

**POL 120**  
**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Prerequisites: ENG 090 and RED 090, or satisfactory score on placement tests

Corequisites: None

This course is a study of the origins, development, structure, and functions of American national government. Topics include the constitutional framework; federalism; the three branches of government, including the bureaucracy; civil rights and liberties; political participation and behavior; and policy formation. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts and participatory processes of the American political system. Basic concepts of state and local government and their relationships with the federal government are also examined. *This course has been approved to satisfy the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement for the general education core requirement in social/behavioral sciences.* Course Hours Per Week: Class, 3. Semester Hours Credit, 3.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- a. Demonstrate in writing a basic knowledge of the functions of American government.
- b. Discuss in writing the constitution, federalism, civil liberties, and foreign policy in American government from development to the present.
- c. Recall elements of the constitution, civil liberties, federalism, the functions of the three branches of government, and the expansion of the role of government in American life.

**OUTLINE OF INSTRUCTION:**

- I. Introduction
  - A. The vocabulary of American government and political process
  - B. The historical context of the constitution and the articles of confederation
- II. The Constitution
  - A. The three branches of government
    - 1.) The judicial branch
    - 2.) The legislative branch
      - (a.) House of representatives
      - (b.) Senate
    - 3.) The executive branch
  - B. The bill of rights

III. Federalism vs. anti-federalism

- A. Hamilton vs. Burr
- B. The origin of political parties

IV. The role of the individual in the American political process

- A. Voting rights and restrictions
- B. Civil liberties
- C. National defense
- D. Foreign policy

V. The expansion of the federal government in the twentieth century

- A. The executive branch
- B. The legislative branch
- C. The judicial branch

VI. Developments since World War II

- A. Civil liberties and the civil rights movement
- B. Foreign policy and the Vietnam War

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS:**

To be selected by the Instructor/Discipline Chair.

**STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students who require academic accommodations due to any physical, psychological, or learning disability are encouraged to request assistance from a disability services counselor within the first two weeks of class. Likewise, students who potentially require emergency medical attention due to any chronic health condition are encouraged to disclose this information to a disability services counselor within the first two weeks of class. Counselors can be contacted by calling 686-3652 or by visiting the Student Development Office in the Phail Wynn Jr. Student Services Center, room 1309.