

POL-1000: UNITED STATES NATIONAL GOVERNMENT: CIVIC LITERACY

Cuyahoga Community College

Viewing: POL-1000 : United States National Government: Civic Literacy

Board of Trustees:

December 2025

Academic Term:

Fall 2026

Subject Code

POL - Political Science

Course Number:

1000

Title:

United States National Government: Civic Literacy

Catalog Description:

Nature, purpose, theories, and evolution of the government of the United States. Relationships between structure, function, and process. Dynamics of political change, including historical development and significance of the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the subsequent amendments. Specific emphasis on the federal system, significant Supreme Court decisions, and the role of citizens within the construct.

Credit Hour(s):

3

Lecture Hour(s):

3

Lab Hour(s):

0

Other Hour(s):

0

Requisites

Prerequisite and Corequisite

ENG-0995 Applied College Literacies, or appropriate score on English Placement Test; or departmental approval.

Outcomes

Course Outcome(s):

Interpret and explain the democratic principles embodied by the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Civic Responsibility: Analyze the results of actions and inactions with the likely effects on the larger local and/or global communities.

Objective(s):

1. Discuss theoretical and historical roots of U.S. democracy.
2. Read and discuss the entire Declaration of Independence.
3. Read and discuss at least 5 essays in their entirety of the Federalist papers.
4. Read and discuss the entire U.S. Constitution.
5. Compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution.
6. Discuss the importance of the interest group system.

7. Determine differences between the major political ideologies within the U.S. and how those ideologies relate to political party membership.
8. Discuss the nature of judicial philosophy and the impact varying philosophies may have on the nature of democracy.
9. Assess the development of the fundamental civil liberties and rights of American citizens and discuss the relationship that exists between recent events and civil rights and liberties.
10. Read and discuss the entire Gettysburg address.
11. Read and discuss the entire Emancipation proclamation.
12. Read and discuss the entire Letter from Birmingham Jail.

Course Outcome(s):

Critique, interpret and understand the U.S. political process as defined by the Constitution.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Civic Responsibility: Analyze the results of actions and inactions with the likely effects on the larger local and/or global communities.

Objective(s):

1. Assess the role, effectiveness, and influence of the mass media on the political process.
2. Examine the primary responsibilities of Congress, the Presidency, and the Federal Court system.
3. Discuss the policy process and the development of social, economic, foreign and defense policy.
4. Read and discuss the principles of Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations.
5. Recognize the basic steps of the Congressional bill-making and federal budget process.
6. Critique the overall effectiveness of the U.S. political process.
7. Assess the role, effectiveness, and influence of public opinion and political ideology on the political process.
8. Assess the role, effectiveness, and influence of the interest group system on the political process.
9. Assess the role, effectiveness, and influence of the two-party system on the political process.

Course Outcome(s):

Evaluate the fragmentation that is inherent in the U.S. political system.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Civic Responsibility: Analyze the results of actions and inactions with the likely effects on the larger local and/or global communities.

Objective(s):

1. Discuss the development and purpose of American federalism.
2. Assess the nature of state-federal relations.
3. Compare and contrast powers of the federal legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
4. Evaluate the various "checks and balances" and other limitations that are in place among the three branches of government to prevent abuse of power.
5. Discuss and explain the fragmentation that exists within Congress such as bicameralism, committee structure, and majority/minority leadership.
6. Critique the overall efficiency of the U.S. political system.

Course Outcome(s):

Critique, interpret and understand the U.S. campaign process (at the national level).

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Civic Responsibility: Analyze the results of actions and inactions with the likely effects on the larger local and/or global communities.

Objective(s):

1. Recognize political campaigns as a critical component of the U.S. political process.
2. Evaluate the role of the primary/caucus system in electing the President and Congress.
3. Interpret the role the Electoral College plays in electing the President.
4. Discuss various laws and court rulings that impact the campaign process.
5. Evaluate the significance and impact of scientific polling on the campaign process.
6. Assess the effectiveness of the U.S. campaign process and its effect on voter turnout and participation.

Methods of Evaluation:

1. Comprehensive exams
2. Chapter quizzes
3. Participation in class discussions
4. Book reviews
5. Group projects
6. Research papers
7. Oral presentations
8. Assignments deemed appropriate by the course instructor

Course Content Outline:

1. Constitution and Founding
 - a. Philosophical origins and democratic ideals of the Declaration of Independence
 - b. American struggle for independence
 - c. The Articles of Confederation
 - d. Federalist and Anti-Federalist concerns and compromise
 - e. The importance of the *The Federalist Papers*
 - e. Principles of the U.S. Constitution and amendments
2. Federalism
 - a. Principles of federalism
 - b. Structure of federalism, strengths, and limitations
 - c. Exclusion and concurrent powers
3. Civil Liberties
 - a. Bill of Rights
 - b. Fourteenth Amendment
 - c. Criminal defendants' rights
 - d. Civil liberties vs. national security
4. Civil Rights
 - a. Background and history: Civil War era (Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Emancipation Proclamation)
 - b. Modern Era: 1960's Civil Rights Movement including Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*
 - c. Fundamental rights, federal guarantees, and remedies
5. Political Socialization and Public Opinion
 - a. Agents of political socialization
 - b. Public opinion
 - b. Political Polling
6. Political Parties and Interest Groups
 - a. Types of political parties
 - b. Two-party system, including its historical development
 - c. Third parties and independent candidates
 - d. Formation and functions of interest groups
 - e. Significance of factions
 - f. Types of lobbying
7. Campaigns, Elections and Voting
 - a. How the campaign process works: funding, etc.
 - b. Campaign formation and regulation
 - c. Congressional and presidential elections
 - d. Purpose and function of the Electoral College vs. popular vote
 - e. Voter turnout, behavior, and election integrity
8. The Media, Politics, and Technology
 - a. Roles and impact of the media
 - b. Corporate media
 - c. Liberal vs. conservative media

d. Impact of technology on the political process

9. Congress

- a. Article I, Constitution
- b. Function: responsibilities as a coequal branch of government
- c. Structure and powers
- d. Impeachment process
- e. Oversight
- f. Women and minority representation

10. The Presidency

- a. Article II, Constitution
- b. Role as Chief Executive
- c. Powers
- d. Limitations and abuse of powers
- e. Oversight
- g. Party leader and national executive

11. The Federal Bureaucracy

- a. Organization
- b. Purpose: governing body and service provider
- c. Function: powers and overreach
- d. Congressional and presidential oversight

12. The Judiciary

- a. Article III, Constitution
- b. Structure
- c. Jurisdiction and powers
- d. Judicial philosophy
- e. Oversight
- f. History of the Supreme Court: emphasis on significant cases

13. Public Policy

- a. Policymaking and the policy cycle - agenda setting through evaluation.
- b. Type of policies
- c. Decision-making process

14. Economic and Domestic Policy

- a. Measures of economic health
- b. Economic theories, including *Laissez-Faire* economics and the teachings of Adam Smith
- c. Fiscal policy
- d. The Federal budget process
- e. Contemporary Federal budget realities
- f. Monetary policy
- g. Regulatory policy
- h. Tools of domestic policy
- i. Income, housing, and food security policies including Social Security
- j. Health care policy
- k. Education policy
- l. Environmental policy
- m. Energy policy

15. Foreign Policy and National Security

- a. Tools of U.S. foreign policy
- b. Historical and current global context
- c. Foreign policy theories
- d. Foreign policy development and implementation
- e. Foreign policy today and human rights, war on terrorism and unilateral vs. multilateral approach

Religious Accommodation

Before reviewing the course schedule, students should carefully review the following religious accommodation policy and other required instructional policies:

Religious Accommodation:

Students seeking an accommodation for absences permitted under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act must provide the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requires an accommodation and must do so not later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction. Please submit requests for accommodations at this link: [https://portal2.tri-c.edu/ReligiousAccommodation/Religious Accommodation Form](https://portal2.tri-c.edu/ReligiousAccommodation/ReligiousAccommodationForm). Students with questions about their religious accommodations under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act may contact the College's Office of General Counsel and Legal Services by phone at 216.987.4856 or via email at legal@tri-c.edu.

Other Required Instructional Policies:

<https://www.tri-c.edu/student-resources/curriculum/documents/syllabus-part-b.pdf>

Weekly Schedule

	Topics
Week 1	Constitution and Founding
Week 2	Federalism
Week 3	Civil Liberties
Week 4	Civil Rights
Week 5	Political Socialization and Public Opinion
Week 6	Interest Groups
Week 7	Political Parties
Week 8	Campaigns, Elections, and Voting
Week 9	The Media
Week 10	Politics and Technology
Week 11	Congress
Week 12	The Presidency
Week 13	The Bureaucracy
Week 14	The Judiciary
Week 15	Economic and Domestic Policy
Week 16	Foreign Policy and National Security

The Course Schedule is subject to change due to pedagogical needs, instructor discretion, parts of term, and unexpected events.

Required/Recommended Readings

Readings will be from one of the below recommended textbooks, as selected by the individual instructors.

- Harrison, Brigid, Jean Wahl Harris and Michelle D. Deardorff. *American Democracy Now*.
- Krutz, G., & Waskiewicz, S. *American Government*. Open Stax.
- The Declaration of Independence
- The U.S. Constitution
- Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, James Madison. *The Federalist Papers*. 1788.
- King, Martin Luther. *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*. 1963.
- Lincoln, Abraham. *Emancipation Proclamation*. 1863.
- Lincoln, Abraham. *Gettysburg Address*. 1863.
- Smith, Adam and Original Thinkers Institute. *Complete Works of Adam Smith: Includes The Wealth of Nations, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, and The Origin of Language*.

Resources for the Instructor

The Ashbrook Center, Ashland University. *The American Idea*. Ashland, OH: Ashbrook Press, 2019.

Baum, Lawrence. *The Supreme Court*. 15th. Thousand Oaks, CA: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2024.

Barbour, Christine and Gerald C. Wright. *Keeping the Republic*. 7th (brief). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2016.

Baumgartner, Frank R. and Bryan D. Jones. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. 2nd. Chicago: University Press, 2009.

Beard, Charles. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2016.

Bigler, Allan and Burdett A. Loomis, eds. *Interest Group Politics*. 10th. Lanaham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2020.

Dahl, Robert A and Ian Shapiro. *On Democracy*. 2nd. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020.

Edelman, Murray J. *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.

Erickson, Robert S. and Kent L. Tedin. *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact*. 11th. New York: Routledge, 2024.

Fornieri, Joseph R. *Free Speech: Core Court Cases*. Ashland, OH: Ashbrook Press, 2020.

Fortier, John. *After the People Vote: A Guide to the Electoral College*. 4th. Washington, DC: AEI Press, 2020.

Greenberg, Edward and Benjamin Page. *The Struggle for Democracy*. 13th. New York: Pearson, 2022.

Grover, William F. and Joseph J. Peschek. *Voices of Dissent: Critical Readings in American Politics*. 9th. New York: Pearson Press, 2012.

Harrison, Brigid, Jean Wahl Harris, and Michelle D. Deardorff. *American Democracy Now*. 8th ed. New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2024.

Jones, Bryan D. *Politics and the Architecture of Choice: Bounded Rationality and Governance*. Chicago: University Press, 2001.

Ketcham, Ralph. *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates*. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2003.

Kingdon, John W. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*. 2nd. New York: Pearson, 2010.

Lasswell, Harold D. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC, 2001.

Krutz, G. & Waskiewicz. *American Government*. 3rd ed. Open Stax, 2024.

Lowi, Theodore J. *The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States*. 2nd. New York: W. W. Norton Co Inc., 1979.

Morgan-Smith, Sarah A. *Women's Voices: Religion in American History and Politics*. Ashland, OH: Ashbrook Press, 2019.

Neustadt, Richard E. *Presidential Power*. 13th. New York: Longman, 1999.

O'Brien, David M. *Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics*. 12th. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2020.

Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Osborne, David and Ted Gaebler. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. New York: Plume Publishers, 1993.

Patterson, Thomas E. *We the People*. 14th. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2025.

Peters, Guy. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2021.

Peters, Guy. *Institutional Theory in Political Science*. 4th. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishers, 2011.

Sabato, Larry J. *Feeding Frenzy: Attack Journalism and American Politics*. New York: New Lanahan Editions in Political Science, 2000.

Schattschneider, E. E. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. Stamford, CT: Cengage, 1975.

Serow, Ann G. and Everett C. Ladd, eds. *The Lanahan Readings in the American Polity*. 7th. Baltimore, MD: Lanahan Publishers, 2023.

Tocqueville, Alexander. *Democracy in America*. New York: Signet Classics, 2016.

Tucker, David. *Documents and Debates in American History and Government*. Vol. 2, 1865- 2009. Ashland, OH: Ashbrook Press, 2018.

Wilson, James Q. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Additional Resources for the Instructor

Relevant titles as deemed appropriate by the course instructor.

1. United States House of Representatives. www.house.gov (<https://catalog.tri-c.edu/www.house.gov>)
 - a. Directory of representatives
 - b. Leadership
 - c. Committees
2. United States Senate. www.senate.gov (<https://catalog.tri-c.edu/www.senate.gov>).
 - a. Senate leadership
 - b. Committee assignments
 - c. Rulings and proceedings
3. The White House. www.whitehouse.gov (<https://catalog.tri-c.edu/www.whitehouse.gov>)
 - a. Contact information
 - b. Executive offices
 - c. Administration priorities
4. Supreme Court. www.supremecourt.gov (<https://catalog.tri-c.edu/www.supremecourt.gov>)
 - a. An overview of the High Court, including frequently asked questions
 - b. Oral arguments: transcripts and audio
 - c. Opinions of the Court, along with online sources

Instructional Services

OAN Number:

Ohio Transfer 36 TMSBS and Transfer Assurance Guide OSS011

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