

Print Date: 12/6/19
Spokane Community College
Course Learning Outcomes and Outline

Course Title: Introduction to American Government

Prefix and Course Number: POLS 202

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, a student should be able to:

- explain the concepts of power
- identify the historical events that lead to the American revolution;
- explain the founders philosophical reasoning for creating the system they did
- understand the U.S. Constitution, its adoption, ratification, amendment process and contents
- explain and understand federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers
- discuss the political socialization process;
- examine the nature of political participation including voting and interest group politics;
- discuss the influence of public opinion on the political decision-making process in the United States;
- identify the different types of electoral systems and assess the implications of those systems;
- identify the role and functions of political parties
- describe and evaluate the three branches of government
- discuss and explain the origins and principles varying ideologies
- describe and analyze civil liberties and the Bill of Rights
- understand civil rights and the historical context of the Civil War, the Industrial Revolution, the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Movement.

Course Outline:

1. Introduction

What is Political Science and how is it studied?
The American founding
The Constitution
Federalism
Philosophical underpinnings of the United States Government

2. Political participation and Intermediary institutions

Public opinion
Voting
Interest group politics
Elections systems
Political Parties
Ideologies

3. Structure of United States Government

National, state and local governments
National government
Executive

- President
- Vice president
- Cabinet
- Federal bureaucracy

Legislature

- Congress
 - House of Representatives
 - Senate
 - Committee System
 - Representation
 - Legislative Districts

Judicial

- Dual court system
 - State
 - Federal
- Three-tiered federal court system
 - District courts
 - Appellate courts
 - Supreme Court

4. Civil rights and Civil liberties

The difference between civil rights and liberties

Civil liberties and the Bill of Rights

- Political liberties
- The right to bear arms
- Privacy
- Rights of the accused
- States' rights

Civil Rights

- Minority rights
- State and federal involvement in denying and protecting minority rights
- Slavery
- Civil War and Civil War Amendments
- Reconstruction
- Civil rights Movement
- Black lives matter
- Women's rights
- LGBTQ rights and marriage equality
- Rights of the disabled