

**JEFFERSON COLLEGE**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**PSC102H**

**HONORS U.S. AND MISSOURI GOVERNMENTS AND  
CONSTITUTIONS**

3 Credit Hours

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Revised Date: March 2015

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## PSC102 U.S. and Missouri Governments and Constitutions

### I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

- A. Prerequisite: none
- B. 3 semester credit hours
- C. U.S. and Missouri Governments and Constitutions examines the U.S. and Missouri constitutions, including their impact on federal, state, and local government structure and power. Focus is on citizen and group efforts to influence government policies. This course fulfills the Missouri and US Constitutions requirements and partially fulfills the history-political science requirement for the Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science Degrees (F, S, Su)

### II. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES/CORRESPONDING ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Expected Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures
Describe the environment of the American political system by examining the political ideologies and theories of democracy that influenced the construction of our system of government	Class discussion Written exam Quiz
Outline the structure of our government, as set up in the Constitution	Class discussion Written exam Quiz
Describe the links between citizens and government; articulate key concepts about voting, political parties, campaigns, and other forms of political participation	Class discussion Written exam Quiz
Recognize (1) the structure and interactions of the presidency, congress, bureaucracy, and courts and (2) how the institutions are intended to respond to citizen inputs	Class discussion Written exam Quiz
Examine the practices and processes that describe how governmental institutions work and interact to create domestic and foreign policy	Class discussion Written exam Quiz
Demonstrate the effect government has on daily life	Class discussion Written exam Research project

### III. OUTLINE OF TOPICS

- A. The environment of our system
  - 1. Origins of the American system
    - a. Definition of “politics”
    - b. Definition of “ideology” and its component parts, beliefs, and values
    - c. Key components of three classic ideologies
      - 1) Classical Conservatism
      - 2) Classical Liberalism

- 3) Classical Socialism
    - d. Classic Liberalism
      - 1) The “American” ideology
      - 2) The United States unique as the world’s most classically liberal nation
    - e. The difference between a democracy and a republic
    - f. The contributions to the American version of democracy
      - 1) Rousseau
      - 2) Locke
      - 3) Montesquieu
      - 4) Newton to the American version of democracy
  - 2. The Constitution
    - a. Weaknesses of our first national government, the Articles of Confederation and the need to create a new government
    - b. Framers of the Constitution
      - 1) Pragmatic politicians
      - 2) Solved practical problems of governance
      - 3) Key parts of the Constitution
    - c. Major sections of the Missouri Constitution
  - 3. Federalism
    - a. Why federalism was included in the Constitution
    - b. Clauses relevant to the power of the central government in the state-federal relationship
      - 1) Supremacy clause
      - 2) Full faith and credit
      - 3) Privileges and immunities
    - c. Clauses relevant to the power of the state governments in the state-federal relationship
      - 1) Enumerated powers
      - 2) 10th amendment
      - 3) 11th amendment
    - d. The importance of McCulloch v. Maryland.
    - e. “Devolution” in the state-federal relationship
    - f. The modern relevance of federalism and its implications.
- B. Links between the government and the governed
- 1. Political participation
    - a. Political participation
    - b. Likelihood of participation
    - c. American participation compared to that of other democratic countries
    - d. Current participation compared to that of forty years ago
    - e. The difference between economic interest groups and public interest groups
    - f. The influence of interest groups on the policymaking process
      - 1) Lobbying
      - 2) Grassroots lobbying
  - 2. Public opinion and the news media
    - a. The role of public opinion in governing a representative democracy
    - b. Public opinion polling and consumers

- 1) Sampling
    - 2) Question wording
    - 3) Survey design
    - 4) Margin of error
  - c. Problems with the coverage of politics by the news media
  - d. How politicians use the news media
    - 1) Staged events
    - 2) Trial balloons
    - 3) Leaks
    - 4) Extensive PR staff
  - e. How the news media have changed politics
- 3. Political parties
  - a. Political party vs interest group
  - b. Function of parties in a representative democracy
  - c. Progressive Era reforms and how they weakened parties in the US
  - d. Representatives from single member, simple plurality districts/states v. proportional representation
  - e. Why we have a predominantly two-party system in the United States
  - f. The role of third parties in the United States
- 4. Campaigns
  - a. Criteria for a good election
    - 1) Turnout
    - 2) Absence of fraud
    - 3) Absence of demagoguery
    - 4) Information
  - b. Analysis of recent elections
  - c. The Electoral College
  - d. Campaign finance law in the United States
    - 1) The FECA amendments of 1973
    - 2) Buckley v. Valeo
    - 3) Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act
    - 4) McConnell v. FEC
    - 5) Recent developments

C. Institutions and issues

- 1. Congress
  - a. Local orientation of members of Congress
  - b. Structure of the House and Senate
  - c. How a bill becomes a law
  - d. Passage of the annual budget--Congress's biggest job
- 2. Executive branch
  - a. Who can legally become president v. what demographic groups have actually served as president
  - b. Functions of the president
  - c. Formal (constitutional) and informal (evolved) powers of the president
  - d. The President's effectiveness as a foreign policy leader v. as a domestic policy leader
  - e. Characteristics and functions of the bureaucracy and how it fits into a democratic society

3. The Courts
  - a. Primary function (adjudicating) and primary objective (protect civil liberties) of courts
  - b. Design of the federal judiciary per Hamilton's Federalist Papers
    - 1) Permanent tenure in office
    - 2) Selection by the president
    - 3) Confirmation by the senate
    - 4) Small, collegial court
  - c. Design of the federal judiciary
    - 1) District courts
    - 2) Circuit courts
    - 3) Supreme court
  - d. How the Supreme Court functions
  - e. Judicial review and the importance of Marbury v. Madison
  - f. Factors which influence Supreme Court decisions
    - 1) Constitution
    - 2) The law
    - 3) Personal views of the justices
    - 4) Public opinion
  - g. Limits on the power of the Supreme Court
    - 1) The President
    - 2) The Congress
    - 3) The Constitution
    - 4) Judicial restraint
  - h. Civil rights and civil liberties
  - i. Selective incorporation
  - j. Constitutional amendments bearing on voting, our most
4. Policy
  - a. The US economic system
  - b. Why the government is involved in regulating the economy
  - c. The difference between fiscal and economic policy
  - d. Foreign policy goals of the United States
  - e. Making foreign policy in a democracy
  - f. The military and economic tools for making foreign policy
  - g. The interaction of political institutions and the general public in the production of foreign and domestic policy

#### IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Videotapes
- C. Classroom and group discussion

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Schmidt, Steffen, Mack Shelley, Barbara Bardes. *American Government and Politics Today, Brief Edition*, 2014-2015, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cengage Learning. 2014.

VI. REQUIRED MATERIALS

None

VII. SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES

A. Library resources

1. Present offerings
2. Anticipated texts
3. Journals
4. Video/audio tapes
5. Software

B. Other

VIII. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Exams: There will be four exams given during the semester. The tests will consist of true-false, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.
- B. Research project: Students will have the option of presenting an 8 minute PowerPoint presentation or a five page research paper. You may select the topic but must clear it with the instructor.
- C. Quizzes: Students will be expected to learn how to analyze and understand their readings and lecture notes.

Grading Scale:

A= 100-90%; B= 89-80%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=59-

IX. ADA AA STATEMENT

Any student requiring special accommodations should inform the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Support Services (Library; phone 636-481-3169).

## X. ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

All students are responsible for complying with campus policies, as stated in the Student Handbook (see College website, <http://www.jeffco.edu>).

## XI. ATTENDANCE STATEMENT

Students earn their financial aid by regularly attending and actively participating in their coursework. If a student does not actively participate, he/she may have to return financial aid funds. Consult the College Catalog or a Student Financial Services representative for more details.

## XII. OUTSIDE OF CLASS ACADEMICALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES

The U.S. Department of Education mandates that students be made aware of expectations regarding coursework to be completed outside the classroom. Students are expected to spend substantial time outside of class meetings engaging in academically related activities, such as reading, studying, and completing assignments. Specifically, time spent on academically-related activities outside of class, combined with time spent in class meetings, is expected to be a minimum of 37.5 hours over the duration of the term for each credit hour.