

COURSE DOCUMENTS

David L. Caffey

Syllabus

PSCI 102: American National Government

Instructor: David L. Caffey

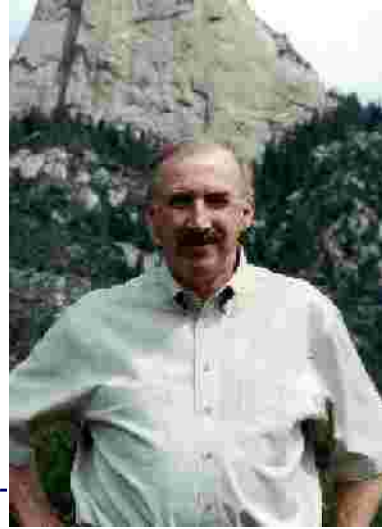
Room 118, Clovis Community College

(505) 769-4010 (work)

(800) 769-1409 (toll-free to CCC for New Mexico residents)

(505) 769-2496 (home)

E-mail: david.caffey@clovis.edu (*In case you need to contact me other than through the Course Web page. Please use WebCT e-mail for submittal of journal entries and most course-related communications.*)



Office Hours

Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

I am sometimes out of town or in a meeting, but otherwise available to you any time.

Text

The required text is Magleby, O'Brien, Light, Burns, Peterson, and Cronin, *GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE*, 7th brief edition. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. It is important to have this exact edition, as online quizzes are keyed to the chapters in this book. The International Standard Book Number or ISBN, a unique number that publishers and booksellers use to identify books, is as follows. ISBN: 978-0-13-157817-3.

Materials Required

You will need the textbook and access to a computer with an internet browser capable of accessing and using the Clovis Community College WebCT website.

Course Description

Political Science (PSCI) 102: American National Government, 3 credits.

American national government; formation and principles of government; political parties; structure of legislative executive, and judicial branches; civil rights; current trends and issues.

Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain the origins, importance and evolution of the U.S. Constitution.
2. Students will be able to explain the U.S. federal system, changes it has undergone, and issues related to federalism.
3. Students will be able to identify distinctive features of American political culture.
4. Students will be able to profile the United States in terms of its cultural and demographic

characteristics and explain how these relate to the system of government adopted for the U.S.

5. Students will be able to explain the roles of political parties and interest groups in the political process.
6. Students will identify various ways in which individuals participate in the political process and describe typical patterns of voting and participation.
7. Students will be able to discuss the role of media in the American political process.
8. Students will be able to explain the lawmaking process of members of Congress, and the politics of legislative activity.
9. Students will be able to identify roles and powers of the President and to explain the nature of presidential power.
10. Students will be able to assess the importance of the bureaucracy as an independent center of power in the government.
11. Students will be able to explain key concepts in the judicial process and to discuss the role of the judiciary in the American system of checks and balances.
12. Students will be able to identify the Constitutional basis, significant changes in the law, and current policy with respect to individual rights and liberties and due process of law.
13. Students will be able to explain the meaning of "equal justice under the law" and apply the concept in contemporary contexts.
14. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the powers and scope of activities of the federal government in economic and social policy.
15. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the powers and priorities that determine federal government activity in foreign policy and national defense.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Students will work through each of the units of the course, reading the textbook chapter and completing exercises and examinations as indicated. Course grades will be based on the following:

1. **Journal, 20%.** Journal entries provide for regular dialogue between you and your instructor about topics relating to the course, over the whole semester. Each student will complete a minimum of ten journal entries for the course. A journal entry consists of a well written paragraph providing a personal response to textbook material, or recent news, or something you have experienced or observed related to the course. Journal entries are not gradable individually, but for the course as a whole, taking into account the relationship of the item to American national government, the student's analysis of the item, appropriate expression, and use of language--grammar, spelling, etc. *Timely submittal of journal entries is required.* Timely submittal requires submittal of at least one entry by midnight Sunday each week and a *total of 10* by the end of the course. A well-done, on-time journal entry is worth 10 points, for a potential score of 100 on the journal grade. Late submittal of journal entries incurs a penalty of 5 points for each late entry. The ideal would be to do one or two each week, and you are always free to work ahead and finish this assignment early. Journal entries submitted after midnight **Sunday, July 19** will be read but will not receive an instructor response, and will have a potential value of 5 points each rather than 10. See the announcement, "Your Online Journal" for instructions on the journal assignment. ***Entries are submitted via the WebCT e-mail system that is part of this course Web page—one journal entry per e-mail message, with the subject line containing the number of the journal entry.***
2. **Threaded Discussion, 10%.** Participate in threaded discussion in at least 12 of the 15

chapter units. Threaded discussion topics appear under “Discussions” in the Course Menu on the blue vertical bar at the left side of your course Web page—one for each chapter of the textbook. The discussion typically will continue through the unit, with a new topic introduced for each chapter. This is essentially participation grade, and full participation will generate full credit. Spelling and grammar will not be graded in this activity, but some consideration will be given to timeliness--distribution of responses over the term, rather than left until near the end of the term. Participation in at least 12 threaded discussions will generally result in a grade of 95 for this activity--again, it is essentially a participation grade.

1 **Student Essays, 30%.** Each student will submit two essays. Essays should be approximately 500 words in length. That's about 2 pages typed, double-spaced with 12-point typeface. Essays will be graded on a 100 point basis. The essay average will be weighted to account for 30% of the final semester course grade. Be sure to review sections of this syllabus titled Essay Assignment and Standards for Grading of Student Essays. **Your first essay is due not later than Wednesday, June 24.** Two points are deducted from the essay grade for each day the essay is late. **The second essay is due not later than Sunday, July 19.** Again, two points are deducted from the essay grade for each date that it is late until midnight July 23, at which time the essay grade is recorded as a zero if the assignment has not been turned in.

1 **Quizzes, 40%.** Each student will take a 20-item multiple-choice quiz from any 12 chapter units you choose. You may take the quiz anytime up until the quiz closes, use books and notes, and take as much time as you wish. However, you may submit each quiz only once, and the first twelve unit quizzes you submit will be the basis for this portion of your grade. All quizzes are open to you at the beginning of the course and you can move through them as rapidly as you like. Two weeks after the Monday on which any chapter is first scheduled in the syllabus, the quiz for that chapter will close; it will close at 11:55 p.m. Sunday, and will no longer be available. Item results and page references will then show up in the student's online gradebook. Check the Course Schedule below for exact quiz closing dates. The quiz average will account for 40% of the semester course grade. *In the summer course, we do two chapters each week—thus you would normally be completing two online quizzes most weeks.*

Course Grade Scale. A fairly conventional scale applies for assignment of course grades.

A 90-100 final average

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

F Below 60

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes *plagiarism* (presenting someone else's work as your own original work) and other forms of cheating behavior as described in the Clovis Community College catalog. Academic dishonesty is unacceptable at Clovis Community College and in this course. Students committing acts of academic dishonesty shall be penalized by the assignment of lowered or failing grades on assignments and/or for the entire course, depending upon the instructor's evaluation of the severity of the dishonest act. Consult the college catalog for more information in the institutional policy on academic integrity. A written

assignment that is plagiarized—or taken from another source without attribution, rather than originally written by the student—will generally receive a grade of zero.

Attendance

The WebCT system maintains a log each time you enter your online course. Students are required to login at least once a week in order to meet course assignment deadlines and to receive additional instructor announcements. Students may be administratively withdrawn from the class for non-participation and failure to inform the instructor in the event of absence from participation for a period of two or more weeks.

Netiquette

Netiquette is using good manners in cyberspace. Since most of the communication over the net is by way of text, be sure your written words are not offensive to the receiver. Remember email is a document, and can be read by someone other than the intended audience. "Flaming" (making personal attacks on a person) is also unacceptable, and will follow the same discipline actions found in the [student handbook](#), including administrative withdrawal at the instructor's discretion. Whether you are in a chat room, writing an email or posting to a discussion area, remember to use proper etiquette in consideration of others. If you would like to read more on the subject of netiquette, use the link below.

<http://www.iwillfollow.com/email.htm>

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Essay Assignment

Original essays will account for 30% of your grade in the course. The essay assignments give you the opportunity to demonstrate your grasp of course materials by synthesizing ideas, taking and supporting positions, and otherwise critically examining issues and communicating your views effectively.

This assignment requires that you prepare and submit two essays. You may select essay topics from anything relating to material in the course or any issue relating to American national government. Essay ideas could come from items in the news, from research, or from personal experience. In your essays, you should take and support a position, and cite at least a couple of outside sources (books, articles, websites, etc.) that help convey information or your position. You should indicate within the essay where you have used outside sources. You can do this: (1) by quoting the outside source, for example--According to TIME magazine for April 24, 2007, "Federal enforcement of legal trade has decreased 40% over the last ten years;" (2) by referring to the source even if the material is not given as a direct quote. You can make a footnote or endnote, or simply put the reference in parentheses--(TIME Magazine, April 24, 2007, p. 67).

The guideline for length is minimum 500 words--that's the equivalent of about two double-spaced typewritten pages. Before starting on an essay, be sure to review the Standards for Grading of Student Essays which will indicate in a fairly specific manner the instructor's expectations in assigning grades to essays submitted.

Essays may be submitted via electronic format provided on the companion website, or they may be prepared in another format and e-mailed direct, or they may be mailed in hard copy form.

Under **Grading Policies** above, please note the deadlines for the essays (June 24 for the first and July 19 for the second) and penalties for late submission of the essays.

Standards for Grading of Student Essays

A

- | The essay is clearly on-topic and well-organized.
- | The essay expresses a position that is supported with a depth of research and analysis that is beyond the norm for a good, sound "B" essay. The number and quality of sources used may indicate such care. Four or more sources would be indicative of this level.
- | The student's thesis is clearly stated, logically and sequentially supported, and clearly summarized.
- | The essay exhibits excellence in narrative style and usage; almost no errors in spelling or punctuation are noted.
- | The essay is persuasive, informative and focused.

B

- | The essay speaks directly to the assignment.
- | The student's position on the topic is clearly discernible.
- | Points of discussion are well organized and conclusions are clearly stated.
- | The essay conforms to standard usage with respect to spelling, grammar, and narrative style.
- | The essay makes good use of relevant supporting information from course material and/or supplementary materials that the student has found and cited. Use of at least two references would be indicative of this level.

C

- | The essay is generally on-topic.
- | The essay provides credible information, but does not support a position.
- | Points of discussion are discernible, but logical organization may be lacking.
- | Errors in spelling, grammar and narrative style are discernible--usually not more than one per fifty words of text.
- | The essay makes little use of supporting information and course materials and/or supplementary materials.

D

- | Much of the essay does not directly address the assignment as stated.
- | Information provided is questionable as to source and/or validity.
- | The essay rambles, points of discussion are difficult to discern.
- | The essay displays significant deficiency in spelling, grammar and narrative style--average of more than one error per fifty words of text.
- | The essay is based primarily on thought or opinion not substantiated by information in

course materials or identified supplementary materials.

F

- | The essay is overly brief and/or poorly organized.
- | The essay does not adequately address the assignment.
- | Spelling, grammar and narrative style may be noticeably deficient.
- | The essay relies on personal opinion only, or makes inappropriate use of materials.
- | The assignment is not turned in as scheduled or as agreed upon prior to the due date and/or the essay is substantially plagiarized from other sources and does not represent the student's original work.

General Information

You may work through the material at your own pace, provided you complete the number of required quizzes within the open dates for the quizzes. There is no restriction on how early you can complete the course; grades will, however, be reported and posted at the end of the term. If you wish to request an extension, please forward such a request for a grade of *Incomplete* not later than two weeks before the end of the semester. An *Incomplete* grade can only be given for a student who has completed more than 50% of course assignments by the withdrawal deadline and was passing, and for whom a compelling and unforeseen circumstance prevented completion within the time normally allowed. Course completion is otherwise subject to normal semester deadlines for withdrawal and course completion. Students should have 3-4 units completed by one-fourth way through the course, 7-9 units complete by midterm, and 10-12 units complete by three-quarter point of the class. If you fall behind this pace, please let me know what is happening, and I may bug you a bit as well.

Instructor Introduction

My Approach to the Course

I look forward to working with you in the completion of this course in American National Government. I invite you to contact me at any time, if you need help or clarification with any part of the course, or if you have particular needs or interests you would like to pursue in the course. My desire is to meet your need, whether it is to prepare for some particular career or civic interest, or just to earn this course credit.

My view of this course is that its primary function is as a general education course to help students become better informed, participating citizens. As such, my emphasis is on practical, rather than theoretical aspects of government and politics, and on practical familiarity with the structures and process of government rather than formal academic performance. As a general education course, this course concerns itself not only with the specifics of American National Government, but with the development of literacy and thinking skills; thus some emphasis is placed on development of the student's capacity for expression in writing.

This is an online course. In my view, there are some advantages and some limitations relative to courses taught in a traditional classroom. The most attractive feature of an online course, in my view, is that it provides access for students who are bound by place and time to continue pursuing the education they want, and I am happy to be part of that. This course seems to me to be ideally suited to online delivery, in that the online format naturally provides a gateway to

many, many websites and resources that are available to enhance and vary the learning experience. In addition, the course deals with ideas and information, rather than material objects and skillbuilding, so the online course should provide many students with a good opportunity to study this subject.

Who I am

I was born in 1947 and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government in 1970. I have graduate degrees in political science and higher education from Texas Tech University.

I have held teaching and administrative positions in four community colleges--El Paso Community College in El Paso, Texas (1974-76), Midland College in Midland, Texas (1978-82), San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico (1990-92), and Clovis Community College (1992-present). I started out teaching American National Government and State and Local Government and State and Local Government, and have continued to do so off and on throughout my career in community college education.

I worked at the Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico as a seasonal employee 1965-74, and have been a resident of New Mexico since 1982. I continue to enjoy the New Mexico outdoors whenever I can. I also have an interest in the literature and history of New Mexico and the Southwest, and am the author of four books including recently published *Frank Springer and New Mexico: From the Colfax County War to the Emergence of Modern Santa Fe*.

Some Suggestions for Online Learning in this Course

- | Online learning puts a premium on (1) student initiative and time discipline in working through the course in a timely manner, and (2) reading/writing tasks. You just need to be aware of this and evaluate how these characteristics relate to your strengths and weaknesses. Since we don't have regular face-to-face, spontaneous discussions, I don't know any way around relying on the written word.
- | In addition, you will find that evaluation of your performance is more on a "portfolio" basis--grading of many smaller assignments, rather than a few major exams and maybe a major paper.
- | On the plus side, you can work on the course anytime you want to, and you can communicate with me and with other students in a direct confidential manner, by e-mail--so this may allow some students to feel more free to ask questions and make comments. Please do communicate with me as you wish at any time, and I promise to respond.
- | Do monitor your progress to see that you are staying on task and on pace to finish the course. The freedom to work at your own pace can also be the freedom to procrastinate--one reason some online classes have a high withdrawal rate.
- | I encourage you to pay attention to events in the world as we go through this course, and try to see relationships between the course content and events. Please feel welcome to share your observations with me and with other students in the class.

Course Schedule

In the 8-week summer term, we cover two units each week. (A unit is a course Web page

corresponds to the chapter with the same number in the textbook.) You are, of course, free to move at a faster or slower pace, so long as quizzes are done within the time allowed and all other required materials are submitted by specified deadlines. Look for new unit introductions each Monday or Tuesday--they may sometimes appear on the previous Thursday or Friday.

Week 1	June 1-7	Units 1 and 2	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. June 14.
Week 2	June 8-14	Units 3 and 4	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. June 21.
Week 3	June 15-21	Units 5 and 6	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. June 28.
Week 4	June 22-28	Units 7 and 8	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. July 5.

First persuasive essay is due Wednesday, June 24.

Last Day to Change from credit to audit: Friday, June 26 (Contact Admissions and Records) **FOUR- WEEK CHECKPOINT** June 28, Instructor progress e-mail the following week.

Week 5	June 29-July 5	Units 9 and 10	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. July 12.
--------	----------------	----------------	-----------------------------------

Independence Day Holiday, Friday, July 3 (The online course is still available to you—CCC campus will be closed.)

Week 6	July 6-12	Units 11 and 12	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. July 19.
--------	-----------	-----------------	-----------------------------------

Last Day to Withdraw from this Class: Friday, July 10 (Contact Admissions and Records)

Week 7	July 13-19	Units 13 and 14	Quizzes close 11:55 p.m. July 23.
Week 8	July 20-23	Unit 15	Quiz closes 11:55 p.m. July 23.

Second Essay is Due Midnight, Sunday, July 19.

SEVEN-WEEK JOURNAL DEADLINE: Last chance to submit journal entries *for full credit*, Midnight Sunday, July 19.

END OF COURSE: 11:55 p.m. Thursday, July 23, 10 journals and everything else due.

The withdrawal deadline for this class is Friday, July 20, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. If you wish to withdraw, you must do so through the Clovis Community College Office of Admissions and Records, 505-769-4025. If you cannot withdraw in person, they will likely require signature proof of your desire to withdraw.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES: The first essay is due by midnight Wednesday, June 24, 2008. The second essay is due by midnight Sunday, July 19. Journals are due as indicated for that assignment in the course syllabus. All other assignments--and threaded discussions--are due at the final course deadline of Thursday, July 23, but students are strongly encouraged to complete assignments week by week, throughout the semester.

FINAL DUE DATE: ALL MATERIALS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR GRADING PURPOSES MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR BY 11:55 p.m. **Thursday, July 23, 2008**. Course materials will not be accepted after that date, and assignments not submitted will be have a grade of zero. Technical glitches will not serve as an excuse for assignments not received by this deadline--so plan ahead and don't push the deadline!