Course Introduction and Objectives:

This is a survey course covering the American Government and politics. Because this is a survey course we will cover a broad range of topics – some in depth and others we will just touch on. There will be a significant amount of reading. This course will provide you with a thorough understanding of how and why the United States government came to be and how it has developed over time. Starting with the Declaration of Independence and the drafting of the Constitution we will explore the early history of our political institutions and learn how they have evolved. We will examine present day politics with an eye towards this foundational history. This course examines the structure, context, functions and problems of American national government.

Political Science Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this semester, students should be able to: (1) Identify and explain the central principles, institutions, procedures, and decision making processes of the American political system; (2) Evaluate the basic strengths and weaknesses of the American political system through the application of political concepts and ideas; (3) Relate historical events and/or developments to contemporary political issues, debates and outcomes in the United States; and (4) Develop an analytical, social scientific disposition toward American politics.

This course is required for all Political Science majors and minors. It must be completed within the first 15 hours of political science courses.

This course also fulfills a General Education Social Science requirement. Students completing this course successfully will earn a social science general education credit. The College of Charleston has established a General Education learning outcome for students that specify that upon completion of the course, students can apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions. Students will be evaluated in a short essay question to identify, explain and apply a concept on the first scheduled in-class test.
General Education Student Learning Outcomes:

Throughout the semester you will be required to read a national newspaper and identify current political topics so that you can begin to understand them in the context of what we are learning in class. On the first of our four in-class tests, you will be required to identify and define a Constitutional Amendment and then describe a relevant current political event from a newspaper article that you have read. Further, you will be required to relate that event to what you have learned in the context of the Constitution and specifically an Amendment. This short answer will count as 8 points on the test. The test will be worth 18.75% of your overall grade in this class.

In addition to the textbook (We the People, Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert & Campbell, 12th Edition) some outside reading will be assigned. You will be required to attend at least two sessions of General Sessions court to observe guilty pleas in downtown Charleston, on your own time, during the 9-5 work week. Available guilty plea court weeks will be announced in class.

You will be expected to have read the assigned material for the lectures and the tests. We will have several short films and videos during class. Additionally, you will be required (weekly) to read a national newspaper, identify and be prepared to share briefly with the class a topical political issue. You will be expected to tie this current political topic into what we are learning from the textbook and the lectures. Regular and on-time attendance is mandatory. Short written assignments should be expected throughout the semester.

Unexcused absences will negatively impact your final grade. You can gain as many as two extra points towards your final grade for perfect attendance and lose as many as three points for unexcused absences. To receive an Excused Absence, you must submit an Absence Memo Request Form to The Absence Memo Office, Suite 101, Lightsey Center (843-953-3390). If your absence is excused, that office will notify me by email.

If you miss a class, even if it is an Excused Absence, it will be your responsibility to obtain the class lecture notes from another class member. I do not post my lecture notes on OAKS, nor do I provide them to individual students. I want and expect you to attend every class, take good notes and actively participate in class discussions. Taking accurate and thorough hand-written notes is a great way to retain and learn new lecture information. I prefer that you take notes by hand and not use a computer in class.

In other classes students have asked me if buying a textbook is really necessary? I think it is essential. In the past, students who seemed to perform best in this class told me that they would review the chapter in the textbook before the lecture and then after the lecture would read the chapter more closely while referring to their lecture notes. I offer this as a method that has been successful for other students. I recognize that this method takes time, but doing well in any class takes time!

The Center for Student Learning (CSL) offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies and a host of other areas. This is free help for students – so take advantage
of what they have to offer. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career. These services are available to you at no cost. Their website is http://csl.cofc.edu and their phone number is (843) 953-5635. Their office is located on the 1st floor, Room 116 of the Addlestone Library.

**Mental Health and Physical Wellbeing:** If you find yourself experiencing physical illness, please reach out to student health services (843-953-5520). If you are experiencing mental health issues (anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, loneliness or homesickness, etc.) please contact either the Counseling Center (professional counselors at http://counseling.cofc.edu) or Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting “4support” to 839863 or visit http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php). You can also visit both groups on campus on the 3rd floor of the Robert Scott Small Building. These services are here to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.

**Food & Housing Resources:** Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (such as not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please contact the Dean of Students for support (http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/about/salt.php). Also, you can go to http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/student-food-housing-insecurity/index.php to learn about food and housing assistance that is available to you. In addition, there are several resources on and off campus to help. You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd Floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student in need.

**Final grades** will be based on class attendance and participation, (10%), your weekly written political topic culled from a national newspaper (10%), as well as written assignments and observation of at least two guilty plea court sessions (10%), and four in-class tests (18.75% each test for a total of 70%). There are no scheduled make up tests. If you are aware of a conflict or have an excused absence at the time of a scheduled test – then it is your responsibility to notify me well in advance of the test to determine if alternative arrangements can be made. Similarly, if you are aware of an attendance issue for a lecture or guilty pleas, then I expect you to communicate that issue to me in advance of your absence. Finally, if there are any special circumstances that will hinder your ability to complete the course work, tests or other requirements, or any issues that will limit your potential to succeed in the class – then please let me know.

Grading Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topical newspaper write ups</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Court observation write ups</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 in-class tests – each 18.75% for a total</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Grading Policy:
A 94-100 A- 90-93 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

Disability/Access: The College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center for Disability Services (SNAP) (843-953-1431) or me so that an accommodation may be arranged. If you are a SNAP student, then please present me with your SNAP letter in the first days of class.

Inclusion: The College of Charleston offers many resources for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff along with their allies.

Academic Integrity: As is true with all College of Charleston classes, lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of the deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding or confusion will be handled by the instructor. The instructor designs an intervention or assigns a grade reduction to help prevent the student from repeating the error. The response is recorded on a form and signed by the instructor and the student. It is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course. Indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php.
Schedule for American Government (POLI 101) – Spring 2020. This is subject to modification.

1. **Wed. 1/8**  Introduction. Review of Syllabus, etc.
2. **Mon. 1/13**  How to access current newspaper articles on-line, then Chapter 1.
3. **Wed. 1/15**  Chapter 1, Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
   **Mon. 1/20**  MLK Holiday – do something appropriate. No Class.
4. **Wed. 1/22**  Chapter 1 continued.
5. **Mon. 1/27**  Chapter 2
6. **Wed. 1/29**  Chapter 2
7. **Mon. 2/3**  Test #1 (Covering Chapters 1 & 2). Explanation of Guilty Plea Court
   Attend Guilty Plea Court this week. This will be the first of two court observations. See Below for Details about times, courthouse location, courtroom, etc.
8. **Wed. 2/5**  Chapter 3
9. **Mon. 2/10**  Chapter 3
10. **Wed. 2/12**  TBA
11. **Mon. 2/17**  Chapter 4
12. **Wed. 2/19**  Chapter 4
13. **Mon. 2/24**  Chapter 5
14. **Wed. 2/26**  Chapter 5
15. **Mon. 3/2**  Test #2 (Chapters 3,4,5), then start “Slavery By Another Name”
16. **Wed. 3/4**  Finish “Slavery By Another Name”.
17. **Mon. 3/9**  Chapter 12
18. **Wed. 3/11**  Chapter 12
   **Mon. – Fri. 3/16 – 3/20:** SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS – Don’t get arrested.
19. **Mon. 3/23**  Chapter 13
20. **Wed. 3/25**  Chapter 13
21. **Mon. 3/30**  Chapter 15
22. **Wed. 4/1**  Chapter 15
23. Mon. 4/6 Test #3 (Chapters 12, 13, 15 and movie)
24. Wed. 4/8 Chapter 7
25. Mon. 4/13 Chapter 10
26. Wed. 4/15 Guilty Plea Court and Write-up Review
27. Mon. 4/22 Test #4 (Chapters 7, 10 and Guilty Plea Court)
28. Wed. 4/24 TBA

***** Attend Guilty Plea Court at the Charleston County Courthouse, 100 Broad Street, Courtroom 4D (4th Floor, Courtroom D). Observe and take hand-written notes for no less than 1 hour. Dress well. No shorts, no flip-flops, no t-shirts. Turn off your cell phone before entering the courthouse. DO NOT go to City Court on Lockwood Blvd., nor should you go to Federal Court on Meeting Street!

On the weeks listed above - Guilty Pleas are typically held:
Monday afternoons;
Tuesday through Thursday mornings and afternoons;
Mornings start around 9:45AM and go to about noon.
Afternoons start around 1:45PM and end about 4:30 or 5PM.

Predicting exactly when Plea Court will start and end is like trying to predict the weather!
All I can tell you – it’s best to go early in the week and early in the day so you have a chance to regroup and try again if for some reason court is not held.