

Course Information

- Semester and Year: Fall 2026
- Course Title: American National Government
- Course Prefix and Number: POS110 #18137
- Credit Hours: 3
- Start Date: 9/10/2026
- End Date: 12/18/2026
- Class Format: Hybrid In-Person
- Days & Time: Thursdays, 10:30-11:45am
- Room: SBW-116
- Instructor: Nicholas Damask, PhD
- Email: Nicholas.Damask@Scottsdalecc.edu
- Phone: 480-423-6201
- Office Location: SBE-117
- Office Hours: M 10:00-11:30 & R 9:30-10:30, by appointment or virtual

Course Description

Study of the historical backgrounds, governing principles, and institutions of the national government of the United States.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites

No prerequisites or corequisites required

Course Competencies

1. Discuss the causes of the American Revolution and why the American Revolution is consistent with British values.
2. Explain how the Constitution remedies the main defects of the Articles of Confederation.
3. Explain how Federalism, Separation of Powers, and Checks and Balances address concerns about concentrated political power.
4. Explain the mechanism for amending the U.S. Constitution.
5. Identify the major civil liberties and civil rights issues in the U.S.
6. Describe the party leadership structure in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate and how this leadership structure impacts the policymaking process.
7. Identify the steps involved in the lawmaking process in the U.S. Congress.

8. Identify the constitutional powers of the U.S. President as well as the constraints on the exercise of those powers.
9. Outline the organization and role of the federal bureaucracy in carrying out executive branch functions.
10. Describe the structure of the federal courts as well as the process for appointing federal judges.
11. Trace the development of political parties and interest groups and differentiate between the functions each performs.
12. Examine the process of political socialization in the U.S.
13. Examine the roles that the media and public opinion play in the U.S. political system.
14. Explain the role that elections play in U.S. politics and the major criticisms of the electoral process.

Texts and Course Materials

There is no textbook required. Readings will be provided as:

- 1.) supplemental readings in Word format
- 2.) PowerPoint slides

Both can either be viewed in Canvas or downloaded to the student's device and will remain accessible throughout the course.

Course Policies

Students are encouraged to ask questions and to participate in class discussions – no question is “silly” or a bother for me to answer, and it’s likely that other students may have the same question as you, so please don’t hesitate to ask!

Quizzes and the final exam will be taken online via Canvas and will be accessible for one week prior to their due dates and **due by 9:00am** on the dates noted in the schedule, below.

Students are also responsible for the college policies included on the [Student Regulations](#) page of the Maricopa Community College District website.

Class Schedule

Module #1: Introduction & The Constitution and Federalism

September 10: Democracy and equality

September 17: National power in a federal system

Reading: *Federalist #15*, by Alexander Hamilton

Quiz #1 due September 24

Module #2: The Congress

October 1: The US Census, Apportionment and the Senate

October 8: The Incumbency Effect

Reading: *Federalist #62*, by James Madison

Quiz #2 due by October 15

Module #3: The Presidency

October 15: Electing the President

October 22: The Election of 2024

Reading: *Federalist #70*, by Alexander Hamilton

Quiz #3 due by October 29

Module #4: The Courts

October 29: Judicial Review

November 5: The Supreme Court

Reading: *Federalist #78*, by Alexander Hamilton

Quiz #4 due by November 12

Module #5: The Political Parties

November 12: Republicans and the Civil War

November 19: Democrats and the New Deal

Reading: "Farewell Address," by George Washington

Quiz #5 due by December 3

Module #6: The Media and Politics

December 3: What is the "news media?"

December 10: Is the news media "objective?"

Reading: "Report on The Virginia Resolutions," by James Madison

Quiz #6 due by December 17

*** FINAL EXAM due by December 17 ***

Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Points Range
A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 89.99%
C	70 – 79.99%
D	60 – 69.99%
F	0 – 59.99%

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken each day. Given the abbreviated in-person component of the class, only one (1) unofficial/unexcused absence will be permitted. Please see the Attendance section of the [Student Regulations](#) page of the Maricopa Community College District website.

Instructional Contact Hours and Minimum Course Expectations

This is a three (3) credit-hour course, with 1¼ hours in-person once per week and the remainder to be spent on course content via Canvas, including quizzes and the final exam. This time is exclusive of weekly study.

Course Technologies

View the [Accessibility Statements & Privacy Policies](#) of the technologies used in this course. The [SCC Help Desk](#) provides students with a primary point of contact within SCC for college-supported technology services and technical assistance.

This course uses key Maricopa systems for course management and communication.

- Canvas Learning Management System
- Student Maricopa Gmail Account
- Maricopa Open Educational Resource Learning System (MOER)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The World Economic Forum defines generative AI as “a category of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms that generate new outputs based on the data they have been trained on. Unlike traditional AI systems that are designed to recognize patterns and make predictions, generative AI creates new content in the form of images, text, audio, and more.”

Some examples of generative AI tools include but are not limited to: ChatGPT, Google Gemini, SpaceXAI Grok, Microsoft Copilot, Stable Diffusion, GrammarlyGo, and Adobe Firefly.

No Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Allowed

In this class, all work submitted must be your own. The use of generative AI tools will be considered academic misconduct (see Administrative Regulation 2.3.11 1.B(b)) and will be treated as such. If you are unsure if the tool or website you are using is a generative AI tool, please contact the instructor for further clarification before using the tool or website.

Response Time

Students can expect a response time of a couple of hours for the instructor to respond to messages sent via the Canvas Learning Management System or by email, with a response within 24 hours in nearly every instance. Once students have completed their quizzes and the final exam they will immediately be able to see their grade for that assignment. Grades will be accessible throughout the length of the class.

Tutoring

SCC's tutors are available online to help with your courses. You may work with an SCC tutor remotely using Google Meet, your phone, or email. Visit the [Tutoring & Learning Centers](#) page for detailed information on the five learning centers' hours and procedures.

If you need to work with a tutor outside regular hours, online and hybrid students now have access to a 24/7 online tutoring service called Brainfuse. To access Brainfuse and begin working with a tutor, visit the [SCC Online Tutoring Services Through Brainfuse](#) page.

MCCCD Policies

MCCCD is committed to providing a safe, fair, and accessible environment for all students. This includes laws such as the ADA and Title IX, which protect against discrimination. These statements explain your rights, available support, and where to go for help or more information. Please review the following policies:

Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) and its associated colleges are committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities to students with documented disabilities (e.g. physical, sensory, neurological, chronic illness, mental health, learning disabilities, or other health concerns). If you require accommodations for this course, please contact [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS) at your college.

Contact with [DRS](#) should be made as soon as possible to ensure academic needs are met in a reasonable time. Additional information can be found in the [Non-Discrimination Statement](#) and [MCCCD Non-Discrimination Policies](#).

Addressing Incidents of Title IX Sexual Harassment

Students are responsible for the information contained in this syllabus, the Syllabus page in your Canvas course and the **College Policies & Student Services** page found in the First Steps module of your Canvas course. Students will be notified by the instructor of any changes in course requirements or policies.