POLS-1120 American National Government
University of New Mexico –Valencia

Fall 2026
Sections: 501

Professor: Anthony Squiers, PhD, Habil.
Phone: 269-215-0179
Email: asquiers1@unm.edu

Online Office hours: M 07:30-08:30 (Mountain time) and by appointment.
Call, text, email and I can also set up a conferencing link.

DESCRIPTION: This course explains the role of American national government, its formation and principles of the Constitution; relation of state to the national government; political parties and their relationship to interest groups. This course also explains the structure of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Textbook:

American Government. Book URL: https://openstax.org/books/american-government/pages/1-introduction

Class Policies:

- Students are expected to abide by all policies set forth in the student handbook.
- Attendance is defined by submission of course requirements.
- Plagiarism is defined as the use of other people's ideas and words without proper attribution. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. *If anyone is found plagiarizing they will receive a zero for that assignment or test and may encounter other disciplinary measures, including failure of the class.*
- Turning in late work is possible. Just ask and we can work something out.
- Open discourse is essential for an effective education and the maintenance of a free society. In order to have open discourse we must maintain proper decorum. Therefore, it is essential that we treat everyone with the respect and curtsey that we ourselves would like to receive. Disagreement is a sign of a healthy discourse; but, please remember that it is an idea which we might not like, not the person who espouses it. We can disagree with an idea but remain civil to the people who put forth the idea. We will refrain from ad hominem criticism.

Course Requirements and Grading

- Midterm Exam--15%. The Midterm will cover material from units 1-8
- Final exam--15%. The final will cover material from units 9-13, 15 and 17
- Discussions 15%
    - Everyone is expected to write a minimum of 80-100 words as an original post for each discussion board and reply to at least one of your colleagues with a minimum of 40-60 words. You must submit an original post and a reply for credit.
    - Remember to be *courteous and respectful*.
- Issues and Demographics 10%
    - These are reading assignments with a quiz.
- Chapter Reading quizzes 15%
    - These are quizzes over the textbook readings.
- Interactive Video Exercise 20%
    - These are assignments with a video lesson and quiz over it.
- Ideas and Alternatives 10%
    - These are short quizzes over videos discussing salient, polemical ideas.

Course Outlined

For due dates see Canvas Calendar and Syllabus under the course navigation.

Course Communication:

Important course announcements will be communicated via the Announcements tool on Blackboard Learn. This will forward an email to your campus (registered) email address. Be sure to pay attention to the Announcements because they will contain important information.

Recommended resources for additional exploration:

These are found in the Supplemental Materials folders inside each Lesson folder.

Hardware:

The online course content will work better the more up to date your computer is. Please try to do what you can to make these updates happen. Make sure that your system meets the requirements specified on Blackboard before signing up for an online course. A **functional computer** with speakers is **necessary for success in this course**, and you will need to use your computer quite frequently. You will also need frequent internet access. If this is a problem, please consider taking the course in the traditional, campus based manner.

Technical Support Information:

UNM Learn Support/ Create a Support Ticket - For help with UNM Learn
http://online.unm.edu/help/learn/support/

IT Customer Support Services - Note: IT Customer Support handles username/ password issues.
Phone: 505-277-5757
http://it.unm.edu/support/

Grading Scale:

A+: 97-100, A: 93-96, A-: 90-92, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62, F: below 60

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. 1. Explain the historical and political foundations of the government of the United States;
2. 2. Explain the precursors to, and the development and adoption of the United States Constitution;
3. 3. Explain the United States federal system, the basics of federalism, and the changing relationship of state and federal power;
4. 4. Describe the power, structure and operation of the main institutions of government, namely the legislative, executive, judicial, and the federal bureaucracy;
5. 5. Explain the development and role of political parties and interest groups;
6. 6. Identify the constitutional basis of civil rights and civil liberties and their changing interpretation; and
7. 7. Describe the role of demographics, public opinion and the media in American politics.

Student Learning Outcomes	Activity
1. Explain the historical and political foundations of the government of the United States	Video Lesson Quiz 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Reading Chapter 1, 2; Reading Quiz Chapter 1, 2; Flashcards Chapter 1, 2
2. Explain the precursors to, and the development and adoption of the United States Constitution	Video Lesson Quiz 3, 4, 5; Reading Chapter 2; Reading Quiz Chapter 2; Flashcards Chapter 2; Video Lesson Quiz 3, 4, 5
3. Explain the United States federal system, the basics of federalism, and the changing relationship of state and federal power	Video Lesson Quiz 6; Ideas and Alternatives 2, 5; Reading Chapter 3; Reading Quiz Chapter 3; Flashcards Chapter 3
4. Describe the power, structure and operation of the main institutions of government, namely the legislative, executive, judicial, and the federal bureaucracy	Video Lesson Quiz 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41; Reading Chapter 11, 12, 13, 15; Reading Quiz Chapter 11, 12, 13, 15; Flashcards Chapter 11, 12, 13, 15
5. Explain the development and role of political parties and interest groups	Video Lesson Quiz 21, 22, 23, 24, 25; Ideas and Alternatives 1; Reading Chapter 9, 10; Reading Quiz Chapter 9, 10; Flashcards Chapter 9, 10

Student Learning Outcomes	Activity
6. Identify the constitutional basis of civil rights and civil liberties and their changing interpretation	Video Lesson Quiz 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Reading Chapter 4, 5; Reading Quiz Chapter 4, 5; Flashcards Chapter 4, 5
7. Describe the role of demographics, public opinion and the media in American politics	Video Lesson Quiz 13, 14, 19, 20; Issues and Demographics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15; Reading Chapter 6, 8; Reading Quiz Chapter 6, 8; Flashcards Chapter 6, 8

Chapter Learning Objectives and Alignments are found within each chapter's folder, inside the course.

Student Responsibilities

- Read all announcements
- Complete all assignments, discussions, quizzes and tests on time.
- Read all assigned readings.
- Conform to all college rules.
- Ask questions.

Instructor Responsibilities

- Responding to student inquiries with one business day.
- Grading assignments and tests within two weeks of due date.
- Being available for students outside of class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: attendance is defined as submission of course requirements.

Academic Integrity

Having academic integrity is paramount to your success in any class. Plagiarism or cheating is not tolerated. Any instance of this will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. Here is the link to the UNM Academic Dishonesty Policy:
https://policy.unm.edu/regents-policies/section-4/4-8.html. The policy states:
Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or who otherwise fails to meet the expected standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.
Academic Dishonesty is defined as: *"Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.*

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Include a statement such as the following:

If you have a documented disability, the Equal Access Services office will provide me with a letter outlining your accommodations. I will then discuss the accommodations with you to determine the best learning environment. If you feel that you need accommodations, but have not documented your disability, Equal Access Services at 925-8910.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION: Optional, but an approved statement from UNM

Main Office of Equal Opportunity is:

In an effort to meet obligations under Title IX, UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered "responsible employees" by the Department of Education (see page 15 - http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-201404-title-ix.pdf). This designation requires that any report of gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Equal Opportunity (oeo.unm.edu). For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, see: https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html.

Title IX prohibitions on sex discrimination include various forms of sexual misconduct, such as sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. Current UNM policy designates instructors as required reporters, which means that if I am notified (outside of classroom activities) about any Title IX violations, I must report this information to the Title IX coordinator. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted and would like to receive support and academic advocacy, there are numerous confidential routes available to you. For example, you can contact the Women's Resource Center, the LGBTQ Resource Center, Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), or LoboRESPECT. LoboRESPECT can be contacted on their 24-hour crisis line, (505) 277-2911 and online at loborespect@unm.edu. You can receive non-confidential support and learn more about Title IX through the Title IX Coordinator at (505) 277-5251 and http://oeo.unm.edu/title-ix/. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UNM Police Department at (505) 277-2241.