of how checks and balances are built into our constitution.
7. Examine how the Judiciary functions, and its role in our government.
8. Examine the Christian and Humanistic ideologies that have influenced the history and development of American government.

Specific Behavioral Objectives (*Learning Outcomes*):

As a result of the activities and study in this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the role of government in our nation's founding and why the Founders feared the growth of big government.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of and be able to describe how the three branches of government in America's Constitutional Republic operate.
3. Describe how the Republic was originally formed and how it currently functions in conjunction with federalism.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of and be able to provide an overview of how the Senate and the Congress function within American government.
5. Describe what the powers of the President are and how the Executive Office functions in relation to the other branches of government.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of and be able to describe the jurisdictions, functions and powers of the federal, state and local governments in light of the checks and balances built into our government.
7. Describe how the courts function, its power to judge legislation passed by Congress and how it can be subject to political manipulation in order to influence law at the various levels of government.
8. Demonstrate knowledge about the ideologies and cultural influences in our nation that have affected the development of our Republic form of government and its public policies.

Major Topics:

- A. The role of government
- B. The Constitution and the three branches of government
- C. Federalism
- D. The function of the Senate and the House of Representatives
- E. The Presidency
- F. Checks and Balances
- G. The Judiciary
- H. Ideologies

Course Assessments:

- A. **Text/Media.** All text/media is evaluated in the threaded discussions and assignments.
- B. **Threaded Discussions.** As is the case with all DAL courses, a Threaded Discussion is part of each unit. However, for this course, the threaded discussions are structured slightly differently. You will be asked to make a minimum of four posts each week: (1) Pre-Reading Post – Due by the end of Wednesday: Your initial post is meant to be a reaction to the prompt prior to engaging the course material of the week. In this post, you should simply provide your current understanding/beliefs about the question being posed. (2) Post-Reading Post – Due by the end of Friday: Your second post should be a more systematic and thorough response to the prompt after you have engaged the material. In this post, you should explore whether your ideas in the initial post have been altered, reinforced, or confirmed by the material and explain why that is the case. Peer Responses 1 and 2 – Due by the end of Monday: Finally, you will be expected to engage the posts of your classmates in a way that extends the conversation beyond their initial ideas and to provide additional perspectives for your classmates to consider.

- C. **Unit Assignments.** As a means of assessing your reading comprehension, you will be asked to take a multiple-choice “mastery” quiz during each unit. You may take the quiz as many as four times throughout the week and only your highest score will be counted toward your semester total. On each attempt, questions will be drawn randomly from a large test bank resulting in a different set of questions from one attempt to the next. Additionally, to encourage you to return to the text for a closer reading, a minimum of 6 hours between quiz attempts is required.
- D. **Course Projects.** You will be asked to write two, 3-4 page papers. The first paper (due in Unit 3) is a brief political biography of your home district’s U.S. House representative and the second paper (due in Unit 6) is an overview and exploration of one of the landmark Supreme Court cases in American political history.
- E. **Exams.** There are two exams scheduled for the course: a Mid-Term in Unit Four and a Final exam in Unit Seven. These exams will be based on material from all aspects of the course – the textbook, additional readings, threaded discussions, and so forth. Half of the exam will be multiple-choice (similar to the reading comprehension quizzes of each unit) and half of the exam will be free responses to a set of short essay prompts. These essay prompts will ask you to move beyond the simple memorization of material and to apply the material to broader theoretic concerns, to issues of cause and effect, or to evaluate the importance/relevance of those concepts. You will be expected to answer five of the six prompts provided (allowing you to avoid the question of which you are least confident).

Evaluation:

A. Threaded Discussions	350
B. Unit Assignments	150
C. Course Projects	100
D. Exams	400

Grading Scale:

The standardized grading scale provides a uniform foundation from which to assess your performance.

Grade	Quality Points per Credit	Score
A	4.0	930 - 1000
A-	3.7	900 - 929
B+	3.3	870 - 899
B	3.0	830 – 869
B-	2.7	800 – 829
C+	2.3	770 – 799
C	2.0	730 – 769
C-	1.7	700 – 729
D+	1.3	670 – 699
D	1.0	600 – 669

F	.0	0 - 599
Letter Grade Equivalencies:		
<p>A = Clearly stands out as excellent performance. Has unusually sharp insights into material and initiates thoughtful questions. Sees many sides of an issue. Articulates well and writes logically and clearly. Integrates ideas previously learned from this and other disciplines. Anticipates next steps in progression of ideas. Example "A" work should be of such nature that it could be put on reserve for all cohort members to review and emulate. The "A" cohort member is, in fact, an example for others to follow.</p>		
<p>B = Demonstrates a solid comprehension of the subject matter and always accomplishes all course requirements. Serves as an active participant and listener. Communicates orally and in writing at an acceptable level for a cohort member. Work shows intuition and creativity. Example "B" work indicates good quality of performance and is given in recognition for solid work; a "B" should be considered a good grade and awarded to those who submit assignments of quality less than the exemplary work described above.</p>		
<p>C = Quality and quantity of work in and out of class is average. Has average comprehension, communication skills, or initiative. Requirements of the assignments are addressed at least minimally.</p>		
<p>D = Quality and quantity of work is below average. Has marginal comprehension, communication skills, or initiative. Requirements of the assignments are addressed at below acceptable levels.</p>		
<p>F = Quality and quantity of work is unacceptable and does not qualify the student to progress to a more advanced level of work.</p>		
Unit and Time Distribution:		
<p>The time to complete each unit is approximately 17 hours per week on average for a three hour course. Actual assignment completion times will vary. A more detailed breakdown of each assignment can be found within the course.</p>		

POLICIES

Attendance Policy:
<p>At Lee University student success is directly related to the student actively attending and engaging in the course. Online courses are no different from classroom courses in this regard; however, participation must be defined in a different manner.</p> <p>Online courses will have weekly mechanisms for student participation, which can be documented by submission/completion of assignments, participation in threaded discussions, and/or specific communication with the instructor as outlined within the syllabus.</p>
Academic Honesty Policy/Information:
<p>Cheating is defined as the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials or receiving unauthorized assistance or communication during any academic exercise.</p> <p>Examples of cheating include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submitting work for academic evaluation that is not the your own. ▪ Receiving assistance from another person during an examination.

- Using prepared notes or materials during an examination.
- Permitting another student to copy your work.
- Plagiarism.
- Falsification.
- Other misrepresentations of academic achievement submitted for evaluation or a grade.

As stated in the LEE UNIVERSITY Catalog, plagiarism is presenting as your own work the words, ideas, opinions, theories, or thoughts which are not common knowledge. Students who present others' words or ideas as their own without fair attribution (documentation) are guilty of plagiarizing. Unfair attribution includes, but is not limited to, a direct quotation of all or part of another's words without appropriately identifying the source. It is also unfair attribution to have included a source within a Works Cited page without having carefully cited the source within the text of the document.

Plagiarism also includes, but is not limited to, the following acts when performed without fair attribution:

- a. directly quoting all or part of another person's words without quotation marks, as appropriate to the discipline.
- b. paraphrasing all or part of another person's words without documentation.
- c. stating an idea, theory, or formula as your own when it actually originated with another person.
- d. purchasing (or receiving in any other manner) a term paper or other assignment, which is the work of another person, and submitting that work as if it were one's own.

Late Policy:

- No credit is available for postings of any kind made in the **Threaded Discussions** after a given Unit ends.
- If your faculty approves your submission of late assignments, each assignment score will be penalized 10% per day up to five days late. After the fifth day, late assignments will not be accepted. (Note: An assignment is a paper, a project, a team presentation, etc., **not** a discussion.)
- No late assignments will be accepted after the close of the final unit.

EXPECTATIONS

Faculty Expectations of Students:

- Have consistent access to a computer and possess baseline computer and information skills prior to taking online courses.
- Log into their courses within 24 hours of the beginning of the session to confirm their participation. (Students who register after the session has begun will be responsible for any assignments or material already covered.)
- Take an active role in each unit, participating fully in discussions, assignments and other activities throughout the entire session. If some event interferes with that participation, the student is responsible for notifying the instructor in advance.

- Review the course syllabus and other preliminary course materials thoroughly as early as possible during the first few days of the course.
- Be responsible for raising any questions or seeking clarification about these materials, if necessary, within the first week of the session.
- Frequently check the course calendar for due dates.
- Submit assignments and papers on time, and take tests by the posted dates. Acceptance of late work and any penalties for late submissions are up to the discretion of the instructor, based on the expectations outlined in the course syllabus.
- Contribute meaningful, timely comments to online discussions according to guidelines provided.
- Contribute substantively to group assignments (if required in course).
- Check for University announcements each time you log onto the LMS. These postings are critical.
- Use Lee email address.
- Complete the "Student Survey of Instruction" for each course to evaluate the instructor and the course.

Students' Expectations of Faculty:

- The opportunity to be active participants in a stimulating and challenging education that is global in scope, interactive in process and diverse in content and approach.
- A friendly, respectful, open, and encouraging learning environment.
- A course outline or syllabus that clearly provides information regarding course content, teaching methods, course objectives, grading, attendance/participation policies, due dates, and student assessment guidelines.
- Instructors who are responsive and available to discuss within 48 hours students' progress, course content, assignments, etc. at mutually convenient times from the first day of the session through the last day of the session. (Check the faculty contact information regarding weekends and holidays.)
- Individual instructor's contact information, schedules, availability, and procedural details are located within the course.
- To have access to instructor feedback and grading on projects, exams, papers, quizzes, etc., within ten (10) days of assignment due date so students are able to determine where they have made errors or need additional work.
- Final grade/feedback provided within ten (10) days after the last date of course.

IMPORTANT STUDENT INFORMATION

Special Needs:

Lee University, in conjunction with the Academic Support Office, works to ensure students with documented disabilities have access to educational opportunities. Students who need accommodations based on a disability should visit the Academic Support Office, call (423) 614-8181, or email academicsupport@leeuniversity.edu. It is the student's responsibility to share the Accommodations Form with the instructor in order to initiate the accommodations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY**Knowledge Base/Working Bibliography (Reading List):**

Demar, Gary. *God and Government*. Powder Springs: American Vision, 2011. ISBN: 9781936577033.

Grudem, Wayne. *Politics according to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. ISBN: 97803103310295.

O' Conner, Karen. *American Government: Roots and Reform*, 11th edition. Longman, 2011. ISBN: 0205771300.

Skousen, W. Cleon. *The Five Thousand Year Leap*, 7th edition. National Center for Constitutional Studies, 2009. ISBN: 0880801484.

Volkomer, Walter. *American Government*, 13th edition. Longman, 2010. ISBN: 0205778380.

Wilson, James Q., *American Government*, 10th edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005. ISBN: 0618556621.