



POL101 Introduction to the American Political Process

(3 credit hours)

Course Syllabus

Course Description

A survey course that analyzes the American Democratic processes and discusses the distribution of authority and responsibility between the federal, state, and local levels. It introduces students to the principles of government outlined in the U. S. Constitution and the document's impact upon society.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Comprehend the concepts, institutions, and officials that make up the American political process.
2. Analyze the meaning and intent of the American Constitution and its amendments.
3. Apply how government affects our lives on a daily basis.
4. Using the knowledge gained from lectures and written material, critically assess the American political process

Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

Required Textbook(s) and Resources

For this course you will need the following materials:

Patterson, T. (2019). *We the people* (13th ed.). McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
eText ISBN: 9781260165821, 1260165825

An electronic version of the above textbook is included with your course fees. A printed copy of the textbook may be available at a discounted rate from the bookstore.

Note: this course may contain additional resources for specific activities or modules. Be sure to read the instructions carefully for individual assignments or activities for those requirements. Where applicable, Tiffin University has obtained permission to use copyrighted material.

Visit the [Tiffin University Library](#) for access to databases, research help, and writing tips. A link is also available in the Course Home area. I also suggest you register for one of the library's many webinars on library research, source evaluation, copyright, and other topics, at the [Library Events - Upcoming Events](#) web page.

If you register but cannot attend a live session, the library will email you a link to the session recording after the event.

For further assistance email a librarian, at: library@tiffin.edu.

Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments.

Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each week**. For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week**.

To help you plan your time and keep you on track toward successful completion, this course maintains a distinctive rhythm for assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays**.
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**
5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays**.

Learning Activities

During the course of this term, you will be engaging in a wide variety of tasks to help you better understand the structure of the American government and its political processes. Each week, you will engage with your fellow classmates in one large or small group discussion. You will also be assigned a variety of tasks that will help you organize your research so that you can better analyze political concepts, candidates, legislation, etc. The capstone of this course will be the judicial case presentation, in which you will look at a judicial opinion, its importance, and the role it plays in modern day society. Finally, there will be several opportunities throughout the course of the term to reflect on the information you have learned so that you can better apply the concepts learned to your everyday life and beyond.

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per module.

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Discussion	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	175
Assignment 1	50	65	65	65	65	65	65	440
Assignment 2	40	40	65	50	50	100	40	385
Total	115	130	155	140	140	190	130	1000

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

Please see the [Academic Bulletin](#) for grade appeal information.

POL101 Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
Week 1: Critical Thinking The Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> WED: Introductory Forum<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Discussion—Checks and Balances (Initial Post)<input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Discussion—Checks and Balances (Responses)

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Concept Map—Basic Political Theory <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Reflection—Concepts of Democracy
Week 2: Federalism Bill of Rights Individual Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> MON: Review Small Group Discussion—Bill of Rights and select an Amendment for Wednesday Discussion post <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Small Group Discussion—Bill of Rights (Initial Post) <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Small Group Discussion—Bill of Rights (Responses) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Federalism Debate <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Reflection—Individual Rights
Week 3: Legislative Branch (Congress) Executive Branch (The Presidency)	<input type="checkbox"/> MON: Review Small Group Discussion—Executive Cabinet and select a Cabinet for Wednesday Discussion post <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Small Group Discussion—Executive Cabinet (Initial Post) <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Small Group Discussion—Executive Cabinet (Responses) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Bill Analysis (Part I) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Bill Analysis (Part II)
Week 4: Political Participation Political Parties	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Small Group Discussion—Evaluating Candidates (Part I) (Initial Post) <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Small Group Discussion—Evaluating Candidates (Part I) (Responses) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—The Electoral College <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Evaluating Candidates (Part II)
Week 5: The Media Public Opinion Interest Groups	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Small Group Discussion—Verifying Information (Initial Post) <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Small Group Discussion—Verifying Information (Responses) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Interest Groups <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Evaluating Candidates (Part III)
Week 6: Judicial Branch and US Supreme Court	<input type="checkbox"/> MON: Review Small Group Discussion—Administrative Agencies and select an agency for Wednesday Discussion post <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Discussion—Administrative Agencies (Initial Post) <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Discussion—Administrative Agencies (Responses)

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
Federal Bureaucracy/Administrative Law	<input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Assignment—Judicial Hierarchy <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Presentation—SCOTUS Decision
Week 7: Civil Rights Public Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/> MON: Review Discussion—Civil Rights and select a topic for Wednesday Discussion post <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Discussion—Civil Rights (Initial Post) <input type="checkbox"/> THUR: Assignment—Drafting a Petition <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Discussion—Civil Rights (Responses) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Reflection—Political Science

Tips for Success

Successful online learning requires a good deal of self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge and review one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery and constructiveness. You should accept constructive feedback as a gift. Your course is a place for you to stretch and grow as you benefit from the expertise, knowledge, experience and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge, understanding and application.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements in any given week are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

Your Instructor Will Expect You to:

- Thoroughly review orientation materials (Start Here) within the first 48 hours of the term.
- Monitor your TU email account **daily** for important updates and announcements.
- Take ownership of your learning experience and act in a proactive, self-directed manner. That means:
 - Fully participate in all learning activities.
 - Complete assignments as described in rubrics or other instructions.
 - Submit all work on time and in the specified format (e.g. APA format for citations).
 - Utilize and incorporate instructor provided feedback to improve your work.
 - Ask questions so you can better understand course material or assignments.

- Use the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity. For more information, see the TU Library guide: [Digital Literacy: Netiquette and Internet Safety](#).
- Treat others respectfully and demonstrate "netiquette" (online politeness and respectfulness) at all times. TU celebrates cultural uniqueness and expects all students to be considerate and thoughtful throughout their learning experiences.

You Should Expect Your Instructor to:

In general, your instructor should advocate for your success as a learner and help guide you toward successful completion of the course activities and most importantly, attainment of the course learning outcomes. To accomplish this, your instructors should:

- Post an introductory announcement/email at the beginning of each week to provide updates and help you prepare for the week's activities.
- Maintain an active and engaged presence in all course activities and throughout the course.
- Respond to your emailed questions within 48 hours, if not sooner.
- Clearly communicate any absences or expected non-participation due to extenuating circumstances. For example, "I will be traveling to attend a funeral this week and may not be able to respond to questions or participate in forums for a couple of days."
- When grading your work, your instructor should:
 - clearly indicate their grading approach (what they like to see in submitted work as well as what types of errors they tend to penalize more harshly),
 - thoroughly review and evaluate your submissions in a timely manner (in less than 5 days for most assignments), and
 - provide constructive feedback that indicates the strengths and weaknesses of your work and provides suggestions on how you can improve your performance on future assignments.
- In general, your instructor should advocate for your success as a learner and help guide you toward successful completion of the course activities and most importantly, attainment of the course learning outcomes.

Accommodations

The **Office for Disability Services** supports the institutional commitment to diversity by providing educational opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities through accessible programs and services in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

If you need reasonable accommodations due to a documented disability, contact the Office for Equity, Access, & Opportunity 419.448.3021 or via email at disabilityservices@tiffin.edu.

Additional Resources & Support

For technical support, either email moodlesupport@tiffin.edu or call the 24/7 Technical Support Call Center at 855-664-1200.

If you need to consult an academic advisor refer to our one-stop shop advising team list.

Website (Google Doc): [Online Graduate Academic Advisors](#)

Website (Google Doc): [Online Undergrad Academic Advisors](#)

For information about TU's peer tutoring program see the Murphy Center's [Tutoring Policies and Procedures](#) page. Veterans and active military can seek assistance from TU's [Veteran and Military Services Web Page](#).

Comments or Concerns

TU's online programs are designed to be student *driven*: to empower you with a voice and stake in your learning. Our courses feature multiple and varied ways that you can share feedback, and we invite you to become an active voice and help drive our improvement efforts. In addition to providing in-course feedback, we encourage you to submit questions or comments directly to the online team at online@tiffin.edu.