

Course Information

- Semester and Year: Fall 2026
- Course Title: The U.S. & Arizona Constitutions
- Course Prefix and Number: POS220 #18219
- Section Number: 001
- Credit Hours: 3
- Start Date: 11/9/2026
- End Date: 12/18/2026
- Class Format: Online
- Instructor: Nicholas Damask, PhD
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- Phone: 480-423-6201
- Office Location: SBE-117
- Office Hours: Mondays 10:30-11:45, by appointment or virtual

Course Description

Examination of the constitutions of the United States and the state of Arizona.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites

No prerequisites or corequisites required

Course Competencies

1. Explain how our current constitution was designed to remedy the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation.
2. Explain the Founders' application of federalism, separation of power, republicanism, and constitutional protections of civil liberties.
3. Explain the importance of the bicameral organization of Congress.
4. Identify the powers and limitations granted to Congress in Article I.
5. Discuss the election processes outlined in the constitution, including the electoral college.
6. Identify the powers and limitations granted to the President in Article II.
7. Explain the importance of Marbury vs. Madison and the constitutional role of the courts.
8. Identify the powers and limitations granted to the courts in Article III.

9. Identify the checks and balances between the three branches of government.
10. Explain the procedures for amending the Constitution.
11. Explain how the Bill of Rights was adopted into the constitution.
12. Discuss the civil liberties and civil rights protected by the constitution.
13. Discuss Arizona's major historical periods from Pre-Columbian to early statehood.
14. Compare and contrast the Arizona and U.S. constitutions.
15. Compare and contrast the three branches of the Arizona and US governments.
16. Describe the elements of direct democracy in the Arizona constitution, including initiative and recall.
17. Discuss how a bill becomes a law in Arizona.
18. Explain the organization and powers of county, municipal, and tribal governments.

Texts and Course Materials

There is no textbook required. Readings will be provided as supplemental readings in Word or pdf format that can be either viewed in Canvas or downloaded to the student's device.

Course Policies

The course is an online course, divided into six modules (each with one or two topics), six quizzes (one per module), and a final exam.

Students are encouraged to contact me should you have any questions at all about the class – 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!

The entire course will be made accessible to students via Canvas at 12:01am on the start date – thereafter, the student may work at his/her own pace, completing the quizzes and the final exam by the class end date.

The course must be taken in the sequential order of modules. Students should first view each module's PowerPoint presentation(s), then complete the supplemental readings, watch the recorded mini-lecture, and only then attempt the related quiz.

Class reading material is comprised of:

1. Lectures delivered in the form of PowerPoint slides – the slides are both downloadable and viewable in Canvas and will remain accessible throughout the course.
- 2.) Supplemental readings in the form of Word and pdf files and found within that topic's module in Canvas – the slides are both downloadable and viewable in Canvas and will remain accessible throughout the course.

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 U.S. Constitution: Federal Power

Readings:

“American Exceptionalism,” former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. YouTube video

“Federalist #51,” by James Madison

“Antifederal Objections to the Constitution,” by Jackson Turner Main, from his *The Antifederalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788*

The US Constitution

Video lecture #1: Introduction

Video lecture #2: Federalism

Assignment: **Quizzes #1 and #2**

Module #2

The U.S. Constitution: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Readings:

“Speech Introducing the Bill of Rights,” by James Madison

“Equality,” by Gordon Wood, from his *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*

Video lecture #3: Civil Liberties

Video lecture #4: Civil Rights

Assignment: **Quizzes #3 and #4**

Module #3

The Arizona Constitution

Readings:

“Arizona’s Struggle Against Joint Statehood,” by H.A. Hubbard

“Territorial Politics,” by Marshall Trimble, from his *Arizona: A Cavalcade of History*

The Arizona Constitution

Video lecture #5: The Arizona Constitution: Citizen-led Legislation

Video Lecture #6: The Arizona Constitution: The Plural Executive

Assignment: **Quizzes #5 and #6**

Assignment: **FINAL EXAM**

Grade Scale

Table 1 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

Students are not required to be online at any specific time. Please note that completely inactive students who haven't accessed any content or logged in for extended periods will be withdrawn from the class.

Instructional Contact Hours and Minimum Course Expectations

This is a three (3) credit-hour course. Plan to spend at least three hours on course content or seat time (direct instruction) and six hours on homework weekly. Accelerated courses will require additional time per week.

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)

Streaming Media/Audio/Video Tools

This course uses lecture capture systems YouTube, and possibly other streaming media services.

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, 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.

Student/Instructor Interaction

In this course you can expect regular and substantive interaction (RSI) that aligns with Scottsdale Community College’s mission to provide challenging and supportive learning experiences and the US Department of Education’s requirement for regular and substantive interaction (RSI) for online courses. My commitment to your success includes the following:

- Being available during regularly scheduled office hours as stated in the syllabus.
- Sharing information about the course materials, including key information, explanations, examples, and resources via in-person, recorded, and/or text-based lectures.
- Promptly responding to student questions about the course sent via email or the Canvas inbox.
- Posting announcements about the course content and activities.
- Monitoring your academic progress and communicating concerns, as needed.

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.