

**Tompkins Cortland Community College**  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: POSC 103**  
**Course Title: American National Government**

**Year: 2020-2021**  
**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

**Course Description**

An examination of the essentials of the American constitutional system, the function of political parties, the concept of the federal system, the role of administrative agencies, the methods by which foreign affairs are conducted, and the manners in which conflicting ideals are resolved in a democratic system. POSC 103 fulfills the SUNY General Education Social Sciences requirement. Prerequisites: Prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100, MATH 090, and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

**Course Context/Audience**

POSC 103 is appropriate for students, who wish to transfer to a four-year college, pursue a career in the field of political science, work in the public sector, or become better educated consumers of political information and more informed citizens. Students should consult with their academic advisors concerning how the course might be applicable to their programs and degree requirements. The course is offered fall and spring semesters in on-line and traditional class room formats.

**Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations**

- Writing:** WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.
- Math:** M1 Taking MATH 090 (if needed) – Course requires limited use of very basic mathematical skills.
- Reading:** R3 Course may be taken concurrently with RDNG 116.

**Course Goals**

The goal of this course is to help students acquire a working knowledge of the three branches of government in the American system and how these branches interact with state and local government, the citizenry, and foreign powers.

**Course Objectives/Topics**

Objective/Topic	% Course
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The student will gain basic knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and Constitutional interpretation, Federalism, political parties and processes, the three branches of government, civil liberties and civil rights.	80%
The student will be able to gather, organize, interpret and synthesize information and research from various sources and apply this to the analysis of public opinion, campaigns and elections, the roles of political interest groups, domestic and foreign policy	10%
The student will be able to combine formal knowledge with individual experience to reach informed opinions, make decisions, and solve problems as they relate to the national government system and politics.	10%

### General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li> <li>➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li> <li>➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li> <li>➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.</li> </ul>	<p>Students are provided contemporary and historical political and governmental issues to analyze and solve. Lectures, discussion and films; implementation of related assignments, group discussion and projects, student presentations, and other appropriate assessment tools.</p> <p>Individual and group critical thinking assignments and research projects are created. Library and internet databases and videos may be utilized by instructors and students.</p> <p>Students collect and analyze data from research databases and academic journals. As they analyze problems they review multiple approaches and solutions.</p> <p>Students engage in classroom discussions and may work in groups on various assignments to collaboratively analyze problems. Others' analyses and solutions are discussed and evaluated in the process.</p>
SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</li> <li>➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li> </ul>	<p>Global perspectives, cultural differences and ethnocentric approaches in our government processes are examined. Discussion occurs in relation to influences form and differences among other cultural approaches. Lectures, discussion and films; implementation of related assignments, group discussion and projects, student presentations, and other appropriate assessment tools.</p> <p>Topics covered under the sections foreign policy, public opinion, political campaigns and ventures exposes students to wide array of global awareness issues.</p> <p>Students will assess foreign and economic policies and applications. Citizens' roles in these are discussed and examined. Political ventures, governmental policies and the global economy affect the economy and environment. Related strategies and their consequences are examined.</p>

### Instructional Methods

Appropriate methods are lecture and group and individual discussion. Active student participation is required. Multimedia

presentations - CD Rom, Power Point slides, Web pages, You Tube videos - are available and should be incorporated into the teaching of this course. Course topics and order of coverage should include: the history, creation and ongoing implementation of the United States system of government; examination of federalism and ongoing debate; the formation of public opinion, economic and foreign policy and their impacts, political structures and civil liberties and rights.

### Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Required: Exams or quizzes. These may include objective questions but should also include essay responses. Written take home options may be used as an alternative.	20-80%
Required: The student must complete a written research assignment. A minimum of a five-page assignment or its equivalent must be used. For example, research papers, position papers, research reviews, annotated bibliography assignments, oral presentations with written components and group projects with written components. The assignment must include proper bibliographies or reference pages and in-text citations.	10-60%
Optional: Presentations - individual and group presentations may be used as desired. These may involve oral and written components and may be graded as individual or group projects.	10-40%
Required: Attendance and class participation. Periodic class assignments or homework must be given. These should involve critical thinking exercises or analyses of contemporary problems in criminal justice: individual and group assignments should be utilized. Each instructor will have the discretion of designing these assignments.	5-30%

### Texts (examples)

American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials, 2014-15 Ed., Barbara A. Bardes, Mack Shelley II, and Stephen Schmidt, © 2014 Wadsworth Publishing Co.

American Government: Institutions and Policies, 13<sup>th</sup> edition, James Q. Wilson, John Dilulio, Jr. and Mena Bose, © 2012, Wadsworth and Cengage Learning.

We the People: An Intro to American Politics (Essentials) 9<sup>th</sup> Ed., Ginsberg, W.W. Norton & Company, © 2013

American Government, 14<sup>th</sup> Ed., Volkomer, Pearson Education, © 2013

OR other appropriate text as chosen by the department chair and instructor.

### Bibliography

American Government: The Essentials, 12th Edition, James Q. Wilson, John Dilulio, Jr. and Mena Bose, © 2011, Wadsworth and Cengage Learning.

Understanding American Government, 12th Edition, Susan Welch, John Gruhl, John Comer and Susan Rigdon © 2010, Wadsworth and Cengage Learning

The American Democracy, 11<sup>th</sup> Ed., Thomas Patterson, McGraw-Hill, © 2013

American Government, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Steven Peterson, Thomas Rasmussen, McGraw-Hill © 1995

### Other Learning Resources

**Audiovisual:** As determined by the instructor.

#### Electronic

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

<http://www.state.gov/>

<http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS/>

[http://www.votesmart.org/resource\\_govt101\\_09.php](http://www.votesmart.org/resource_govt101_09.php)

**Other:** No resources specified